

If you live life to its fullest, each day is a story.

The places listed below are a brief glimpse into the corners of the world where I've slept.

In addition to the specific places numbered below, I easily found shelter

- Under freeway overpasses. There were many types. Almost all were concrete slopes stretching from the road above to the highway below. Generally, they were dusty but clean and a safe place to sleep. It took a while to develop the knack of sleeping with your feet facing downhill, not sliding, and to condition yourself not to hear the traffic passing by or the semi-trucks roaring above. There were some lucky nights when you found an overpass with a slope that flattened out just below the upper road and allowed you to sleep on a flat surface.
- On warm nights, at major cloverleaf intersections, you could sleep in the center on a grassy strip unnoticed by the cars circling around you.
- Rest areas on highways provided a picnic table to sleep on and a place to clean up. Truck stops were a place to shower, eat, and maybe catch a ride.
- Parks, beaches, open farm fields, along rivers, and in the woods were common spots to spend the night. Pine trees were especially useful. Their dense foliage provided coverage from rain, and the pine needles on the ground made for a soft mattress.
- Bus stations, train stations, and seaports were useful sites to find a corner to sleep in.
- There were times in small towns when you saw a homeowner outside his house and asked to borrow their lawn for a night. No one ever said no.
- In big cities, you could sleep behind the landscaping bushes or gardens that encircled the skyscrapers. But eventually, you realized that no matter where you slept, people were more afraid of your body on the ground than you of being beaten up.
- And, at times, the people picking you up would offer to house you for a night.

- And of course, there were always the youth hostels, campgrounds, hotels, B&Bs, etc. However, I rarely used them. Except for the third-world countries, they were out of my budget. Hostels were generally too strict on rules and hours of operation.

Memorable nights

1. Alongside the Potomac River under a bridge between Washington, D.C., and Arlington. I hitchhiked into DC to see the 200th Anniversary Celebration of America on July 4, 1976. There were 500,000 people, fireworks, and music with Johnny Cash, Stevie Wonder, and Barry Manilow. I ended up under a bridge after the concert, when DC police on horseback flushed the backpackers out of the bushes and pushed us toward Virginia. Under the bridge, it turned into a loose night party as cars streamed out of the city till dawn.
2. In a sewer pipe near the Munich Oktoberfest in 1974 — Every hotel was booked months ahead, and I couldn't afford one anyway. Near the fairgrounds, new construction had left giant concrete sewer pipes stacked like pyramids. I slipped into a middle pipe and slept as if in a capsule hotel in Tokyo.
3. In an outdoor Goodwill clothing bin in a small town in Kansas, -----It was a cold wintry night in October. I slept well and woke up with a new wardrobe.
4. 4. In a Bulgarian army barracks — In 1975, the Army pulled me off the streets of Sofia and left me alone overnight in an empty barracks, with an enormous portrait of President Todor Zhivkov to stare at. Bulgaria discouraged independent travelers at the time, offering solo foreign visitors only half the official exchange rate.
5. Outside George Lucas' tobacco warehouse, New Albany, Indiana, 1973 — Ten early-winter nights on the grass without a tent, frost forming inside my cheap sleeping bag, George had picked me up hitchhiking and paid \$2 an hour to sort dry leaf tobacco for the cigarette companies. My first time working alongside migrant laborers
6. Under a bed in a Yellowknife hotel in 1975 — I'd been hitchhiking the 200-mile Northwest Highway, leapfrogging a Black hitchhiker who was going the same way, bound for a cooking job in town. When we reached Yellowknife, he smuggled me into his employee room. I lay hidden under his bed while his boss sat on it, lecturing him about his new job.

7. Sharing a bunk bed with a Chilean poet on a four-day cruise from Helsinki to Leningrad in 1978, I found myself in trouble with the Russian border patrol after wandering off from the tightly controlled tours.
8. Greyhound buses in the 1970s-----Rode twice for 3-month periods across the US and Canada. Greyhound offered a 99-day pass, the Ameripass, to travel across both countries for just \$99. I rode countless nights as a place to sleep while crisscrossing the two countries. Basically, a moving hotel for a dollar a day.
9. Migrant housing in Bordeaux, France, in the mid-70s -----I spent two weeks picking grapes for 100 Francs a day {\$25.00) with food and board. I worked 9-hour days. No one picking grapes was French. There were Australians, Canadians, Israelis, Americans, and numerous other free-spirited travelers looking for some cash and parties.
10. In an old school bus with a 40w bulb and bunk beds used as housing for migrant peach pickers near Spartanburg, South Carolina, ----- I picked peaches for 50 cents a bushel under conditions reminiscent of the Okies of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* in the 1930s.
11. In a century-old cemetery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, ----- the site of my poem "The Roots of Life.
12. Under a bridge along the Tiber River near the Rome Olympic Stadium in Italy in the mid-1970s, -----Short on cash, I spent two weeks there awaiting a return flight to the US. Showered at the train station and lived on cheap pizza and gelato.
13. In the sagebrush somewhere in the dry outback of Southern California, 1979 — A miner dropped me off in the dark, and I unrolled my sleeping bag without realizing I was three feet from railroad tracks. Hours later, the ground started to shake, a train's headlight glared in the distance, and a whistle blew, blasting me awake. Half-conscious, I slapped the dirt around me, terrified I might be lying on the rails. One of the scariest nights of my life.
14. On a bench in a small bus stop shelter along a road in Yugoslavia. ----- I woke up to the whispers of many bus riders outside the shelter waiting for the bus. No one wanted to wake me. The bus stop was one of many places where I slept during a 130-mile walk up the coast of Yugoslavia in 1975. I also slept in a tree house, a trail, and on some beautiful sandy beaches.

15. Lying on my back on the rooftop of a pig shed in northern Alberta, Canada, 1978. --
----I was working on a large farm of a Danish immigrant who was homesteading there. I wanted to see the Northern Lights. I woke up in the middle of the night to a spectacular display of a dancing curtain of lights moving across the night sky.
16. On the home plate of a kid's baseball field in a little Oregon coast town. Two police officers woke me by shining flashlights in my face. I told them I was biking from Seattle to Los Angeles. They shrugged and walked off, one of them calling back, "Well, at least you won't get run over by a car there."
17. Under a pedestrian walkway near the Gare du Nord train station in Paris — I slept on a steep slope, trying to stay out of the rain. I'd unknowingly bedded down on a layer of dry leaves, and every shift made them hiss as I slid inch by inch downhill. Half asleep, I froze, idiotically thinking the sound was rattlesnakes beside me.
18. In the Children of God mission house in Syracuse, New York. I was cutting through a rough neighborhood late at night, following the vague directions in my Rand McNally atlas, when a group of teenagers on bikes began circling me. One of them said, in a threatening way, "You've got to be kidding, walking here at this time of night." I was weighing my escape options when the door of the mission swung open, and several church members waved me inside. The moment the door closed behind me, a rock smashed through the window.
19. Hitchhiking toward Italy, I ended up in a Mercedes in Vienna with two Iranian men who wanted me to drive one of their cars to Iran in the morning. I agreed, slept in the car, and reconsidered the whole plan the next morning when they started swapping license plates.
20. Between two Winnebagos at a KOA in Pismo Beach, California. Biking from Seattle to Los Angeles on a \$50 K-Mart Murray, I pitched my \$10 pup tent between two giant RVs. A wealthy couple took pity on me, fed me, then hauled me to a Gospel Revival where they proudly put me on display. Before I knew it, I'd become the centerpiece of a Born-Again fundraising scam.
21. At the Orient Palace Hotel in Cairo, Egypt. ----- Only \$2 a night. It was no palace, and there were no princesses there! But I did get a marriage proposal from one of the maids.

22. On rivers and creeks in the North Cascades National Park. ----- I spent two weeks gold-prospecting with my sluice box and gold pan. Great beauty, wildlife, night stars, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. I found no gold.
23. In a tent at Camp Muir, 10,000 feet up Mt Rainier in 1984, ----- A beautiful climb towards the summit. The final ascent was in the night, but the memory is of blue and white, the snow, the clouds, and the blue ice of the glaciers.
24. Six months on Eurail trains in the '70s and '80s. Any eight-hour night train became my hotel. It didn't matter what country I was going to. A few well-timed coughs kept others from pulling back the curtain to share my compartment. Most stations had pay-showers. So, I stayed clean enough to pass for someone who belonged wherever I happened to be.
25. Perched atop a twelve-foot mound of log shavings in an abandoned logging field, deep in the Norwegian forest — The warm summer night glowed with a bright, Milky Way. The shavings were soft as down, and I sank into them. Lying on my back, staring into the dark starlit sky, I drifted into the best sleep of my life.
26. Inside a Navy base in Florida in 1983-----I don't remember how we passed security, but a Navy man picked me up hitchhiking and, finding out I was an ex-Navy man, let me ride through security with him and gave me a place to sleep.
27. On the upper deck of a ferry boat sailing from Brindisi, Italy, to Corfu -----I charmed a beautiful Greek American girl studying at Stanford by offering her some of my peanut butter. With her girlfriend by her side and a couple of other backpackers, the five of us got together and spent two great weeks on isolated beaches throughout the island.
28. Lying across the stairs inside the Milan, Italy, train station, I watched as thieves scooted across higher steps in search of other sleeping travelers' baggage they could steal from.
29. In a small cabin along an isolated stretch of the graveled Alaska Highway near Tok Junction in Alaska, 1974. -----I waited five days before I got a ride. A compassionate man offered me a place to stay for the night after watching me stand three days near his cabin.
30. Inside my 1972 Gremlin-X car ----- When I got out of the Vietnam War, I had this new car waiting for me. Cost me \$2100.00. I drove it for 4 months, 15,000 miles across all of Canada and the US—many stories there!

31. Under a bridge along the Arno River in the recently flooded city of Florence, Italy, in 1972.
32. In a Gypsy camp along a back road in Ireland, 1970s----- . An amazing night with the Romanians and their horse-drawn wooden wagons.
33. Inside a small compartment on the Trans-Siberian train in 1983. -----Rode almost 6000 miles across 10 time zones from Nakhodka, Siberia, to Helsinki, Finland during the Cold War. Broke up the trip into four parts with required stays at Intourist hotels. Never met another foreigner. Cost was \$220.
34. On a large block at the Acropolis of Athens, ----- A security guard ultimately woke me up and chased me out.
35. Inside a boxcar of a freight train rolling across the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1973 -----
--I made friends with a hobo named Pete. Attempted to hop freight trains all the way from Winnemucca, Nevada, to upstate New York for a Grateful Dead concert.
36. In an Ottawa Jail Hostel in 1974. Canada financed Youth Hostels across the country, whereby one could stay a night for 50 cents and get a bit of breakfast. I slept in a cell with 3 other backpackers.
37. On a rooftop in Delphi, within sight of the ruins of the religious sanctuary.
38. On ferry boats between Dover, England, and Calais, France ----- Before the Channel Tunnel was built, the night train from Victoria Station, London, to the Gare De Nord station in Paris was widely used by backpackers. The trains were driven onto the ferries with such skill that you often did not even wake up until you arrived in France the next morning.
39. At a Moonies commune in the farmlands north of San Francisco in 1975. They recruited wandering backpackers near the Greyhound station downtown, inviting us up to what they called a party house of music and love. It could take days before you realized you hadn't stumbled into a party at all—you'd been recruited into the Moonies.
40. In the fields of the Watkins Glen Grateful Dead concert of 1973, I was too late for the concert, but I landed a two-day job cleaning up the garbage.
41. At the Peace Hotel in Shanghai, China, in the early 1980's. China was just opening to the world. The streets were filled with thousands of black bicycles and a few cars. The airport was small. You walked across the tarmac to get to the terminal.

42. Behind a Tiki Hut in Pattaya, Thailand, 1985 ----- A few too many beers at a small Tiki Hut bar owned by an old British expat.
43. In my little pup tent in the forest outside the town of Mallow, Ireland, in 1978. ----I spent a week arm wrestling, shooting pool, and sipping Guinness with the locals. I was strong then, as I had just finished six months of clearing land and hand-splitting logs on my father's land near Seattle. Decades later, I learned Mallow was the home of my ancestral heritage.
44. On a houseboat in Sausalito near San Francisco, 1973, -----A woman, middle-aged, picked me up. She was a struggling artist. She had a great bare-minimum houseboat with a sleeping loft towering above the main floor.
45. In Vondel Park, Amsterdam, 1974, ----- This park was the center of the Hippie movement in the early 1970s. It replaced San Francisco as a place for the flower children. The city turned the park over for the young people, so they had a place to sleep during the summer. Portable baths and washrooms were wheeled in at night, and everyone was kicked out of the park in the morning. Up to 2000 people would sleep there. It was a cultural crossroads—with music, drugs, and travelers from every corner of the world trading stories through the night.
46. In a ghetto hotel in Durban, South Africa, mingling with the Zulus. A launching pad for my Comrades Marathon run and my journey into Lesotho.
47. The YMCA in Chicago. Located behind the Conrad Hilton downtown. At \$5 a night, it was a refueling stop on the many cross-country hitchhiking trips I did from Seattle to New York.
48. Motel 6, Las Vegas, summer '78 — Day-labor gigs, biking through the heat to dig ditches, ride shotgun on a Penney's truck, roof a Sears warehouse, stock airport liquor stores, cut glass—whatever paid. Most of it vanished in casinos anyway. When the bike finally died, I left it in a parking lot and hitched north, looking for the greenery of Oregon and a cool mountain breeze.
49. The Armed Forces YMCA in San Diego on July 20, 1969, while stationed on a US Navy destroyer. I watched the Apollo 11 landing on the moon on a small black-and-white TV.
50. On the backroads of Washington state and the Canadian Rockies while motorcycling at 30 MPH on a small 1974 Kawasaki 100 for 3000 miles.

51. At the Tokyo English Center, a boarding-house hostel in Tokyo in 1983, I shared a room with two young Japanese men and returned often for short stays throughout the 1980s as I circled the globe. By the late '80s, those brief stopovers deepened into a choice to settle in Tokyo for a year. That single decision opened a cascade of unexpected paths—that led to teaching English, learning Japanese, working as a movie extra, recording English cassette tapes, and ultimately marrying a Japanese woman in 1990. End of the free-spirited road at the age of 41,