



*PJ, Panama City FL writes:* My first cross-country driving experience was nearly 50 years ago. Three Navy shipmates and I had just returned from 'Nam, and had to get from San Diego to New York City.

Train, bus and air traffic were jammed by a million other guys trying to get home. We chipped in and bought an \$800 1958 Plymouth sedan. We then hit Route 66, took turns driving and made the 3,000-mile trip home in about 50 hours.

At the time, gas was 25¢ a gallon. That was then. Today, despite grossly inflated costs, there are many intelligent ways savvy senior drivers can economically and safely do the journey. Consider some suggestions:     **Tip-Top Physical Condition:** Always make all the right moves to keep your body in shape to meet all challenges. Before a long road trip, your car should also be fit and ready for the tough journey ahead. Be sure the engine is well-tuned, fresh oil, tires treaded well, electronics sharp and everything else in absolute top condition.

**Healthy Attitude:** Just as your body and car chassis must be raring to hit the highway, so should your mind. Especially if you drive during iffy weather, you're certain to hit slow-downs, traffic congestion and nasty drivers.

Keep a positive attitude and don't let frustration take the pleasure out of your venture. Pull over and rest at least once every three hours, and find up to eight hours of each 24 for sleep, preferably on a flat surface. If there's a road block ahead, find an off-highway café to have a cup of coffee and snack until the way is clear again.

**Slowdown Saves :**Statistics show that every 5 MPH over 60 adds 25% a gallon to your cost of gas. If your journey requires 100 gallons, that's money you can use for meals and other expenses.

Realistically consider your reflexes and eyesight. If they aren't as sharp as they once were, don't take chances by going beyond speed limits. It's also wise to avoid the day's heaviest traffic

by doing your long-distance driving during late night and before dawn, when roads are less traveled.

Stay Smart With Smartphone: Keep checking your smartphone, GPS and other apps about road conditions, restaurants, motels and price deals. Acquire all current info as you'll need to plan and follow the route. And happy roading!