October 6 2026, 17:48 (+08)

WISE BECOMES THE FIRST APP TO BRING CUSTOMISABLE ESIM PLANS AND QR PAYMENTS ACROSS FIVE CONTINENTS



Ahead of the peak year-end travel season, Wise has launched a direct fix for "arrival anxiety" - the universal moment of panic of landing in an unfamiliar country without mobile data or the local way to pay. By combining customisable eSIM data plans with an unmatched cross-border QR code scanner that works across five continents, Wise becomes the first to combine the two in one app.

A new Wise-commissioned YouGov survey of more than 14,000 travellers across eleven countries, found that 62% of adults who have travelled internationally in the last year rely on hotel or accommodation Wi-Fi to stay connected abroad. Once outside their hotel, travellers resort to comical behaviours to stay connected:

- 24% of travellers have bought something at a café they did not want, purely to get free Wi-Fi.

- 15% have stood outside a museum or tourist attraction to use their free Wi-fi instead of going inside.
- 7% have asked a total stranger to share their phone's personal hotspot.

Cash management was the most common payment problem reported abroad (43%). Of those who experienced challenges almost 40% of travellers said they missed out on local experiences like street food markets - especially when travelling in countries where QR codes are the preferred payment methods.

Wise is solving both these pain points: the eSIM keeps people connected, while the extensive QR code payments network helps travellers pay like a local.

Waste-free, Build-Your-Own eSIM plans

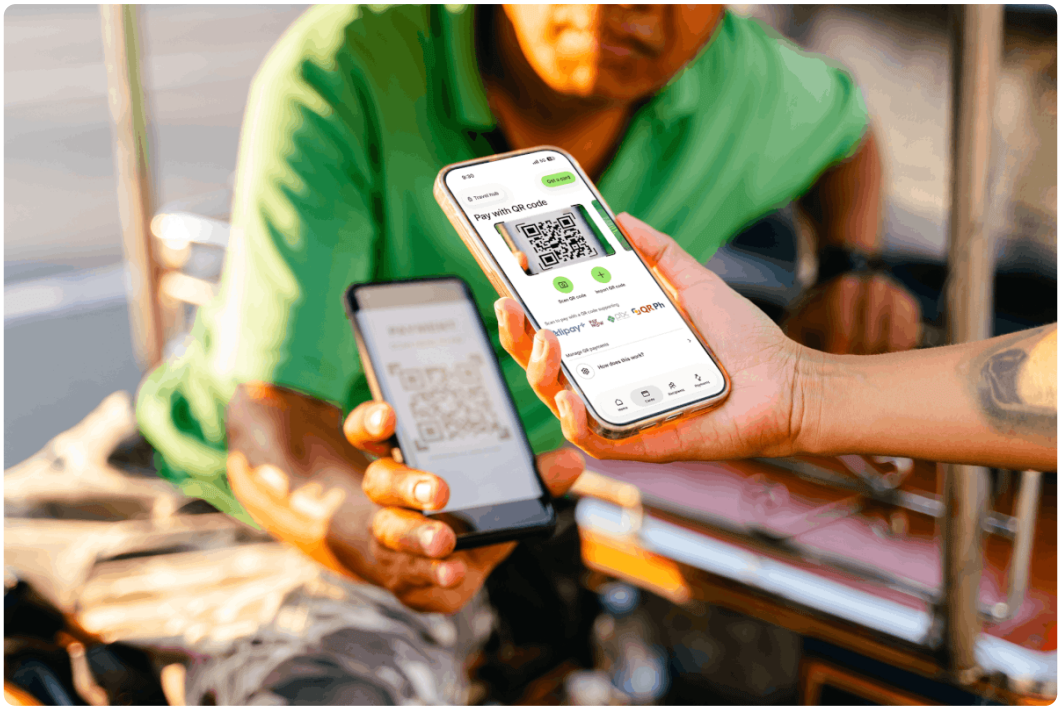
The Wise eSIM introduces a highly flexible model to a telco market historically defined by rigid, pre-packaged expensive roaming plans. Alongside standard regional plans in more than 150 destinations, Wise is among the first in the world to launch customisable data plans to customers in the UK, EEA, US, Canada, Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand, giving travellers the power to design the type of coverage:

- **One-time eSIM installation:** Customers only need to download the eSIM to their device once rather than for each individual trip.
- **Custom Controls:** Travellers can buy the data directly from the Wise app, set the exact data allowance and the exact number of days they need, mapped perfectly to their itinerary.
- **Data Estimation Guidelines:** Intuitive, in-app guidelines to help customers avoid over or under-buying data before they depart.
- **Unused Data Plan Refund:** Wise will refund travellers for any unused data plans they purchase but do not use. Handy for those times when travel plans change.
- **Instant Activation:** The data will only be used when the eSIM is connected to the supported network at the destination.

One app for the world's QR codes

While cards work at hotels or airport duty-free shops, daily life down on the street moves to its own rhythm. Many countries around the world run completely on individual domestic QR codes. Because these systems were built for locals, foreign travellers have historically been locked out - forced to either track down physical cash at ATMs or sign up for a messy folder of single-use local e-wallets. Wise has broken down this barrier by becoming the first to bring together QR codes from five continents into one app.

- **Pay like a local from Singapore to Budapest to Rio de Janeiro:** Wise's direct connections with local payment schemes such as PayNow (Singapore), QR Ph (Philippines), DuitNow (Malaysia), Pix (Brazil), PromptPay (Thailand), Swiss QR-bill (Switzerland) and Qvik (Hungary) means that for the first time, all of these local payment schemes are now available in one place - through the Wise app.
- **Unlocking cashless payment in the Chinese mainland and beyond:** Through a strategic partnership with the Alipay+, Ant International's unified wallet gateway, Wise has simplified payments for travellers visiting Asia. In the Chinese mainland, where cash and foreign card payments are not commonly accepted, eligible Wise travellers can scan the QR and pay at millions of local Alipay+ enabled merchants directly through the Wise app without needing a Chinese bank card, local mobile number, or separate app setup required. The partnership enables Wise users to make cross-border QR payments in 50+ destinations globally including Hong Kong, Nepal, Korea, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.



Smart travelling with the Wise account

Beyond eSIM and QR codes, the Wise Account has also added pay as you go airport lounge passes, country guides with destination tips, as well as features like multi-currency bill split and group spending to make managing navigating new countries and managing money with friends and family a breeze.

Wise eSIM plans and QR payments are available in the Wise Account from today.

About Wise

Wise is a global technology company, building the best way to move and manage the world's money. With Wise Account and Wise Business, people and businesses can hold 40+ currencies, move money between countries and spend money abroad. Large companies and banks use Wise technology too; an entirely new network for the world's money. In the fiscal year 2026, Wise supported around 19 million people and businesses, processing over $240 billion in cross-border transactions and saving customers over $3 billion.

Contact details

Press Inquiries
press@wise.com

Copy link

https://newsroom.wise.com/en-CAS/272962-wise-expands-travel-tools-with-esim-roaming-and-qr-code-payments/