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how to listen to radio on iphone

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How to Listen to Radio on iPhone: A Complete Guide for 2026

Whether you're commuting, working out, or just relaxing at home, the radio can be a constant companion. For iPhone users, however, the question often arises: **how to listen to radio on iPhone**when the device itself lacks a built in FM tuner? The answer is surprisingly simple, thanks to a range of apps, streaming services, and even hardware accessories. This guide will walk you through every method—free and paid, online and offline—so you can enjoy your favorite stations without missing a beat.

Why iPhone Users Want Radio

Radio offers a unique blend of real time content, local flavor, and instant updates that streaming playlists can't always match. From live sports commentary to breaking news and community announcements, radio remains a vital medium. For iPhone users, the convenience of a single, always available device means you can tune in wherever you are, provided you know how to set it up.

Built In iPhone Options: Apple Radio and iTunes

Apple's ecosystem includes several native ways to stream audio, though none provide a traditional FM radio experience. Nonetheless, you can still access radio style content directly from your device.

Apple Radio (Apple Music Radio)

Apple Music offers a curated selection of radio stations called Apple Radio. These stations are available to all Apple Music subscribers, and the service is integrated directly into the Music app.

1. Open the Music app on your iPhone.
2. Tap the Browse tab at the bottom.
3. Select Radio from the list of options.
4. Choose a genre or a specific station, then tap Play.

Apple Radio features a mix of live shows, podcasts, and music streams. While it isn't the same as a local FM broadcast, it offers a polished, ad free listening experience.

iTunes Store Radio (Now Apple Music Radio)

Historically, iTunes provided a radio feature that let users stream music directly from the store. Apple has since consolidated this under Apple Music Radio, so the steps above apply.

The Reality of FM Radio on iPhone

Unlike many Android devices, the iPhone does not come equipped with a built in FM tuner. That means you cannot directly capture over the air radio signals using the phone's hardware. However, you have several workarounds that bring the radio to your fingertips.

External FM Receivers

USB powered external FM receivers can attach to an iPhone via the**Lightning to USB Camera Adapter** or the

newer **USB C** adapters. Once connected, you can use a compatible app to tune into local stations. Popular models include:

- RCA FM Radio Receiver
- AudioQuest FM Receiver
- Audio-Technica AF-1

These devices typically require a separate app, so be sure to download the companion app from the App Store before connecting.

Bluetooth FM Transmitters

Another option is a Bluetooth FM transmitter that receives audio from your phone and broadcasts it on an FM frequency. This method is useful if you want to play radio through a car stereo or home speakers that only accept FM input.

Streaming Radio Apps: The Most Popular Choices

For most users, the easiest way to answer “how to listen to radio on iPhone” is to download a streaming app. Below are the top choices, each with its own strengths and unique features.

TuneIn Radio

TuneIn is the industry standard for online radio. It hosts over 100,000 stations worldwide, including local news, music, talk shows, and sports.

1. Download the TuneIn Radio app from the App Store.
2. Open the app and allow location access to find nearby stations.
3. Use the search bar to find a station by name, genre, or city.
4. Tap Play to start streaming.

Premium subscribers can enjoy ad‑free listening, higher audio quality, and the ability to create custom playlists.

iHeartRadio

iHeartRadio is a free app that offers a mix of live radio, podcasts, and music streaming. It’s especially popular in the United States.

1. Install iHeartRadio from the App Store.
2. Sign in with an Apple ID or create a new account.
3. Browse by genre, location, or featured stations.
4. Press Play to listen.

With iHeartRadio, you can also create a custom station based on your favorite songs or artists.

Pandora

While Pandora is known for its music recommendation algorithm, it also offers live radio stations in select markets.

1. Download Pandora from the App Store.
2. Sign in or create an account.
3. Navigate to the Stations tab.
4. Select a station and tap Listen Now.

Premium users get higher quality audio and the ability to create station playlists.

Spotify Radio

Spotify's radio feature lets you generate stations based on a song, album, or artist. While it's not a traditional radio format, it provides continuous, personalized music streaming.

1. Open the Spotify app.
2. Find a song or artist you like.
3. Tap the three dots next to the item and select Create Radio.
4. Press Play to start streaming.

Spotify Premium users enjoy ad free listening and higher bitrate audio.

Apple Podcasts & Radio.com

For those interested in talk radio, podcasts, and live streams, **Radio.com** offers a wide range of stations, including sports and news. It also integrates with **Apple Podcasts** for on demand listening.

Using Safari or the Web to Stream Radio

If you prefer not to install an app, you can stream radio directly through Safari. Many radio stations provide live streams on their websites.

1. Open Safari on your iPhone.
2. Navigate to the website of the radio station you want to listen to.
3. Look for a Live or Listen Live button.
4. Tap the button to start streaming.

Some stations may require a subscription or a free registration, but most offer basic streaming for free.

Setting Up Streaming Accounts: A Step by Step Guide

To get the most out of radio streaming apps, you'll often need to create an account. Below is a generic process that applies to most services.

1. Open the app and tap Sign Up or Create Account.
2. Enter your email address, create a password, and follow the on screen instructions.
3. Verify your email or phone number if prompted.
4. Complete the profile by adding your favorite genres or stations.
5. Choose a subscription plan if you want premium features.

Most services offer a free tier with ads and limited features, while paid plans unlock higher audio quality, offline listening, and ad removal.

Offline Listening: Downloading Radio for Later

Some streaming apps allow you to download stations or playlists for offline playback. This is particularly useful when traveling or in areas with limited connectivity.

TuneIn Offline Mode

With a TuneIn Premium subscription, you can download your favorite stations to your device. Once downloaded, they'll play without an internet connection.

iHeartRadio Offline Listening

iHeartRadio Premium users can download stations and podcasts for offline use. Simply tap the download icon next to the station.

Spotify Offline Radio

Spotify Premium lets you download entire playlists or albums for offline listening. While you can’t download a live radio stream, you can save the station’s generated playlist.

Customizing Your Radio Experience

Many apps provide personalization features that let you tailor the listening experience to your taste.

Creating Custom Stations

Both TuneIn and iHeartRadio allow you to build stations based on a theme, artist, or song. These stations adapt over time, learning from your listening habits.

Bookmarking Stations

Save your favorite stations for quick access. In TuneIn, tap the star icon; in iHeartRadio, tap the heart.

Using Smart Playlists

Apple Music and Spotify let you create smart playlists that automatically include songs or stations matching certain criteria.

Leveraging AirPlay, CarPlay, and Bluetooth for Better Audio

Once you’ve found your favorite station, you can use Apple’s ecosystem to enjoy the audio elsewhere.

AirPlay to HomePods and Speakers

1. Ensure your AirPlay device is on the same Wi Fi network.
2. Swipe down from the top right of your iPhone to open Control Center.
3. Tap the AirPlay icon and select your speaker.
4. Start playing the radio; the audio will route to the chosen device.

CarPlay Integration

When you connect your iPhone to a CarPlay enabled vehicle, radio apps appear on the car’s display, allowing you to control playback via the car’s interface.

Bluetooth Headsets and Speakers

Pair your iPhone with a Bluetooth headset or speaker for a wireless listening experience. Once paired, the audio from any radio app will automatically route to the Bluetooth device.

Accessibility Features for Radio Listening

Apple’s accessibility features make radio listening inclusive for all users.

VoiceOver

With VoiceOver enabled, the iPhone reads out station names, play/pause status, and other controls, making it easier for visually impaired users to navigate.

Hearing Enhancements

Apps like TuneIn allow you to adjust the equalizer or add sound enhancements to improve clarity for users with hearing difficulties.

Battery Life Tips for Radio Streaming

Streaming audio can drain your iPhone’s battery faster than regular use. Here are some ways to conserve power:

- Turn on Low Power Mode in Settings.
- Lower the screen brightness while listening.
- Disable background app refresh for radio apps.

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