How to View Your Old QR Scan History on iPhone or Android

Scanned a QR code last week and forgot the URL? Here is what the built-in camera does and does NOT save, and how a dedicated QR app keeps your full scan history locally on your device.

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You Scanned It Last Week — Now What?

Picture this: you scanned a QR code on a restaurant menu two weeks ago and want to pull up that dish description again. Or you configured your home Wi-Fi from a QR sticker on the router, and now a friend wants the password. Or you scanned a boarding pass URL on the go and realized later you need it again. In every one of those situations, you reach for your phone and discover the same uncomfortable truth — there is no scan history to be found.

This is one of the most common frustrations with QR codes, and it does not have an obvious solution unless you know where to look.

What the Default Camera App Stores (Hint: Not Much)

On iPhone, the native Camera app recognizes QR codes instantly and shows a small banner at the top of the screen. Tap the banner and it opens Safari. That is it. There is no log, no history tab, no way to retrieve what you scanned yesterday. Apple does not record QR scan history anywhere in iOS — not in Photos, not in Safari history (unless you actually tapped and loaded the page), nowhere.

Android is more fragmented. The experience depends entirely on your phone manufacturer.

Google Pixel phones use Google Lens, Samsung devices have Bixby Vision, and other brands ship their own camera software. Most of them behave similarly to iPhone: they open the link immediately and keep no persistent record.

Google Lens: Partial Help at Best

Google Lens does maintain a 'recent searches' list, but it is tied to your Google account, it is not limited to QR codes, and it clears itself or gets buried under image searches fairly quickly. If you scanned something two weeks ago and did not act on it immediately, there is a good chance it is already gone from that list. It also requires you to be signed in to a Google account, which is not everyone's preference.

Samsung Bixby Vision and Other Manufacturer Apps

Samsung's Bixby Vision scans QR codes through the camera, but Bixby's history feature is mixed into all kinds of other Bixby activity. It is not a clean, searchable QR log. Other manufacturers — Xiaomi, OnePlus, Huawei — each have their own implementation, and few of them prioritize scan history as a feature.

Why a Dedicated QR App Handles This Better

Dedicated QR code reader apps are built around one specific use case: scanning codes and letting you do something useful with the results. Because that is their only job, they almost always include a proper scan history with timestamps and content types.

Here are the situations where having that history matters most:

- A **restaurant menu** you want to revisit without going back to the venue
- **Product information** from a package you already recycled
- A **boarding pass URL** you scanned in a rush at the airport
- A **Wi-Fi credential QR** you set up months ago and now need to share
- A **contact QR** from a business card you did not save properly
- Any **promotional link** from an ad or poster you passed on the street

How to Search and Filter Your QR History

Good QR apps let you do more than just scroll through a list. You can typically filter by date — 'show me everything from last Tuesday' — or by content type. A URL scan looks different from a Wi-Fi scan, a plain text QR, or a contact card. Being able to filter by type means you can find that Wi-Fi QR instantly instead of scrolling past fifty website links.

Local Storage vs. Cloud: The Privacy Angle

There is an important distinction between apps that store your scan history locally on your device versus apps that sync it to a cloud server. If your scans are stored only on-device, no one else can access them. No account required, no data sent to a company's servers, no privacy policy clause you have to worry about. For something as potentially sensitive as

scanning boarding passes, business contact cards, or internal company QR codes, local storage is clearly the better choice.

QR Code Reader Without Ads

One app that gets all of this right is **QR Code Reader Without Ads**, available for both iPhone and Android. It keeps a complete local history of every QR code you scan, stored entirely on your device. No account is required. No data leaves your phone. It also shows you the full URL before opening it, so you can decide whether to proceed — a small but important safety feature that most camera apps skip entirely. And as the name makes obvious, there are no ads anywhere in the app.

You can find it on the App Store and on Google Play. It is free.

The Bottom Line

If you have ever needed to retrieve a QR code you scanned in the past, you already know the pain. The built-in camera on both iPhone and Android is designed to open QR codes fast — not to remember them. For actual history that persists, is searchable, and stays private, a dedicated QR reader is the straightforward answer.

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

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