

Radio reception overseas

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BBC World Service

BBC World Service broadcasts around the world in English and many other languages, 24 hours a day. It has traditionally broadcast on short wave (SW), but nowadays, thanks to developments in technology, it is also available in some areas on other platforms – FM, medium wave, satellite, cable or digital radio. In some parts of the world, such as Australia and North America, the BBC no longer broadcasts on SW.

You can also listen to BBC World Service via its website: bbc.co.uk/worldservice. See the Radio Schedules section for details of the ways to listen in different parts of the world.

Short wave (SW)

To listen on SW you need a radio that covers the appropriate frequencies – many radios sold in the UK do not.

BBC World Service broadcasts in the following metre (m) bands. Frequencies are usually given in kilohertz (kHz), though some radios show them in Megahertz (MHz) – to convert kHz to MHz, simply divide by 1000.

90 m	3000 kHz (3 MHz)
49 m	6000 kHz (6 MHz)
41 m	7000 kHz (7 MHz)
31 m	9000 kHz (9 MHz)
25 m	11000 kHz (11 MHz)
22 m	13000 kHz (13 MHz)
19 m	15000 kHz (15 MHz)
16 m	17000 kHz (17 MHz)
13 m	21000 kHz (21 MHz)
11 m	26000 kHz (26 MHz)

SW reception can vary greatly from place to place. In some parts of the world there are many stations using frequencies that are quite close together, so it can be difficult to tune to the one you want. Reception can also vary from summer to winter, with different atmospheric conditions, and from day to night. In general, higher frequencies are better in daylight, while lower frequencies are better after dark. You may need to retune frequently.

Tuning accurately can be tricky with a tuning dial or bar, so it can help to use a radio with a digital display that shows the exact frequency in numerals and that has pre-set buttons to store the frequencies you are going to use most.

BBC World Service broadcasts on many SW frequencies simultaneously. Try tuning to all those available to find the best reception, and repeat this if the signal fades on the frequency you are listening to.

SW signals can be picked up many thousands of kilometres away, so in the UK it is possible to listen to SW broadcasts from around the world. Radio enthusiasts can find lists of stations in *World Radio TV Handbook* (from bookshops or www.wrth.com).

Getting the best SW reception

This is often a matter of experimenting, not just with tuning to different frequencies but also with the location of the radio and the aerial.

It is best to place the radio by a window, especially one facing the direction of the transmitter (see bbc.co.uk/worldservice for details of transmitter locations). Sometimes it can help to place the radio on a metal object such as a filing cabinet, although large metal constructions (such as fire escapes or lift shafts) can cause interference, and so can some domestic appliances (for example, microwave ovens and computers).

Most portable SW radios have a telescopic aerial, and you should make sure this is extended fully. To boost a weak signal you can buy a clip-on wire aerial, though this may also pick up unwanted signals that produce more interference. There is more information about aerial extensions on the FAQs page at bbc.co.uk/worldservice.

FM and medium wave (MW)

In some parts of the world, selected BBC World Service programmes can be heard on local FM and MW radio stations. In western Europe, the full service is broadcast on MW on 648 kHz.

See the **Radio Schedules** section of bbc.co.uk/worldservice for more information about what services are available in different regions.

Satellite and cable

BBC World Service is available via satellite in many parts of the world, including Europe, the Middle East and the Gulf, Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, the USA and Australasia. In some European countries it can be also heard on cable FM frequencies.

Digital radio

The BBC's English for Europe service broadcasts on digital radio in parts of Europe. This uses the Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM) system, which allows digital broadcasting on LW, MW and SW. To listen, you need a DRM digital radio. For more information, visit www.drm.org.

In the UK, you can listen to BBC World Service on all the digital platforms: DAB digital radio, DTT (Freeview), satellite, cable and broadband. For more information, see bbc.co.uk/digital.

Internet

You can listen to the World Service and any of the BBC's UK radio stations on your computer. Go to bbc.co.uk/radio or any BBC radio website and use the BBC Radio Player. For more information about the Radio Player, see bbc.co.uk/radio/help.

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