

Bitcoin opens up the doors to a number of financial options you might not have previously thought possible

Bitcoin allows for fast, cheap, and international payments with ease. There are a number of ways to obtain Bitcoin but we **recommend all new users learn about how to use a Bitcoin exchange since they provide quick, round-the-clock access to Bitcoin buying and selling.**

What is a Bitcoin exchange?

Knowing how to buy bitcoin is an essential first step in getting started with the digital currency. Like many other assets, **Bitcoin can be bought and sold using an online service known as an exchange.** Today, we want to share guide, how to choose the best bitcoin exchange since this is such an important step.

Remember, these are just suggestions to help you make the right decision. In the end, things can always change based on the exchange and the market.

Generally speaking, buying bitcoin within your home country might be the easiest in terms of bank deposits and withdrawals but many prefer to use foreign exchanges for aspects related to increased privacy.

Where the exchange you use is based is important, as laws and regulations can vary country to country. **For a full list of exchange country locations, go to <https://www.bitcoin.com/buy-bitcoin> and from the dropdown menu, select your country to start.**

After registering your account on an exchange you will want to link your account with a bank account so you can deposit and withdraw fiat currency to buy and sell Bitcoin. If this is not something you want to do then try to find alternate deposit methods like gift cards or Paypal which is accepted on some exchanges.

Here are some other things to keep in mind when selecting a Bitcoin exchange:

Exchange fees

You will want to make sure that the exchange fees are within reason and aren't exorbitant compared to the rest of the market.

Fees can change overtime and can vary from one exchange to another. Some exchanges charge additional service fees on top of bitcoin transaction fees (which are inherent in every bitcoin transaction and serve to reward miners for their labor and resources used in verifying transactions).

Order book volume

Most exchanges with a decent customer base will publish their order book. An order book is simply a list of buy and sell orders on the exchange that are being offered. **A higher volume order book is an indicator that people are using the exchange and the exchange has liquidity.**

Although this is an important indicator, an exchange that doesn't publish an order book doesn't mean it's not legit, it just might not have that function yet and/or has a smaller volume than other bigger exchanges.

Is the exchange transparent?

Exchanges that are fully transparent will publish cold storage addresses or audit information on how to verify their bitcoin reserves. Bitcoin audits are a good way for an exchange to prove to customers that they have liquidity and can cover all bitcoin exchange sales, and aren't running a fractional exchange.

How quickly will you get the bitcoins after purchasing them?

This may vary person-to-person, but it's good to know how long before the bitcoin will be sent to you after purchase.

Make sure to also check if the exchange offers 'locked in' pricing; meaning that the price you buy at remains the price you are charged — even if the bitcoins take a few days to arrive in your wallet or your sale takes a few days to arrive in your bank account.

Is anonymity important to you?

Staying completely anonymous is difficult, unless you buy locally from someone in cash through a person-to-person marketplace. Make sure to check if the exchange follows Know Your Customer (KYC) and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) laws in your country. If they do, then some identity information will have to be sent to them before buying.

Security is paramount

Knowing the exchange is secure is very important and shouldn't be overlooked.

Is the exchange site HTTPS or HTTP? For it to have a secure protocol it must be HTTPS.

Does the exchange offer secure logins along with two-factor authentication (2FA)? These are just a couple things to think about before selecting an exchange.

Is the exchange reputable?

This is an important question that can only be answered by discussing it with your peers. If you want to make sure the exchange has good customer reviews, **search for feedback about the exchange on internet forums such as the <https://www.reddit.com/r/btc/> or the <https://forum.bitcoin.com/>** If you can't find any feedback about it, ask in those forums if your peers have used it and what their experience was.

Avoiding fraud

Not becoming a victim should be a high priority. This means avoiding any scam exchanges that are designed to steal from you. Please read <https://www.bitcoin.com/guides/your-guide-to-avoiding-bitcoin-fraud> for more details.

Popular Exchanges by region:

- US/EU: Coinbase, Kraken, Gemini
- Greater China: ViaBTC, BTCChina
- Japan: BitFlyer

We hope this information is helpful when thinking about how to get started use an exchange. **Choosing an exchange is an important first step for all Bitcoiners.**

So, what are you waiting for?