

iPod Touch Tip #2: Using Google Maps Routes Offline

The Google Maps application included in the "January Update" apps has a very nice offline feature: Routing. While connected to WiFi, Tap the "Directions" button, and enter the starting location and then the ending location of your desired route. Maps will then download the route data and store it for offline use. All route-point information including zoomed-in maps immediately surrounding each route point is downloaded. Once completed (ie: the progress "spinner" stops) you can shut off WiFi, and the route information will be retained to use offline. Read on for more details on how to use this useful featureâ?¦.

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Maps displays the route's Overview of a zoomed-out map showing pins at the starting and ending points and the route drawn between the pins. Here is an example of a generic route from Chicago to Detroit:

iPod Touch - Google Maps Routes

Tapping the "Start" button in the upper right of the screen will zoom you in to the first route-point map display the route-point directions. It's animated very nicely, looks great, and is easy to read and follow. The Start button is then replaced by left and right arrows that will step you forward and backward through the route. At each route-point, the zoomed-in map is displayed with the route-point's text. Here are two examples of steps along the route:

iPod Touch - Google Maps Route

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If you want a test-only view of the route, just tap the "eyeball" icon on the lower left. This "peels" the screen up revealing more options:

iPod Touch - Google Maps Route

Tap "List" button. All of the route points will display in text with the current point number highlighted. Doing a "flick" gesture will scroll you through the route, and tapping any of the route-points will take you directly to the map view of that point. While in the List view, tapping the "eyeball" icon and then the "Map" button will take you back to the Map view of the last viewed route-point. here is an example of the List view showing

the fill route text:

.Ipod Touch - Google Maps Route

Understand that there are two things to watchout for when using routes: First, Maps only retains one route offline, so you cannot manage multiple routes while offline. And second, if you initiate any searches or try to change anything, you will likely lose the stored route, so be careful if you are relying on the route, and are not near WiFi.

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