How to Scan a QR Code From a PDF on iPhone, Android, Mac, and PC

PDFs containing QR codes are everywhere — boarding passes, invoices, event tickets. Here is how to decode them on any device without pointing your camera at a screen.

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The Problem With QR Codes in PDFs

QR codes show up in all kinds of documents: airline boarding passes, concert and event tickets, tax forms, government identity documents, payment invoices, and product registration cards. When that document lives as a PDF on your phone, tablet, or computer, you cannot simply point your camera at it. The QR code is already *on* your screen — you need to read it from a saved image, not from a live camera feed.

Even if you try pointing one phone at another phone displaying the PDF, the result is often unreliable. The screen refresh rate creates moiré interference patterns, glare from the backlight reduces contrast, and the slightest angle or distance error causes a failed scan. There is a better way for every platform.

iPhone and iPad

The cleanest method on iOS is a two-step process: capture, then decode from the gallery.

1. Open the PDF in any app — Files, Mail, Safari, or your airline app — and navigate to the page containing the QR code.
2. Take a screenshot: press the side button and the volume-up button simultaneously (or

side button + Home button on older models). The image is saved automatically to your Photos library.

3. Open a QR scanner app that supports gallery scanning. In **QR Code Reader Without Ads**, tap the image icon in the scanner screen to open your photo library, select the screenshot, and the app decodes the QR code instantly.

No second device required. The app is free and works fully offline.

Android

The process on Android mirrors iOS almost exactly.

1. Open the PDF and navigate to the QR code page.
2. Take a screenshot using the power + volume-down buttons (combination varies by manufacturer).
3. Open **QR Code Reader Without Ads**, tap the gallery icon, select your screenshot, and the code is decoded.

Alternatively, open the screenshot in Google Photos and tap the Lens icon — Google Lens can decode QR codes directly from saved images. Both approaches avoid any camera-at-screen issues.

Mac

macOS does not have a built-in QR decoder, but capturing a clean image is straightforward.

1. Open the PDF in Preview or any PDF viewer and zoom in so the QR code fills as much of the screen as possible.
2. Press **Cmd + Shift + 4** and drag to select just the QR code area. The screenshot is saved to your Desktop as a PNG.
3. Transfer the file to your iPhone or Android device via AirDrop, iCloud Drive, or any messaging app, then scan it with **QR Code Reader Without Ads** using the gallery mode.

Alternatively, upload the PNG to a browser-based QR decoder — several reputable ones exist as free web tools — or install a browser extension that adds QR decoding to the right-click menu.

PC and Windows

On Windows, use the Snipping Tool (search for it in the Start menu) or press **Win + Shift + S** to capture the QR code region. Save the image, then choose one of these paths:

- Upload the image to an online QR decoder website.
- Transfer the image to your phone and use **QR Code Reader Without Ads** in gallery mode — send the file via Google Drive, email, or a messaging app.
- Install a browser extension with QR decoding support and decode the image directly in Chrome or Edge.

Common Document Types That Contain QR Codes

- **Boarding passes** — IATA bar codes and QR codes encode your flight, seat, and check-in status. Airlines frequently include them in PDF confirmation emails.
- **Event tickets** — concert, festival, cinema, and sports tickets stored in email PDFs or wallet exports.
- **Tax and government documents** — some countries embed data-box QR codes (for example the Czech DS QR) or digital signature verification codes in official PDFs.
- **Payment invoices** — many invoices include a payment QR code encoding bank account, amount, and reference number.
- **Product registration cards** — link to warranty portals or product pages.
- **Digital identity documents** — vaccination certificates, insurance cards, and similar documents issued as PDFs with embedded QR verification codes.

Resolution Matters

Before scanning, make sure your screenshot or export captures the full-resolution page. If you zoom out to see the whole document before screenshotting, the QR code may be rendered at only 50–100 pixels square — too small for reliable decoding. Always zoom in so the QR code is large on screen before taking the screenshot. Most apps, including **QR Code Reader Without Ads**, handle standard-resolution screenshots perfectly, but a tiny thumbnail will fail even the best decoder.

QR Code Reader Without Ads — Gallery Scan Mode

The feature that makes all of the above workflows possible is gallery scanning: the ability to select an image from your photo library instead of using the live camera. **QR Code Reader Without Ads** includes this on both iOS and Android at no cost. Open the app, tap the image picker icon, choose the screenshot of your PDF page, and the result appears in seconds — no internet connection needed, no ads, no second device.

Find it on the App Store (search for QR Code Reader Without Ads, App Store ID 6757708053) or on Google Play (package com.lapnito.qr_reader).

Download QR Code Reader Without Ads free for iOS or Android — no ads, no tracking, and it works fully offline.

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