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Hitchhiking (also known as thumbing, tramping, hitching, autostop or thumbing up a ride) is way of travel that deals with asking people, usually strangers, for a ride in their automobile a distance that may either be short or long. The latter may require many rides from different people; a ride is usually but not always free. Hitchhiking is ultimately popular among young people and can be very entertaining, but requires at least basic knowledge of local culture and highly developed communication skills.

If one wishes to indicate that they need a ride, they must simply make a hand gesture. In North America, the gesture is to stick one of their thumbs upward. For example in other parts of the world, it is more common to use a gesture where the index finger is pointed at the road. This cultural difference stems partly from an alternate offensive meaning for the thumbs up gesture in parts of Europe and Asia. Speaking of culture, hitchhiking was already presented in a number of books, songs, and films, and actually is not part of counter-culture, but rather the part of society itself. Many famous people were hitchhikers as well. By the way, the most famous hitchhiker ever was Che Guevara.

But it isn't as easy as it looks from your seat. In some places one can hitchhike for hours without any result.

It also can be risky as well. But main problem that any hitchhiker is forced to deal with is language. It can be okay in West Europe, but the further East you get, less and less people will be able to understand your English. For example, you won't be able to leave Russia without learning some catchphrases and basic knowledge of Cyrillic alphabet. A person travelling through Germany may have similar problems. Practically any country has dark corners, which are unexpectedly hard to leave. Nevertheless, you can find more brilliant English language in Holland and Scandinavia, than in GB itself.

So, is knowledge of Spanish, French and German on a decent level essential to cope with in Europe? No. The notorious language barrier is not as big as its reputation. You just need to follow some simple rules, and you'll never be in trouble.

1. Speak slowly, simply, politely: Speak with simple words, pronouncing every letter. Make single nouns work as entire sentences and begin each request with PLEASE (e.g. "Bitte, toilet ?")

2. Can the slang: American dialect has become filled with slang not familiar to most Europeans. The sentence "Can the slang," for example, would baffle the average European.

3. Use internationally understood words: Many Europeans will draw a blank if you say "vacation," but light bulbs turn on when you say "holiday." If you say "restroom" or "bathroom," you will get no room — "toilet" is direct, simple, and understood.

4. Be melodramatic and not self-conscious: Exaggerate the local accent and use hand signals and body language to communicate. In France you will communicate more effectively (and have more fun) by sounding like Inspector Clouseau (and the locals will not be insulted). Use whatever French you do know. In Italy be melodic and exuberant. You must be uninhibited. Self-consciousness kills communication.

5. Figure things out: Most major European languages are related and come from Latin. The French word for Monday (our "day of the moon") is Lundi (lunar day). The Germans say the same thing — Montag. Sonne is sun, so Sonntag is Sunday. If "buon giorno" means good day, "zuppa del giorno" is soup of the day.

6. Practice: Read time schedules, posters, multilingual signs, graffiti in bathrooms, and newspaper headlines. Develop your ear for foreign languages by tuning in to the other languages on a multilingual tour. It's a puzzle. The more you play, the better you get.

7. Use a notepad: Words and numbers are much easier understood when they are written. To repeatedly communicate something difficult and important (such as medical instructions, "I'm a strict vegetarian," "boiled water," "well-done meat," "your finest ice cream"), write it in the local language on your notepad.

8. Go with your educated guess: The key is to see most communication problems as multiple-choice questions. Make an educated guess at the meaning of a message and proceed confidently as if you understand it correctly.

9. Fake it: Faking it applies to rudimentary things like instructions on customs forms, museum hours, and menus. With this approach you will find that 80 percent of the time you are correct. And if you are wrong, it does not really matter (and your trip will become much more interesting!).

10. Relax: Don't worry about making mistakes, and just try to relax. You will be surprised at how well you can communicate with a 20 word vocabulary by just making an effort and breaking the ice.

All information that we gathered via magazines, internet and people showed us quite a conclusion. European Union was created due to high integration level, similar cultural and civilization level. And nowadays it's a whole state problem – to remove language barriers.

You can't be successful unless you have proper education and communicative skills. It's just not profitable. And therefore, Europe evolves.

Literature references

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