

# Hitchhiking In Japan



James  
hitchhiking

Japan is a great country for sightseeing and travel – if you can afford it. Transportation costs are at least double that of the USA. It costs around US \$85 just to travel 300 KM (about 190 miles) by the “bullet train” (*Shinkansen* in Japanese). Want to save some doe and meet people? Try hitchhiking! I do and I love it!

I first came to Japan in 1972 while in the US military stationed near Tokyo. A couple years later I decided to become a missionary to the Japanese people and tell them about Jesus Christ. Missionaries need to “live by faith”. This also means to live within one’s income. I needed to travel the country to “preach the Gospel” but could not always afford public transportation. My partner and I often opted to hitchhike. We usually got to our destination that day, and if we didn’t, often the person that picked us up took us to their home where we spent the night and sometimes several days.



With Shizuka



Yutaka and Ayumi  
who visited my  
home.



Couple who took me  
from Otsu City to  
Ishikawa  
Prefecture



First trip 1998!

I wish I had kept a record of all my adventures hitchhiking in Japan. If I had, I would have a book by now which might have even been a best seller. LOL! At the very least, it would have made interesting reading for me in my old age. I will be 67 in June this year of 2017.

I define hitchhiking as getting rides from total strangers. Therefore it does not include rides from associates, friends or family.



Take and Nami,  
Toyama Prefecture,  
2001



With Russian  
Gennady



Eiji and Miki



A young couple on  
a coastal road of  
the Sea of Japan

### **What kind of people pick me up?**

Kind people, unselfish people, people who care about others. Some are fond of Westerners, some study English and want to practice using it, some lived in the USA and want to repay the kindness they received from Americans, some have hitchhiked in their university days and understand people who do, some have broken hearts (often marital problems or broken love relationships) and wish to pour out their hearts to somebody, some are lonely, and some know they are prone to be sleepy driving on the expressway and wish to have someone to talk with in order to help them stay awake! Some drivers have correctly identified me as a Christian missionary even before I tell them so! They are usually the most open to hearing the Message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the Bible than most Japanese. To meet such people and have an

opportunity to share the Truth with them makes it worth all the discomfort of the hot sun, rain, wind and snow I sometimes face while hitchhiking.



College friends



Chinami who I am  
still in touch  
with.



Chieharu who took  
me to Kanazawa  
from Shiga



Two girls in  
Toyama

How do I hitchhike? Read a [page of tips I compiled!](#)

Since August of 2003 I have been keeping [statistics of my travels.](#)

My blog documenting [many of my adventures hitchhiking.](#)