

er refusals, you know you've done just about as well as you can. Then you can return to the dealer you liked the most to buy the product. Unlike shops in cities, those at airports and borders offer few bargains (other than liquor and cigarettes) because there is no competition. Avoid them.

Watch out for a vendor who asks you what you paid for something and then tells you he'd have charged you half, after which, having convinced you he's a fair dealer, he proceeds to rip you off on other items. First find out if his product and the one you already bought are indeed identical. If they are, try to return yours and then hold the vendor to his word.

Many people say that bargaining opportunities are best in the morning before the vendors get tired and grumpy. In my experience this rule isn't reliable. If a guy has had a slow day, he'll really want to sell something, and you find your best bargains when you want to buy less than he wants to sell. Sometimes you'll do best by coming back several times during the day.

Haggling aggressively will save you a lot of cash. Time and again I've seen people pay two or even three times the price that better bargainers have paid. If you master the material in this chapter, you'll easily save the cost of the book. But remember that haggling is a game. It doesn't pay to get upset or unfriendly; the vendor will give you a better deal if he likes you. If he's not busy, he'll be happy to shoot the breeze with you; so take your time. Rushing will bring you only hostility abroad, where the pace of life is slower and easier than it is at home. As much as haggling is a game, it's an art. It should always be a pleasant pastime.

If you really want to meet the common people and gain true insight into their nature, you must have a reasonable understanding of their language. If you want to read their newspapers, enjoy their literature, or join clubs to learn jungle survival, first aid, crafts, or mountaineering, you generally can't depend on your native tongue.

You don't have to learn five hundred languages to be able to talk with foreigners, though. Spanish will get you by all over Latin America, and French will be adequate in North Africa and a major part of the South Pacific. A few words of Arabic will get you through the Middle East, and English is good for basic communication in cities almost everywhere else.

Just a few weeks of study can lay the groundwork you need to pick up a foreign language on your own. You can get books at bookstores or language schools. Some of them are almost self-teaching in all but pronunciation, which you'll learn amazingly fast by listening to locals. Comic books are also great for learning languages; they are interesting graded texts.

## Staying Healthy

You've got to respect the diseases in undeveloped countries. These, much more than snakes, sharks, and knife-wielding Bedouins, are the real dangers abroad. Happily, there are ways to prevent and cure just about every disease you may come up against, and it's the very rare (and usually ignorant) traveler who has any real problems.

In general, medical care in foreign countries is less available and of lower quality than what you're used to at home. Just as you shouldn't drive a car abroad if you don't know anything about basic repairs, so you shouldn't travel if you don't know anything about first aid. In fact, all human beings should know a little about medicine whether they travel or not.

If you've got a simple problem like athlete's foot or ringworm, you can go to a druggist for advice. By this I mean a licensed pharmacist and not an employee who's been left to tell you about shades of lipstick. But if you've got a serious ailment, head straight for a doctor, preferably one who's been educated in a developed country and not at the local butcher shop. I've seen simple foot infections turn into candidates for the knife for want of medical care. I've also seen knife-happy doctors prepared to operate for what turned out to be a mild case of bursitis that was relieved when they pulled it.

Travelers can find doctors by asking among resident foreigners and at embassies, military bases, classy hotels, hospitals, and clinics. Medical care is often free and is always cheap. In Costa Rica, for example, I got an x-ray check for tuberculosis and chest cancer; a complete physical that included urine, feces, and blood examinations; shots for tetanus and smallpox; and hundreds of malaria pills—all for seventy cents.

The best way to treat bad water is to let the visible junk, if any, settle out and then boil the water for ten minutes. This kills everything. Shaking the boiled water or pouring it back and forth between two clean containers will settle it and thus improve the taste. Chlorine pills are slightly less effective and may be subject to spoilage. Recent studies have shown that the potency of chlorine pills is reduced by half if they are exposed for a day to temperatures above 100° F. In addition, their shelf life is two years—and nobody knows how long the pills you buy have been sitting on a shelf.

The more effective substitute is iodine in pills (follow the directions) or dissolved and sold as ordinary tincture of iodine. The tincture, long used as an antiseptic, is available almost everywhere and is much cheaper than the pills. Use eight drops per quart of clear water or 16 if the water is cloudy, and wait half an hour before drinking the mixture. You'll probably like the taste better if you add a few drops of lemon juice. There are about 450 drops in an ounce; so a half-ounce bottle is enough to purify about thirty quarts of water. If you carry iodine in a plastic bottle, the bottle will turn yellow, but this is no problem. Just be sure the cap doesn't come off inside your pack.

### MEDICAL KIT

For general purposes, in addition to aspirin and bandages, you may wish to have a small amount of cotton gauze and adhesive tape, water purification tablets or tincture of iodine, and an antacid. In malaria areas you'll need insect repellent or mosquito coils and antimalarial tablets. If you haven't brought Cutter repellent, you should try to find a preparation that contains N,N-diethyl-methyl-toluamide, the active ingredient most effective against mosquitoes. The

antimalarial tablets should contain a chloroquine salt, usually chloroquine phosphate. This is sold abroad under a multitude of trade names, but you'll usually get the best price if you simply ask at a pharmacy for chloroquine. Tablets are available in dosages of either 250 or 500 milligrams. Any region in the tropics should be assumed to be malariaous unless you have reliable information to the contrary.

### INOCULATIONS

Inoculations provide protection against many of the worst diseases. To prevent getting jabbed with a rusty needle at a foreign airport, properly enter all your shots in your yellow international vaccination certificate. The shots you'll need depend on your travel plans; your doctor or public-health center can advise you on what to get. It's not a good idea to pump your body with vaccines you don't need. If you're traveling with children, get special medical advice. In addition, the *Travel Information Manual* has information on local inoculation requirements and also on currently infected areas.

**RABID ANIMALS** Beware of rabid dogs. Unlike healthy ones, which bark and run, rabid dogs often show no fear. Pick up a stick if you see a dog acting crazy and avoid him completely. If you are bitten, especially for no apparent cause, try to capture the dog alive and keep it for ten days. If the dog dies, you can assume it was rabid; and you should then seek treatment immediately. There is a way of testing the dog's brain to see if it was rabid, but I personally would get the treatment no matter what the results of the test, unless it was done in a developed country by a technician that inspired my utmost confidence. You don't screw around with rabies. Once the symptoms appear, death is all but certain.

### HITCHHIKING

I've tried all the above modes of transportation, and for me hitching is the best. By sticking out your thumb, you magically transform the world into one consisting exclusively of those who are willing to go out of their way to help other people. Drivers will take you to interesting little towns and roadside restaurants full of local color and down-home cooking.

Hitchhiking abroad is generally both easy and legal. Often you can cover much more ground in a day and in greater comfort than you would by taking buses or trains. Because you haven't laid out any money, you're more likely to get out to interesting places you otherwise would have missed, places few travelers ever see.

Unlike at home, the thumb sign is not universal on foreign highways. In fact, it's actually considered obscene in some areas. More often you use the palm "stop" signal or simply wave the car down. You must ask in each location for the most reliable method, but when in doubt the last is probably the best. It's wise to wear light-colored clothes, especially at night when hitching is difficult; to avoid sunglasses, which prevent you from establishing eye contact with the drivers; and to look as straight as possible. If you have too much luggage, it's hard to hitch. With no bags,

of course, sometimes even a healthy dog will bite if provoked. If you think this is the case, check back later to see how the dog is. If you're bitten by a normally peaceful dog like a squirrel, you should be very suspicious. If I were bitten and couldn't catch the animal, I would get the rabies treatment. Dr. Sigmund concurs with this judgment.

The treatment consists of fourteen painful shots in the stomach. If you feel you need them, get to a competent doctor right away. One woman who got the series in Indonesia developed an infection after the tenth shot. To get better treatment, she wisely flew to Singapore and started the series all over again.

### PAMPHLETS

The U.S. Department of State publishes a series of pamphlets on each and every country in the world right down to the Comoro Islands (pop. 60,000). Entitled "Background Notes," they are complete and surprisingly unbiased. Fairly sketchy on culture, but what do you want for 50¢?

### METRIC CONVERSIONS

1 lb. = 0.45 kilograms	1 kg. = 2.2 lbs.
1 oz. = 28 grams	
1 quart = 0.95 liters	
1 mile = 1.6 kilometers	1 km. = 0.62 miles, or about 5/8 mile
1 inch = 2.5 centimeters	1 cm. = 0.34 in.
1 meter = 39.4 inches	3.3 feet = 30.5 cm.

—courtesy of "TRAVELING CHEAPLY" by Rick Berg

maybe you're a bum. With one, you're a traveler. With two or more, you're a pain in the ass.

On the highway the best places to stand are those where the traffic is relatively slow and where the drivers can see you well before they reach you. The intersection of an entrance ramp and a highway is an ideal spot, since you get both sets of traffic and there's plenty of room for cars to pull over. In cities you can hitch at red lights or at gas stations.

Mixed couples make ideal hitching companions, since they get rides from people who would be afraid of picking up two guys.

Even in rural areas, it's often best not to hitch on the highway. Gas stations, rest stops, roadside restaurants, and police checkpoints provide excellent hitching opportunities. Two people can split up, with one on the road and the other asking drivers who have stopped at these places. Such places also afford shelter from the rain, and frequently you can eat or sleep at them. They're especially good at night, when it's hard for drivers to see you unless you're at a spot where the road is lit. Proprietors and police will often help you get a ride, so it's wise to stay on their good side. If crowds gather, it's best to move on.

There are a few other places where hitching is especially good, such as at borders and ferry landings.

**How to hitch**

LANGUAGE Carry as little as possible. Try and keep it down to just your frame-pack, or at the most, one hand item as well. I know plenty of people who have hitched carrying a frame-pack, suitcase, camera bag and portable typewriter, but it's not a good general rule. A lot of cars won't stop because they simply don't have room for your luggage.

ROAD TACTICS This is the most important thing of all and while plenty of experienced hitchers might argue that you can get away with any sort of appearance because people want to pick up your way for a kick, or that if a driver wants to stop to help you on your way he's not going to worry about extra pieces of luggage, they'll agree unanimously that you have to choose your thumbing position carefully.

First (and most obviously, though it's horrifying how many fools do it), don't hitch on a bend. There are three reasons. One, it's deadly. Cars cut through bends and you can get killed. Two, drivers are concentrating too much on the problem of getting through the bend to be worried about anyone trying to stop them from the side. Third, even if the driver was stupid enough to want to stop on a bend, the law forbids him to do so.

Second, choose your road edge carefully. Drivers aren't inclined to stop in the middle of the road, so you must pick a position, when possible, which has a nice safe edge for them to run off on to, and the more of their car they can get off the road when they stop the more they like it. And the smoother the area the better. Drivers don't like running off the road into mud, or pot-holes, or into a puddle of water when they don't know how deep it is.

Third, when you're trying for a ride, try properly. My experience has been that I get rides when I'm standing up and looking like I want to go somewhere. You might one when you're lying on the ground with your feet up on your pack, lazily devouring a bottle of wine, with a dairy stuck behind your ear and nonchalantly waving your free hand up above the grass, but the odds are right against you.

HOW TO WIN THE CAR RACE My technique depends upon my constitution. Normally I use my thumb—always my right thumb

regardless of which side of the road I'm on—but when I'm feeling a little peevish I sometimes change to a regular, floating wave of my whole hand which, if the driver happens to be feeling in the same mood, seems to work wonders.

country identification This is purely a matter of choice. I've done one trip with the international AUS for Australia attached to my pack and two cars stopped specifically because the drivers had relatives in Sydney. The question is, how many cars don't stop because of it? Lots of people carry small flags or national emblems and one friend of mine went through Europe like a rocket, dressed in a suit and carrying a small suitcase with a mouse attached which simply read "US student." Perhaps you can approach the problem in terms of international political opinion. Try and figure how popular your country is in Europe before you mount a sign.

WITH A CAR STOPS A lot of drivers who have stopped for you are nevertheless in a hell of a hurry. Most drivers pull up fifty or a hundred yards beyond you. Never risk losing a ride by wandering in a suit and carrying a small suitcase with a mouse attached which simply read "US student." Perhaps you can approach the problem in terms of international political opinion. Try and figure how popular your country is in Europe before you mount a sign.

WHEN YOU'RE STOPPED If you're stuck in a traffic jam, never mind. It doesn't matter what the driver has said—"I'm going as fast as I can." "I'm in a hurry." "It'll be a slow trip"—yes is the one word which is the nearest thing to an answer. And keep smiling. FAST DRIVERS If you make the mistake of getting in with a fast one who you reckon is taking you both on a one-way ride and it happens just about every trip, politely indicate that you want out. If he won't stop of course I understand what you're trying to say, but a little more obvious and a little less polite and make sounds which suggest you're about to throw up all over his upholstery. That usually drives the point home. And perhaps saves your life.

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