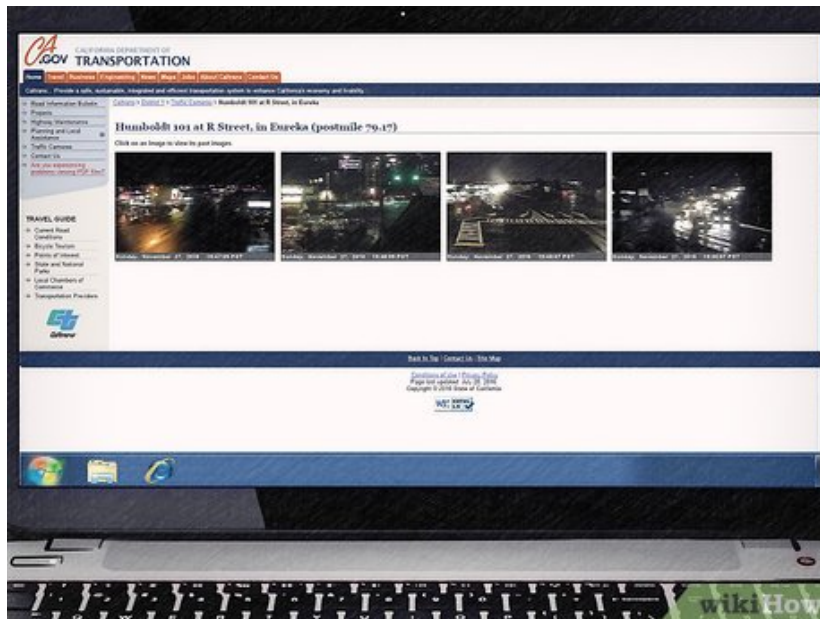


How to Avoid Traffic

As more people choose to live in urban areas, highway and city traffic has increasingly become a problem. When there is no choice but to drive to your destination, you can take precautions to avoid routes that will be congested either...

Method 1 of 3:

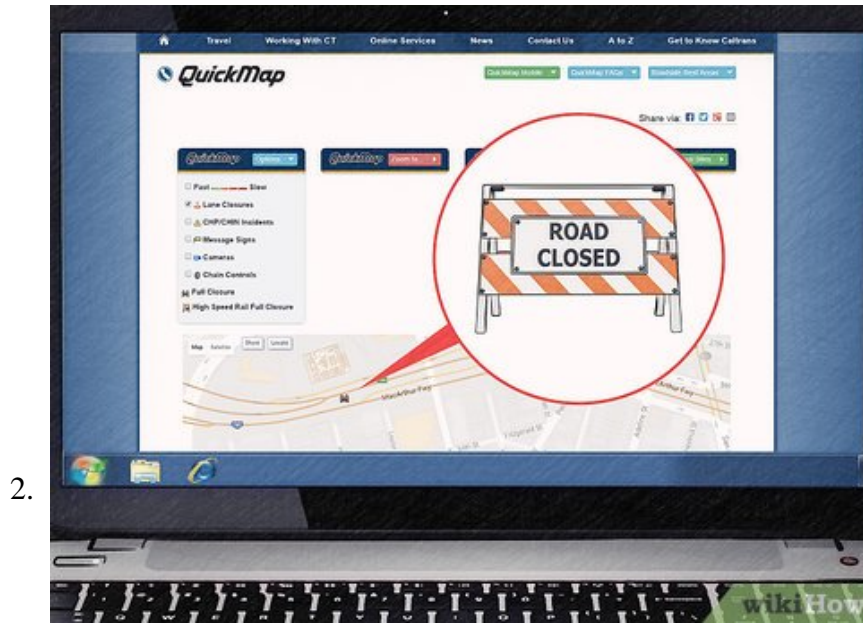
Planning Your Drive



1.

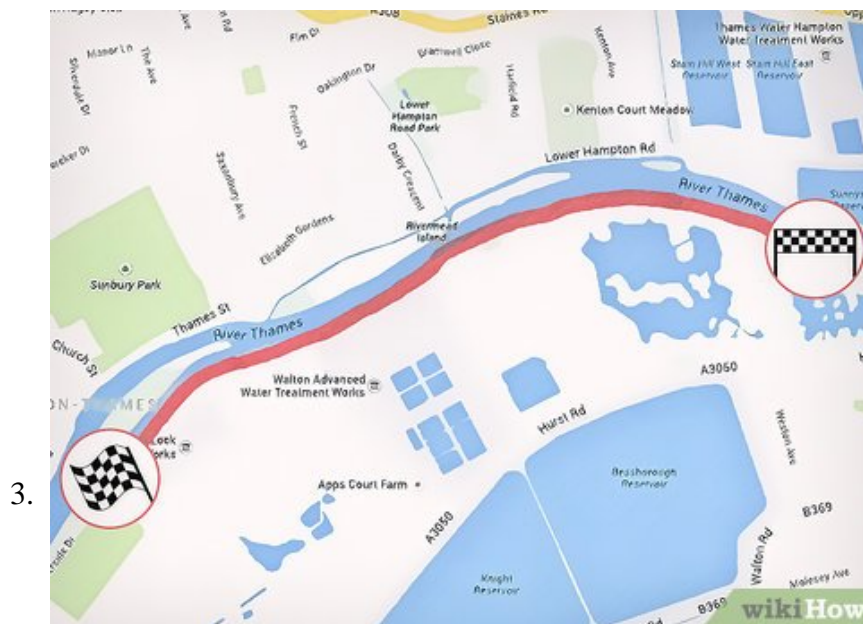
Check traffic before you leave. Many local and national government websites offer up-to-the-minute traffic data for most major roads. Checking these can give you an idea about travel times, and help you to decide whether to take an alternate route.

1. Useful national traffic information sites include the USDOT Federal Highway Administration's National Traffic and Road Closure Information,^[1] and Traffic England.^[2]

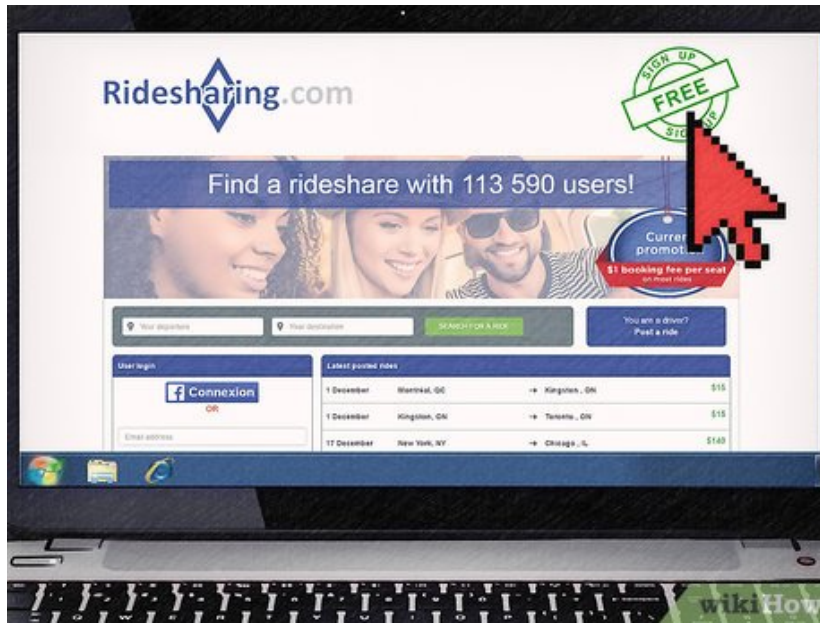


Avoid construction areas. If you'll be travelling on highways or in a city during the warmer months, there is a good chance you could encounter traffic caused by road construction. In this case, you might want to plan an alternate route. You can find out just where construction is taking place by using the local and national governmental sites that provide updated information on roads under construction.

1. Some national sites with road construction information include Highways England, and the USDOT Federal Highway Administration's National Traffic and Road Closure Information.^[3]



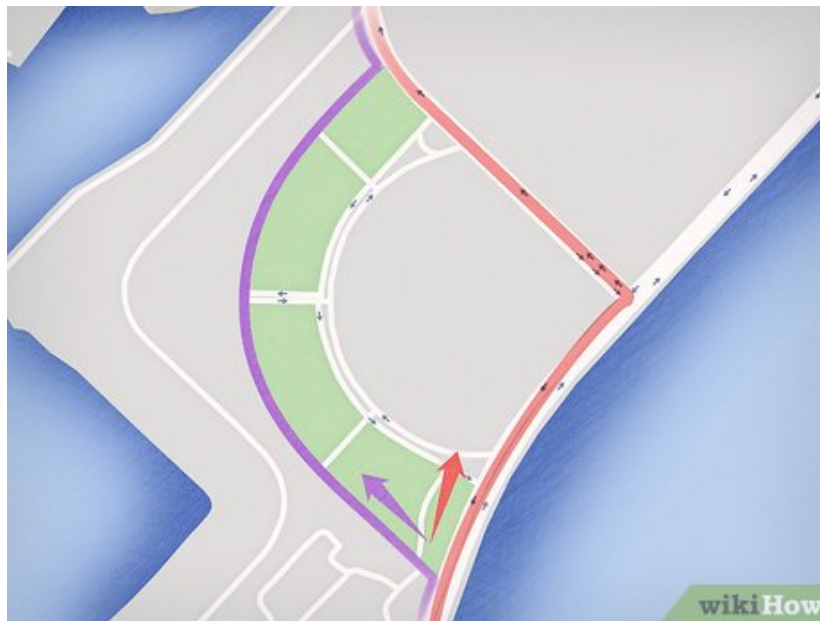
Check for sporting events and festivals. Highways near sports stadiums can become congested two hours before and two hours after games. Check your local professional teams' schedules to see whether a match will be taking place within two hours after or before you plan to drive on these highways. If this is the case, consider alternate routes. Take similar precautions with large city festivals.



4.

Sign up for a carpool. Driving with friends or co-workers during high traffic times is an excellent way to reduce traffic. By carpooling you can save money on gas while reducing pollution. Carpooling vehicles can also take advantage of usually traffic-free carpool lanes in some cities.

1. Ask your co-workers about setting up a carpool, or connect to online carpooling networks such as Ridesharing.com^[4] or Erideshare.com.^[5]



5.

Plan an alternate route. Check traffic websites, and use GPS systems and software to help you plan alternate routes past familiar congestion areas. Try to plan at least two routes, in case the best secondary way is congested itself or under construction. Having several optional routes planned will allow you to adjust on the fly, without having to check maps or ask for directions.

1. Sometimes an alternate route on city streets or state highways can get you to your destination faster than the congested road. But sometimes they can take longer, especially if you encounter several traffic lights or involve a major detour.

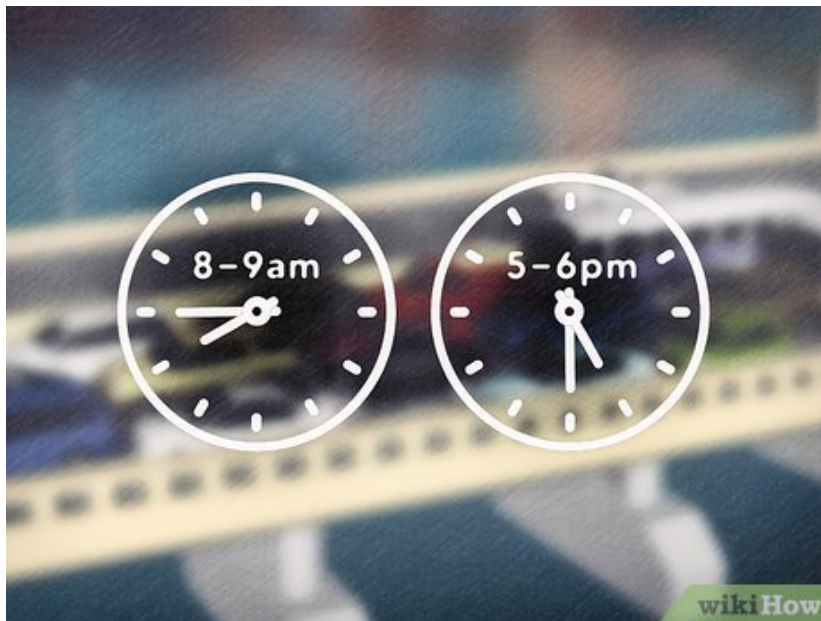
2. Avoid taking an alternate route that you haven't planned. Just getting off a congested highway spontaneously, especially in an area you're not familiar with, is an easy way to get lost.

6.



Take advantage of electronic tolling. Many metropolitan areas now offer electronic tolling on major highways. This system cuts down on traffic by allowing you to pay tolls automatically without needing to stop at a tollbooth. Look up your state's department of transportation website to sign up for this service.

7.



Avoid rush hours. If you are able to choose which time of day to drive during the week, be sure to avoid rush hours or peak hours. Most cities' rush hours run from 8 to 9 a.m. (08:00 to 9:00) and 5 to 6 p.m. (17:00–18:00), with less-severe congestion about one hour before and after these peak periods. High-density areas are also known to have a lunchtime rush period lasting roughly from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (11:30 to 13:30).

1. If you routinely get caught in traffic during your work commute, ask your supervisor about the possibility of changing the hours when you begin and end work in order to avoid the heaviest

periods of traffic.

8.



Drive on the weekends. If you're planning a trip or a shopping day, try scheduling it on the weekends, when traffic is substantially reduced in most metropolitan areas. Be careful, though, to find out when major weekend city festivals are taking place, since roads can fill up quickly before and after these events.

9.



Keep tabs on the weather. If you can choose when to drive, wait for heavy rain or snow storms to pass before driving. Accidents and slower driving brought on by severe weather can significantly increase traffic. City traffic also tends to increase with sunny, warmer weather, so consider alternative transportation when going downtown during summer months.

Method 2 of 3:

Steering Clear of Congestion while Driving

1.



Use GPS traffic tools. In addition to helping you to navigate the roads, GPS systems and cell phone apps can alert you to where traffic is happening on all roads in your area. If your car has a GPS system installed, read through the help guide or user's manual to learn how to use the traffic-information function.

1. Try using a cell phone app that displays up-to-the-minute traffic information, such as Google Maps [6] or Waze.[7]
2. Driving while using a cell phone is dangerous, and is illegal in many cities. Only use traffic information apps if you are a passenger in the vehicle, or when parked if you're the driver.

2.



Listen to radio traffic reports. Most cities where traffic is a problem should have traffic reports available through local radio stations. In larger cities, these can be broadcast as often as every ten minutes during rush hour or peak hours. Check these reports while driving to help you decide whether to take an alternate

route.

1. Radio traffic reports are most frequently found on AM news stations.

3.



Check the right-hand lane. During highway driving, if you notice traffic slowing down ahead of you, try changing to the right-hand lane. This lane is often more open than the other lanes in slow-moving traffic.

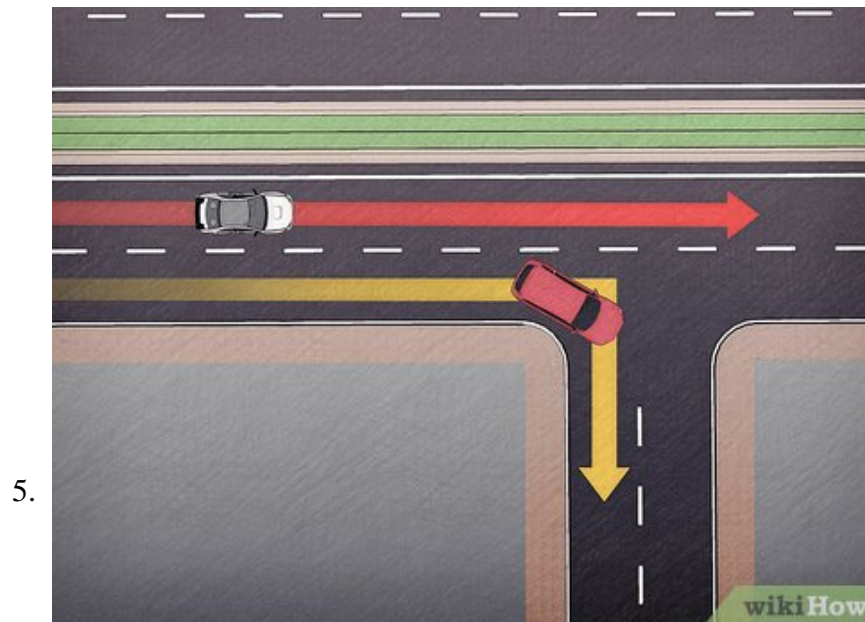
1. In countries with left-hand traffic, it should be the left-hand lane that is more open as traffic slows.
2. Avoid changing lanes once traffic has slowed. There will be less space to maneuver in, and accidents can occur more easily, which of course only contributes to congestion.

4.



Watch for entrance ramps. If you're driving on the highway through an area with a high number of interchanges, try to stay in the center or left-hand lanes (or right-hand lanes in countries with left-hand traffic). The right-hand lanes (or left-hand lanes in countries with left-hand traffic) can fill up quickly with vehicles entering the highway from entrance ramps. Leaving the merging lane open also allows these vehicles to enter traffic easier.

1. Some interchanges have entrance ramps that connect with left-hand lanes (or right-hand lanes in countries with left-hand traffic), so be alert to merging lanes opening up on the opposite side as well.



Favor the curbside lane in cities. In city streets with two lanes in each direction, try to stay in the right lane (or the left lane in countries with left-hand traffic) to avoid having to stop for cars waiting to make a left turn from the left-hand lane (or a right turn from the right-hand lane in countries with left-hand traffic).

1. Watch for buses in the curbside lane, since they may make frequent stops to pick up and drop off passengers. The non-curbside lane may be quicker in this case.
2. Whatever you do, make an attempt to pick a lane and stay in it, since changing lanes frequently will increase your chances for an accident.

Method 3 of 3:

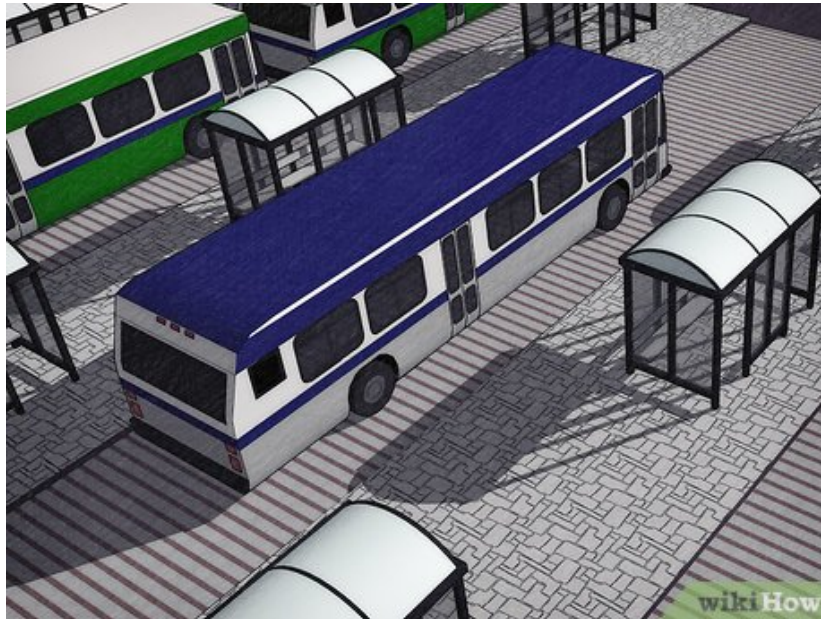
Using Alternative Transportation

1.



Take advantage of rail systems. Look at public train schedules and maps for your city to see if they cover routes serving your origin and destination. You'll save time, spend less money on fuel and parking, and cut down on pollution. Plus, you can read, relax, or get work done during the commute.

2.



Try taking the bus. While not always as efficient as rail, metropolitan bus networks commonly serve broader areas, and can save you money on fuel and parking. On the highway and in city streets, buses can sometimes take advantage of bus-only lanes that bypass traffic.

3.



Consider riding your bike. If you live fairly close to work, try going there by bicycle instead of driving. You might find that your travel time is not much different from when you were driving to and from work in traffic. Plus you'll get some fresh air, save money on fuel, and get a good amount of exercise.

4.



Find a residence close to work. Alternative modes of transportation such as biking, walking, and busing will be much more practical if you can manage to live as close as possible to your place of work. But if locating close to your job isn't an option, at least try to live near a public transportation route that connects your residence and place of work.

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