

# Guide to riding MUNI and BART

## Step 1: Get directions and schedules

The Bay area has scores of transit systems. While traveling in San Francisco, you're mostly like to either take the **MUNI** light rail / buses or the **BART** trains.

### Option1: In front of a computer or with your MOBILE

Use [511.org](http://511.org) to plan your best route, including times. But keep in mind that that system only factors in allowing you to walk up to a mile. After you've ridden your recommended route a few times, you may notice that it's easier to walk further or bike to a different station to make the trip faster or more pleasant.

Train arrival times provided on [511.org](http://511.org) aren't always accurate. For more precise arrival times, Check MUNI's **NextMUNI**. NextMUNI gives you the updated predicted time for the arrival of many, though not all, routes. You can also sign up for pop up **web** and **mobile** alerts through myNextBus. Also, BART has an estimated arrival **tool** too on its Web site.

You can get schedule and realtime information about BART on the web (<http://www.bart.gov>) or on you mobile device ([www.bart.gov/mobile](http://www.bart.gov/mobile)). You can also receive service advisories by text and email (<http://www.bart.gov/alerts>) or Twitter ([twitter.com/sfbart](http://twitter.com/sfbart))

### Option 2: On the street

If you don't have time to check any of the above sites you can find arrival times on the electronic signs at the train stop. All of the underground stations in the downtown area have signs with information about when the next train arrives (separate for MUNI and BART). MUNI even has a map of where all the trains are. MUNI and BART also make constant announcements in the underground stations about when the next train will arrive.

If you're waiting at an outdoor MUNI stop that doesn't have a sign about arrivals, call 311 or 511 to ask for the schedule.

By the way, the MUNI trains are either inbound or outbound. Inbound is towards Embarcadero (the downtown stop right by the ferry building). Outbound is going away from Embarcadero.

## Step 2: Find your stop and wait

The underground stations are all marked with reasonably large MUNI and BART signs. If you see stairs going down Market Street downtown, then you've found a station. MUNI and BART share the downtown stations, so use the signs in the station to find the right entrance.

The outdoor MUNI stops have a sign and, oftentimes, a raised area at the stop.

If you have to wait, listen to your iPod, read something or catch up on your calls. You can also read the [N Judah Chronicles](#) on your phone.

## Step 3: Pay

### MUNI

If you're getting on MUNI at street level stops, you can either pay the driver at the very front of the train \$2.00 (no change available) or get on anywhere on the train with a transfer or your prepaid pass. If you're getting on at one of the underground stations downtown, you can either flash your pass or transfer to the agent in the booth or pay \$2.00 in change (no dollar bills) in the turnstile machine. There's a machine that will change your bills into dollar coins in some stations. You can also use the BART fare machines, where available, to get quarters. If you want to get a pass, your **options are limited** to monthly, weekly and other time limited cards. You can't just buy a pass that you can keep refilling as you need it.. Also, the free MUNI transfer is good for 90 minutes.

## **BART**

The BART system is easy to use. You can buy cards using cash or credit card at machines at the stations. You put your card into the fare gate as you go in the station. Keep it handy because you'll have to put it back in a machine on your way out. The card will tell you how much money you have left on it. The machine on the exit side will tell you if you don't have enough money on your card; use the machines in the station to replenish your card and try again. Be warned, these cards are easily demagnetized! Keep them away from purse magnets and cell phones. Demagnetized cards can be replaced only at select stations.

## **Hybrid**

Check the [MUNI site](#) for information about getting passes that work on both MUNI and BART, or MUNI and CalTrain, etc.. MUNI is currently testing the [TransLink](#) card, which works on some other regional transit systems. Visit [TransLink](#) for the most up-to-date information.

## **Step 4: Get On**

Allow people to exit the train before you get on. Stand to the side of the door and wait until everyone who wants to get off is off before you get on. If you try to board the train while people are still trying to get off, it takes longer.

## **Step 5: Choose a seat or standing place**

### **Sitting**

It may be more convenient to choose a seat that's on the inside of the aisle so others won't need to climb over you to reach that empty seat.

### **Standing**

If it's standing room only, move as far into the car as possible. As more people enter the train, move further back into the train to make room and be courteous. There are poles at the top of the cars on both MUNI and BART that you can hold.

If it's not crowded but you feel like standing anyway, stand away from the doors that will open at the next stop.

### **Where to put your bags**

If you're sitting, put your bag on your lap or between your feet. If you're standing, put your bag between your feet on the floor or hug it to the front of your body. If it's crowded, do not wear your bag so that it protrudes from your side or back.

### **How to stand**

Keep a slightly wide stance and be prepared for sudden stops. It is recommended that you hold on to a pole. See the photos for some creative ways to avoid directly holding the pole if you prefer not to. Try to avoid touching other people if possible. If it's very crowded, you may be forced to be in contact with another passenger. Try to position yourself to avoid touching people, or breathing on someone's face.

### **Bikes, luggage and strollers**

You can bring [bikes onto BART](#) during most times. Only folding bikes are allowed on within San Francisco (below Embarcadero) during rush hour. When you get on, seat or stand yourself in the space designated for bikes and the disabled near the door, by the map or emergency directions information. Be prepared to move around a fair amount so that you don't get in people's way. This also applies to people with lots of luggage or strollers, etc.

### **Special riders**

To be courteous and respectful, offer your seat to elderly or pregnant people. They are allowed the seats near the front. This also applies to the disabled. Note the area reserved for them.

## **Step 6: Ride**

Always be considerate of the people around you. The following tips are guidelines you should follow to be polite to other passengers.

If you're riding during commuting hours, people generally want to have a quiet, hassle free ride. Try to avoid loud conversations with other people on the train or on your phone. On the weekend, people are more likely to be traveling in groups so it's socially acceptable to be a little noisier.

If you have a seat, then you can just relax and sleep or read or observe the other riders. If you think you might fall asleep, position yourself so that you don't lean on your seat mate.

If you're standing you may be able to read a paper or a book. Just avoid bumping others with your book.

If you listen to music, keep the volume down so that other people aren't also listening. Try to refrain from singing out loud.

It is recommended that passengers avoid walking through the doors between cars.

## Step 7: Get off

### MUNI

MUNI stops at all of the overground stops downtown no matter what. Exit MUNI when you arrive at your stop. If people won't let you off, politely say "coming out" and "excuse me." Most of the above ground MUNI stops are optional, so it is recommended that you pull the wire on the sides of the car before your stop to ensure that the driver stops. You have to press the bar on the side of the steps to get the door to open. Avoid exiting the train at the front, near the driver, unless you absolutely have to. It slows everyone down because people boarding have to wait for you to get off.

### BART

BART stops at all stations no matter what. The only thing to note is that the train accelerates and decelerates fast so it's unusually hard to stay upright and make your way to the door.

If you have a bike or luggage, position yourself so that you let the item-less people out first. If you need to get your bearing when you get off, be sure to step away from the door immediately so that you don't block other people getting off the train.

If you rode BART, you'll have to put your ticket back into a turnstile on the way out to complete the paying process.

Follow the exit signs to find your way out. Remember to stand right, walk left on the escalator! People with bikes can't use the escalator; you must walk or use the elevator.

## Step 8: Give Feedback

If you have a suggestion or comment for MUNI, use [this form](#) or call 311. If you want more information about MUNI, reading the [SFist.com MUNI threads](#) are about as helpful as it gets.

Call BART to chat about their service at 415 989-2278 or use this [web form](#).

### Resources

[Rescue MUNI](#) - A transit riders' association for San Francisco  
San Francisco Planning & Urban Research Association ([SPUR](#))  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission ([MTC](#))  
San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency ([SFMTA](#))  
San Francisco County Transportation Authority ([SFCTA](#))

**Step 9:**

San Francisco Car Free Tourism would like to thank SFMTA and Instructables for providing images and copy for this site.