



Electricity in Central Europe

Europe's electrical system is different from ours in two ways: the voltage of the current and the shape of the plug. The plug in Central Europe has two round prongs.

When you want to plug in one of your devices abroad, you'll need an adapter, which serves as a sort of "go-between" as it plugs the appropriate prong style into the socket and your cord plugs into the external side of the adapter.

And here's where it gets a bit more complicated. In many countries — most in fact, except for the U.S. and Canada — the electrical voltage is 220/240V. Our Canadian devices are designed for 110/120V which is not compatible, even when correctly plugged in through an adapter. You know this first-hand if you've ever fried a hair dryer or curling iron while traveling. This is where the converter comes in.



A travel power converter converts or "steps down" the electrical voltage from the outlet to 110/120V so that Canadian devices can be used safely. One more thing: many devices are now made "dual voltage," enabling them to be used with both 110/120V and 220/240V. The trick is to know whether your electric toothbrush, hair dryer, charger, or flatiron falls into that category, which would allow it to be used safely with an adapter alone. If you can't find the voltage listed on the device, check online or look at the instruction sheet it came with.

To be safe when you're traveling with tech, it's smart to invest in a combination adapter/converter. There are universal products that handle both functions, and we've rounded up five options that should help to eliminate electrical confusion while you're on the road. As with all electronic devices, make sure to carefully read the safety instructions before using any of them and to check wattage limitations on the product you purchase before plugging in.

Some power converters come with a high and low setting. The low setting on the voltage converter is for devices rated 25 watts or less and the high setting is for devices over 26 watts to a maximum of 1600 watts. It is important to realize that it is a big difference powering your phone than using a curling iron. I would even suggest buying an item like a curling iron in Europe so that it is already made for the European voltage.