


[Subscribe](#)
[About Us](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Search

GO

[Advanced Search](#)
[Home](#) | [Money](#)

## Ride-sharing Strategies for the Holidays

By Emily Brandon

Posted 11/30/06

The word hitchhiker brings to mind someone standing on the side of the road soliciting rides from passing vehicles. But hitching a ride in the 21st century isn't likely to begin with an outstretched thumb or a handwritten note on a college bulletin board. Looking for a ride increasingly involves typing a request on an Internet message board. Craigslist [www.craigslist.org]—by far the most popular place to seek or offer a ride—has about 20,000 ride-share posts a month, which swell to 30,000 at peak travel times like Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Related Links
<a href="#">More from Money &amp; Business</a>

So, if you still haven't booked your holiday travel this year, here's a guide to the low-cost world of ride sharing.

**Save money.** The average person makes nine trips of at least 50 miles each year, which tend to cost about 53 cents per mile, according to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics. But carrying extra people going in the same direction can slash those costs. Wendianne Eller, 26, a Spanish teacher in Oakland, Calif., who has been ride sharing for four years, is usually able to get to Los Angeles for \$25 or \$30, considerably less than Greyhound's \$45.50, Amtrak's \$56, and Southwest's \$49. Eller usually uses craigslist, where it's free to post offers or requests for rides. Other sites may charge. For instance, Ridester.com [www.ridester.com] imposes a \$2 ticket fee and a processing fee amounting to 9.5 percent of the driver's asking price. However, even with the processing fee factored in, it is still usually a cheaper way to travel than the bus, the lowest-cost alternative.

**Save fuel.** Sharing a car not only saves money but helps you do your part to reduce fuel consumption. According to Steven Schoeffler, the executive director of eRideShare.com [www.erideshare.com], ride sharing "reduces traffic, reduces pollution, reduces greenhouse gases, and reduces dependence on foreign oil." Max Fox, the president of Datasphere Corp., which owns the website Carpoolworld.com [www.carpoolworld.com], says the site saw a big spike in registered trips when Hurricane Katrina hit and gas prices went through the roof. "Sudden high gas prices definitely motivate people to search for solutions," Fox says. "But then they get used to the high prices."

**Meet new people.** Sharing a car can keep you entertained and alert during a long trip. "When you're sharing such a small space, it's a unique way to get to know people," says Cassie Helfrich, 24, an environmental science student at the University of Washington in Seattle who travels to Portland, Ore., almost every other weekend to see her boyfriend. "You get to hear people's life stories, and everyone is doing something interesting." Wendianne Eller has made several new friends by sharing rides as well. "I have people I've taken with me I've actually stayed in contact with because they are interesting people," she says.

**Service to your door.** When you fly, you have to factor in transportation to and from the airport. Taking the train means finding someone to pick you up at the station. But ride sharing offers transportation directly to your destination or another mutually agreed-upon spot. "I ended up saving money, but my motive was convenience," says Nisheet Goyal, 27, an engineer in Austin who found a ride-share to Houston at Ridester.com. "Even if I took the Greyhound, the timing was inconvenient, and I would have to go from where the bus stop was to wherever I was going in Houston."

[Share this article on Facebook](#)
[Bookmark this article with del.icio.us](#)

 1 | [2](#) [Next »](#)
[Print](#) | [Email Article](#) | [Respond](#) | [Newsletter](#)

# Get 4 FREE Issues

First Name	Last Name	
Address		City
State Select	Zip	Email

