Good morning,

What is the cheapest way to travel? Airplane? Train? Or bus? None of them. It is hitchhiking. I hitchhiked around Japan for 2 weeks. About 50 drivers gave me a ride, and I moved total of more than 2,800 miles, which is like from Los Angeles to New York. Understanding this information will help you open your mind to hitchhiking and positively change your attitude about hitchhiking. Today I will talk about how to hitchhike and the benefit of hitchhiking.

Let me start with preparation

Before you go hitchhiking, you have to research how you get to the destination, which roads you use, how far it is, and so on. If you hitchhike around the U.S., you need to research the laws also. Each state, city, and town has **subtle** differences in their laws that **govern** the roadways. The website Digihitch.com shows the most detailed information in each state. Hitchhiking is legal in green areas. In yellow areas, it is legal while off the traveled portion of the road. But Hitchhiking is illegal in red areas, so you cannot start hitchhiking from Las Vegas.

Packing light is also important. Hitchhiking is not only moving by riding in cars but also walking to the spot where you have more chance to find a ride. You have to walk much more than you think. When I was hitchhiking, sometimes I walked for 8 hours to go to a traffic-**laden** street. So the lighter you pack, the happier you will be. At least you need to pack a black marker, notebook, map, bottle of water, small sleeping bag, and extra change of clothes depending on the season. Be careful about clothes. Even though you need to be clean, you don't need to be fashionable. People pick up hitchhikers that dress like they do.

Now you are ready to go hitchhiking, let’s look at how you hitchhike on the road

Each time you have to make a sign. It shows people that you're literate, and you're on a planned trip. Write your destination clearly, but you don't have to write the final destination. You will need to travel in several cars to get to your final one.

After that, you have to find a good hitchhiking spot, which is the most important step to be successful. Get on the side of the road that is in the direction you are traveling. A nearby stop sign or stoplight will give drivers a chance to look you over. So you can give them as much time as possible to make their decision.

There are several poses you can represent, such as sticking out your **thumb** or put up your notebook. Look drivers in the eye and smile. Make sure the drivers can see your eyes and smile. Keeping this pose, often you will wait for a while.

When the car pulls over, make sure you choose your ride. Don’t accept every ride that pulls over. Ask to know as much about the driver as you can. Only when you can trust the driver, do you hop into the car.

In the car, first you have to talk with your driver about where he or she will drop you off. **Insist** on getting dropped off somewhere safe like a gas station parking lot. Or you can ask the drivers where you should get dropped off. So you can continue hitchhiking from the right hitchhiking spot.

Now you clearly understand how to hitchhike, let’s move on to the benefit of hitchhiking

Even though there are many benefits of hitchhiking like saving money, the most valuable skill you can learn from hitchhiking is how to connect with many different types of people. You will be surprised that a wide range of people give you a ride.

During my hitchhike, drivers from 23 to 71 years old gave me a ride. I was surprised with 71 year-old man who has been married four times. He was very energetic and enjoyed his life. He talked about how his life is dramatic. I was really inspired. Once a family gave me a ride. Even though the husband had a positive attitude about hitchhiking, the wife opposed giving me a ride. Actually, she was angry with me. In the car, I really wanted to run away from this uncomfortable situation as soon as possible. So Hitchhikers are put in situations where they are forced to practice their social skills over and over again. As you are put in these situations, your communication skills will get better and better.

Let me summarize

Hitchhiking is more complicated travel than other methods. So you need to be more organized to be successful. However, you can get more benefit from hitchhiking, especially social skills. Now you know more about hitchhiking and why I recommend it. I believe that hitchhiking makes you grow more mentally and spiritually than other travels.