SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Ring Usa From Australia

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Introduction: Connecting Across the Pacific

Whether you are catching up with family in New York, closing a business deal in Los Angeles, or simply checking in with a friend in Chicago, knowing how to ring the USA from Australia is an essential skill in our interconnected world. The process might seem daunting at first—different country codes, varying time zones, and a range of calling options—but once you understand the fundamentals, placing an international call becomes second nature. This comprehensive guide will walk you through every method available, from traditional landlines to modern VoIP services, ensuring you choose the most cost-effective and reliable solution for your needs. By the end, you will not only know the exact steps to dial a US number from Australia but also how to avoid common pitfalls and save money on your calls.

Understanding the Basics: Dialing Codes and Formats

Before you pick up the phone, it is crucial to grasp the structure of an international call. When calling USA from Australia, you are essentially routing your call through multiple networks, each requiring a specific sequence of numbers. The standard format follows this pattern: **Australia's exit code + United States country code + area code + local number**. Let's break that down step by step.

The Australian Exit Code: 0011 or +

To tell your Australian phone network that you are making an international call, you must dial an exit code. The traditional exit code for Australia is **0011**. However, most modern mobile phones and VoIP services allow you to simply use the plus sign (+) instead. For instance, you can dial **+1** instead of **0011 1**. The plus sign works on nearly all mobile and digital phone systems and automatically selects the correct exit code for your provider.

The United States Country Code: 1

Every country has a unique country code. For the United States (including all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and other US territories), the country code is **1**. After dialing Australia's exit code (0011 or +), you immediately dial 1. This tells the network that you want to reach the United States.

Area Codes and Local Numbers

The United States uses a three-digit area code (sometimes called an NPA code) that corresponds to a specific geographic region. For example, **212** is New York City, **310** is Los Angeles, and **202** is Washington D.C. Following the area code, you dial the seven-digit local number. So a complete call to a New York landline might look like this: **0011 1 212 123 4567** or simply **+1 212 123 4567**.

It is important to note that when calling a US mobile phone, you still dial the full ten-digit number (area code + seven digits) after the country code. There is no separate prefix for US mobile numbers. Also, if you see a US number written as (212) 123-4567, you omit the parentheses and dashes when dialing from Australia.

Method 1: Calling from a Landline in Australia

Traditional landline phones (PSTN) are still present in many homes and offices. To ring a US number from an

Australian landline, follow these steps:

1. Dial the exit code 0011.
2. Dial the US country code 1.
3. Dial the three-digit area code (drop any leading zero – US area codes never start with zero).
4. Dial the seven-digit local number.

For example, to call the White House in Washington D.C. (area code 202): **0011 1 202 456 1414**.

Keep in mind that landline rates for international calls can be very expensive if you do not use a pre-paid calling card or a discounted international plan. Many Australian landline providers charge per minute, with rates ranging from AUD 0.50 to over AUD 2.00 per minute depending on your plan. It is highly recommended to check with your provider or consider alternative methods outlined below.

Method 2: Calling from an Australian Mobile Phone

Using a mobile phone is perhaps the most convenient way to call the USA from Australia, especially if you are on the go. Australian mobile networks (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, and others) support easy international dialing. The process is similar to landlines, but with a key difference: you can replace the 0011 with a plus sign (+).

- Steps for manual dialing: Press and hold the 0 key until a plus sign (+) appears, then dial 1, followed by the area code and local number. For example: +1 212 123 4567.
- Mobile network rates: Standard international call rates on Australian mobile plans can be high. However, many providers now offer international add-ons or packs that give you a bucket of minutes for a fixed monthly fee. For instance, Telstra's "International Call Pack" or Optus's "World Traveller" options can reduce the per-minute cost significantly.

If you have a dual-SIM phone, consider using a local Australian SIM for your calls, or alternatively, use a VoIP app (see Method 5) to bypass standard mobile rates entirely.

Method 3: Using a Prepaid Calling Card

Prepaid calling cards are an old but still effective way to make affordable international calls. When you ring the USA from Australia, a calling card can offer lower rates than your standard landline or mobile plan. Here's how it works:

1. Purchase a calling card from a convenience store, newsagent, or online provider. Look for cards specifically designed for calls to the USA.
2. Dial the local access number (an Australian landline number) provided on the card.
3. Follow the voice prompts: enter your PIN (usually printed on the card) and then dial the destination number (0011 1 + area code + local number).

Be aware of hidden fees: some cards charge a connection fee, a maintenance fee, or require you to use the entire balance within a certain period. Always read the fine print. Cards with a "free call" or "no connection fee" are preferable. Rates can be as low as 1 cent per minute, but you must also consider the cost of the local access call (if calling from a landline, it may be a local call or a toll call).

Method 4: Using VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) – The Modern Standard

VoIP has revolutionised how we make international calls. Services like **Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Meet**allow you to call US numbers for free or very low cost, as long as you have a stable internet connection. When you want to ring the USA from Australia using VoIP, you typically do not need to worry about

country codes at all if you are calling another app user. However, if you want to call a traditional US landline or mobile number (PSTN), most VoIP providers offer a feature called “Skype Credit” or “calling credits.”

Popular VoIP Options

- Skype: Offers unlimited calling to US landlines and mobiles for a monthly subscription (around AUD 10–15) or pay-as-you-go with Skype Credit. Dial the number exactly as you would from a phone: +1 area code number.
- WhatsApp: Free for calls between WhatsApp users. For calling US phone numbers not on WhatsApp, the app does not currently support PSTN calling directly (it relies on the recipient also having the app).
- FaceTime: Free for Apple users. Dial the contact’s phone number or email address. Works only Apple-to-Apple.
- Zoom / Google Meet: Great for business calls, but calls to regular US numbers require a paid subscription or add-on.

The major advantage of VoIP is cost—often a fraction of what traditional carriers charge. The disadvantage is that call quality depends on your internet speed and reliability. For best results, use a wired Ethernet connection or a strong Wi-Fi signal.

Method 5: Using International Calling Apps (e.g., Rebtel, Viber, Talkatone)

Several apps are designed specifically for low-cost international calls to non-app users. Services like **Rebtel, Viber Out, and Talkatone** provide virtual US phone numbers or allow you to call US landlines and mobiles using a local Australian number. When you ring the USA from Australia through these apps, you may be given an Australian access number that connects you to their network at reduced rates. For example, Rebtel offers a local Australian number that you can dial to reach a US number without long distance charges on your mobile plan (though data charges apply if using mobile data).

Understanding Time Zones: When to Call

The United States spans multiple time zones, from Eastern (UTC-5/UTC-4 during daylight saving) to Pacific (UTC-8/UTC-7). Australia also has several time zones (AEST, ACST, AWST). When planning to ring the USA from Australia, you need to account for the time difference. For instance:

- If it is 10:00 AM in Sydney (AEST), it is 8:00 PM the previous day in New York (EST) (or 7:00 PM during EDT).
- If it is 10:00 AM in Perth (AWST), it is 7:00 PM the previous day in Los Angeles (PST) (or 6:00 PM during PDT).

To avoid calling in the middle of the night, use world clock converters. Australian morning is US evening, and Australian evening is US morning. A good rule of thumb: call between 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM Australian time to catch the US during business hours (depending on coast).

Cost-Saving Tips and Hidden Charges

International calling can be expensive if you are not careful. Here are some expert tips to keep your bills low when you ring the USA from Australia:

- Use Wi-Fi calling: Many Australian mobile carriers (Telstra, Optus) offer Wi-Fi calling. If you enable this feature, international calls placed over Wi-Fi may be charged at a lower rate or included in your plan. Check with your provider.
- Buy an international pack: If you frequently call the USA, a monthly add-on (e.g., Telstra’s $10 for 100 minutes) is cheaper than pay-per-minute.

- Skype or Google Voice: Google Voice (US-based) requires a US account to set up, but once done, you can call US numbers for free using a US number. However, you need a VPN or a friend in the US to set it up.
- Avoid 1900 numbers and premium services: If you are dialing a US number that starts with 900, you will incur extremely high charges that can exceed $10 per minute.
- Check your mobile plan's fair use policy: Some plans cap international calling minutes or charge excess fees after a limit.

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Even with the correct dialing sequence, you might encounter problems when trying to ring the USA from Australia. Here are some common issues and their fixes:

- Call does not connect: Verify that you have dialed the exit code correctly (0011 or +). Some landline phones require you to wait for a second dial tone after 0011.
- Number is busy or does not exist: Double-check the area code and local number. US area codes are three digits and never start with 0 or 1. Also, ensure you have dropped any leading '1' that might appear before the area code in US domestic dialing (e.g., 1-212-123-4567 should be dialed as +1 212 123 4567).
- Poor voice quality on VoIP: Close other bandwidth-heavy applications (streaming, downloads). Use a headset with a microphone. Consider switching to a wired internet connection.

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