

GPS



Compared to even recent history, travelling today is almost a cakewalk, at least concerning orientation. Dozens of providers sell their GPS and latest developments around mobile phones make (navigation) life even easier.

You have the choice. From a simple GPS, only with indication of coordinates, to the most advantageous device with built in DVD, sophisticated maps, bluetooth and many more features.

Originally, I opted for a Garmin plotter GPSMAP C176. Although it was costly, it had some extras built in that are very interesting for offroading. Specifically, it has an accurate compass, displays coordinates and an overview of the current satellite reception. Most important though is its robustness. During all the trips I had never any problems. However, there are also some disadvantages: It is relatively bulky and heavy, has no built in audio (newer models have) and if you want to expand memory, you are dependent on special Garmin memory sticks (at least triple the normal price). Nevertheless, the plotter is of great quality and thanks to its integrated gateway, it functions as a control center for my tablet PC (processing the GPS antenna signal into PC readable digits). As common today, thanks to the attachable mobile antenna and the power through four AA batteries, it can also be used for nature hiking, geocaching and/or offroad camping



The second GPS device that I have installed is a simple Garmin Nüvi 1390. The audio guide is very comfortable, specially on trips within Europe and big cities. In addition it has the jam alert that makes circumventing cues easier. With the simple attachment by a vacuum cup it can easily be removed and transported. Details under <http://www.garmin.de>.



However, it is very important to have a backup when determining your position electronically. Even the most robust devices can break. For good reception, an exterior antenna should also be mounted. As it can be damaged when driving through a forest or similar, a respective backup antenna should always be with you. Although, all these technological marvels make life very easy, never forget to take with you real hardware. That means a conventional road book and an old fashioned compass.

