

iOS 17.4: New Details Of The iPhone Update Reveal A Surprise Catch

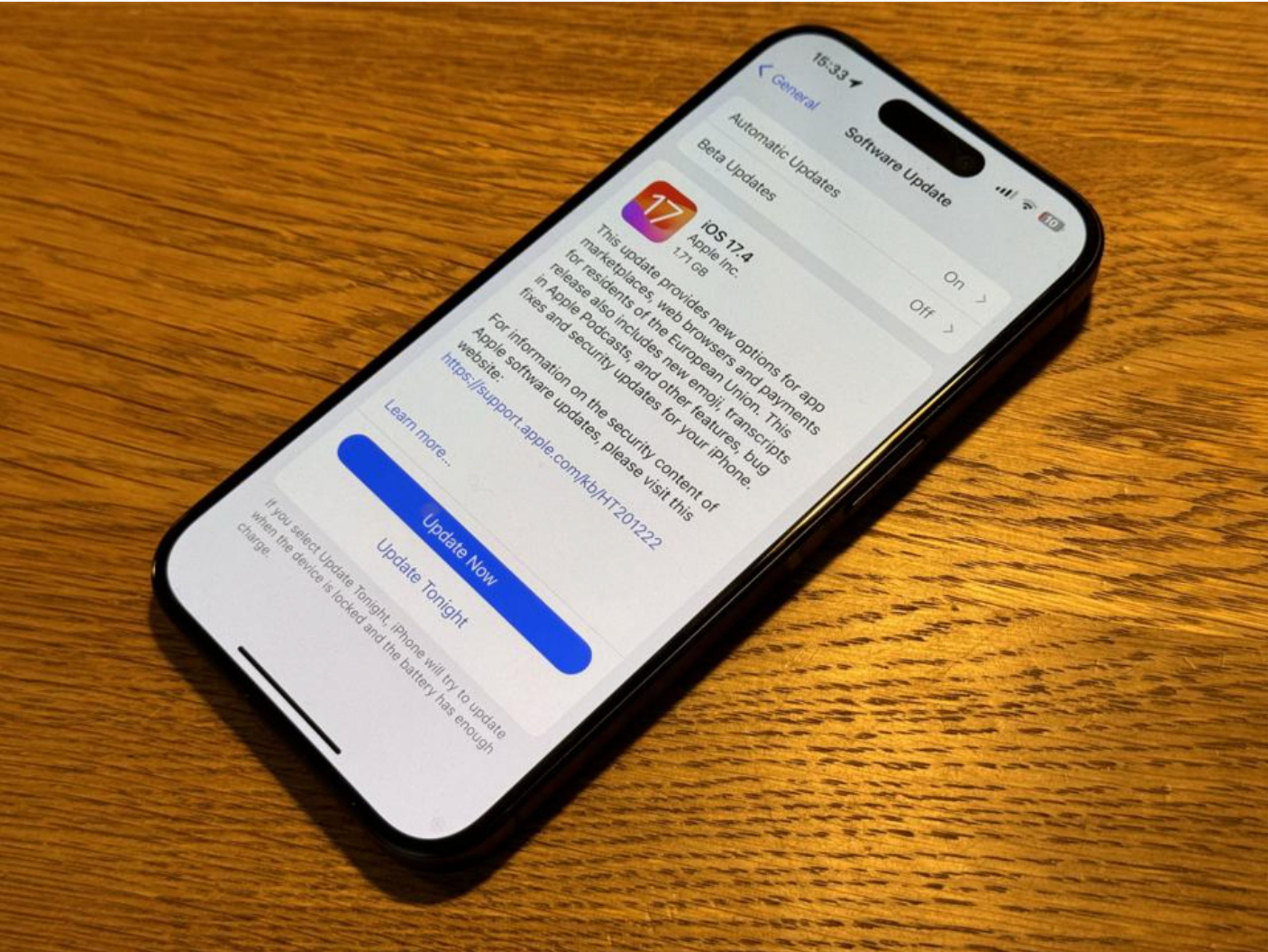
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The new iPhone update, iOS 17.4, is finally here. You can read full details of what’s in it [here](#). But it’s now emerged that some of the biggest changes come with a catch. If you’re an EU user and you like the alternative app marketplaces which the update provides access for, traveling for too long could pose a problem.



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These new marketplaces are one of the biggest changes in the history of the iPhone and allow users based in the European Union to install apps from places which aren’t the Apple App Store.

In a [support document](#) spotted by [MacRumors](#) describing the situation, though, Apple warns that access to these marketplaces is not a given if you’re traveling.

In a section headed Availability in the European Union, it makes clear that this is a geographical thing: “The country or region of your Apple ID must be set to one of the countries or regions of the European Union, and you must be physically located in the European Union.”

All very well, but what if you’re on the move. The document goes on, “If you leave the European Union for short-term travel, you'll continue to have access to alternative app marketplaces for a grace period. If you're gone for too long, you'll lose access to some features, including installing new alternative app marketplaces. Apps you installed from alternative app marketplaces will continue to function, but they can't be updated by the marketplace you downloaded them from.”

So, an app that you’d downloaded will still work after the grace period has elapsed and you’re still away from the EU, but you won’t be able to update it.

There’s a lot of vagueness here. How long is the grace period being the most pertinent question that needs to be answered. I mean, it’s not likely to be two weeks or less—everyone wants to go on vacation, right?—but is it a month, a year, or what?

I’ve asked Apple for details and will update if I hear back.

These new marketplaces are almost ready, with Mobivention in Germany expected to launch a marketplace on Thursday, March 7, the day the relevant legislation goes live. MacPaw has its own, due in April. Epic Games has announced plans for its own marketplace, but no date is set.