

Sometimes we need to organize information and plan tasks, events and actions for things like vacation trips or home repair/remodeling projects.

iCal, which every Apple user has, has several features which can help do this:

Separate Calendars w/different Colors

You can use a separate calendar/color for-

- Airline flights/times
- Lodging reservations
- Events/tours
- Different cities
- To-Dos or incomplete items

And you can turn selected ones on/off to reduce clutter and/or enhance the ability to coordinate items.

Notes

Notes can contain addresses, phone numbers, confirmation numbers, URLs, etc. They can be VERY long - for instance, you can just cut and paste hotel information from a website or confirmation email (although images won't be included).

To-Dos

You can create To Do items for items that still need to be taken care of. You can either use iCal's To Do function, or simply create a separate calendar for To Dos and incomplete items.

Alarms

You can set alarms on either To Dos or events to remind you of critical steps like getting Passports from the Safe Deposit box, holding mail and newspapers, etc.

Publish

You can publish your calendar so other people who need to know can access it. If you have a .Mac account, this is the easiest way, but you can also publish it free on iCalx in either public or password-protected form.

Time Zone Support

iCal can support events in different time zones. This can either be a feature or a really annoying complication, as I will illustrate.

I'll go through two examples of using iCal for vacation trip planning to illustrate.

The screenshot shows the iCal application window for August 2007. The calendar grid displays events as horizontal bars across days. On the left, a sidebar lists various calendars, with 'Hotel' selected. On the right, a 'To Dos by Due Date' list shows tasks like 'GET PASSPORTS' and 'PRINT BUS TICKETS' due on August 16, 2007. The calendar events include:

- Aug 16: Print Via PRINT BUS PASSPORTS
- Aug 18: Blue Horizon Vancouver (2:10 PM MFR-PDX AK2082, 4:47 PM PDX-YVR AK2036)
- Aug 19: Vancouver (5:30 PM Via Dept)
- Aug 20: Union Bank Inn Edmonton (5:30 PM Via arr Edmonton)
- Aug 21: City View B&B Calgary (12:00 PM Bus to Calgary)
- Aug 24: RM tour Calgary
- Aug 26-28: RM Tour- L, RM Tour- Banff, RM Tour- Banff
- Aug 29: Pacific Palisades RM Tour- Vancouver
- Aug 30: 7:05 AM YVR-PDX AK2151, 9:57 AM PDX-MFR AK2159

This window provides details for a 'Pacific Palisades' event. It includes the following information:

- Location:** Pacific Palisades
- all-day:**
- from:** 08/29/07
- to:** 08/30/07
- repeat:** None
- attendees:** None
- calendar:** Hotel
- alarm:** None
- url:** None

Additional notes at the bottom of the window state: '8/29 on voucher, 8/30 separate reservation', '604-688-0461', 'PACIFIC PALISADES HOTEL', '1277 ROBSON STREET', 'VANCOUVER BC V6E 1C4', 'Canada'.

- Canada Rail
- To Do
- Hotel
- Train
- Cities
- Airline/Bus

This is a zoomed-in view of the calendar for the dates August 29 to September 1. It shows the following events:

- Aug 29: Palisades
- Aug 30: Vancouver
- Aug 30: 7:05 AM YVR-PDX AK2151
- Aug 30: 9:57 AM PDX-MFR AK2159

This screenshot shows a daily view of the iCal calendar for the week of August 26 to September 1, 2007. The left sidebar shows the same calendar selection as the first screenshot. The main calendar area displays events as follows:

- Aug 26: RM Tour- L
- Aug 27: RM Tour-
- Aug 28: RM Tour-
- Aug 29: RM Tour-
- Aug 30: Vancouver, Pacific Palisades
- Aug 30: 7:05 AM YVR-PDX AK2151
- Aug 30: 9:57 AM PDX-MFR AK2159