

How To Get Robotaxi Rides in San Francisco—and What It Will Cost

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San Francisco robotaxi companies **Cruise and Waymo** are now allowed to operate across the city 24/7 and charge passengers for the service. So what does that mean for those of us looking for driverless rides? Here's what you need to know.

How to Hitch Cruise and Waymo Rides

General Motors-backed Cruise operates some **400 cars in its fleet**—they're **practically everywhere** in San Francisco. Cruise had previously given free access to some city riders and paid access to others, though it was unclear how the company decided who received the free rides. The company has previously run initiatives to give free rides to late-night service and hospitality workers, as well as University of San Francisco students. After Thursday's regulatory decision allowing for the expansion of robotaxis, Cruise sent emails to the lucky few riders who previously enjoyed free rideshare services, saying that paid rides were imminent.

For the vast majority of us who are not already users, **signing up to become a rider** is simple: People 18 years or older can apply to join the waitlist on their website. Riders can also sign up for the waiting list through the **Cruise app, which allows users to book cars**. However, it is unclear when, exactly, the company plans to roll out the extended service hours that are now allowed and how quickly Cruise will add people off of the waitlist. The company did not respond to requests for comment on Friday. Currently, **Cruise cars operate at nighttime between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.** in select parts of San Francisco, excluding much of Downtown.

Google-run Waymo has a slightly smaller presence in San Francisco but announced a sweeping expansion plan immediately following the California Public Utilities Commission's Thursday vote. The company **previously offered free access to its pool of riders**, but it is now able to charge users for its rides, all day and night. *"In the coming weeks, we'll begin charging fares for rider-only trips across the extensive SF service area where thousands of members of the public already ride with us—the first widely available round-the-clock AV service in the city,"* a company spokesperson said. Don't get your hopes up, however: Waymo currently boasts a **waiting list of over 100,000 members** of the public, which you can join here. Users can access their robotaxis through the **Waymo One app**. A company spokesperson said Waymo will invite new guests gradually as the fleet expands in numbers and reach. The company would not be more specific about how long San Franciscans should expect to wait for access. Note that members of the press or government employees are not allowed to sign up. *"As we expect demand will be incredibly high—there are over 100,000 people on our waitlist—we'll be adding riders incrementally,"* a Waymo spokesperson said Friday.

How Much Cruise and Waymo Rides Will Cost

- **Cruise rides** charge a \$5 base fee, plus additional costs for mileage and ride time: \$0.90 per mile and \$0.40 per minute. The company also includes a 1.5% city tax. Cruise says they do not have surge pricing.
- Uber, by comparison, charges a base fee plus a slew of other related costs: mileage, ride time, surge pricing, tolls and surcharges and a booking fee. Customers are also often expected to tip their driver, which is not an issue for driverless cars.
- Waymo says their rideshare pricing factors in a baseline price, the trip time and distance traveled. *"What we can say is that our pricing will be competitive with other ride-hail services in SF and reasonable considering our service and the demand for it,"* said a Waymo spokesperson in an email Friday. *"We're transparent with riders about our pricing — you'll always know your trip cost before you book."*