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Tour San Francisco by Cable Car

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By Jan Ross

Everyone has seen them. Those commercials for "Rice-a-Roni" with the San Francisco cable cars as an integral part. And now you have that song stuck in your head. "Rice-a-Roni, the San Francisco treat"!

Everyone who has seen one of those commercials or knows anything at all about the City by the Bay has "riding a cable car" on their to-do list before they ever head to California. And rightly so, because riding on a cable car up and down the incredibly steep streets of the city, enjoying the sights and luscious smells is not to be missed.



Touring San Francisco by Cable Car

After witnessing a bad accident with a horse-drawn cable car in the late 1800's, Andrew Hallidie set about developing an electric cable car for San Francisco and by 1872, the first cable car was transporting passengers from Nob Hill. Today, the cable cars run seven days a week, with a revised schedule on the weekend. You can get the complete schedule on their web site here: <http://www.sfcablecar.com/riders.html>

There are three cable car routes in operation, and it helps to know where they are going so you can plan your itinerary. At Powell and Market streets, there is a cable car turntable which serves as the beginning stop for two lines, the Powell-Mason and Powell-Hyde lines.

The Powell-Mason line begins at the Powell/ Market turntable, and the line runs from there up and over Nob Hill and down to Bay Street at Fisherman's Wharf. The Powell-Hyde line also begins at the Powell Market turntable and runs over Nob and Russian hills before ending at Aquatic Park near Ghiradelli Square.

Both these lines end near Fisherman's Wharf, but at different areas, and the routes are

different. Fisherman's Wharf is a big area and you will be doing a lot of walking if you don't know where the cable car will drop you off.

The California Street line runs East-West from the Financial District, through Chinatown, over Nob Hill and stops at Van Ness Avenue. Since all the cars on this line have the same routes, the signs are painted directly on the car. Riders can board at any cable car turntable or anywhere you see the distinctive brown and white stop sign.

Check these signs for important information like the name of the cable car route, the destination, the route's final destination, hours of operation and a phone number if you have questions.

You can purchase tickets for the cable cars at any of the turnarounds (where they turn the cable cars on a big turntable – pretty interesting to watch, especially for kids) or from the conductor as you board. If you plan to ride the cable cars several times, it's best to buy a Passport.

Passports are \$13.00 for one day, \$20.00 for three days and \$26.00 for seven days. If you are going to be in the area for over a month, check into purchasing a Fast Pass.

Tickets: Adults and Youths (Ages 5-17) \$5.00 Each Way (Children 4 and under are free)

When you are ready for your first cable car adventure, wait at one of the brown signs, signal the cable car to stop and board if there is room. You can hang onto the rails on the outside but be careful.

Now have fun riding these historic and iconic symbols of San Francisco!

San Francisco Vacation Rentals

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