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Yellow taxicabs have been synonymous with cities for years – a cultural and nostalgic icon. While the transportation landscape has changed in recent years, taxis have endured those changes and are still a vital thread in the city's fabric.

While people think of buses and Trolleys when they think of MTS (that is our main business, after all), did you know we also oversee the region's taxicab industry?

Back in the day, taxis were like royalty – the only on-demand ride in town. Dominated by a few companies, taxicabs were all painted yellow. Now with independent ownership, taxicabs come in a rainbow of colors and models. The taxicab fleet here in San Diego has been modernized not just in color, but also to include eco-friendly vehicles. Hybrids make up 90% of taxicabs in the region, with several fully electric vehicles now onboard!

Why hail a taxi instead of using a rideshare app? Taxicab drivers go through rigorous background checks (hello, safety!) and their cars are in tip-top shape thanks to yearly safety inspections. Hailing a cab also means you're supporting a local business that's mostly owned by people of color. And did you know that several taxicab companies have an app for booking rides? (You can also still call dispatch, or book online via a website too.)

Hailing the Taxicab Drivers

For many drivers, part of the benefit of being in the taxicab industry is the ability to share part of the city they love with visitors, and the connections made with other locals or visitors.



Take Yassin, for instance. A cab driver since 2008 with Gumi Gayo Cab he's carved out his own path as a driver. "I enjoy owning my own business. I love driving in San Diego. I help (my customers) find hotels, restaurants when they get in late. I treat my passengers like they are my second family."



Medhanie, a veteran driver with 27 years of experience and works for Med Cab, echos the sentiment of being an ambassador. "When I became a taxi driver, I became an ambassador for San Diego," he says. "I know the city very well and sharing my knowledge with my passengers makes their stay more enjoyable".



However, for Gulab, a driver with Ariana Cab since 2013, his calling came from the desire to support his family. “I first came to San Diego to continue my education. But I needed to support my family,” Gulab said. “My children’s education was more important than mine. Driving a cab allowed me to be able to send my kids to college.”

These are just a few of the human stories woven into San Diego’s taxi industry. The next time you hail a cab, remember, you’re not just getting a ride – you’re supporting a local business, helping someone to put their kids through school, and riding with a friendly local at the wheel. The industry has changed a lot, but you can still hail a cab next time you’re at the airport or downtown (just don’t expect it to be yellow). Learn more at sdmts.com/taxi.

Taxicab tips:

- Make sure to check for any forgotten items at the end of your trip.
- You don’t need to carry cash - drivers accept all major credit cards.
- Be sure to keep your receipt! If you leave something behind, you’ll have a way to track it.

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