

aarp.org

Ride-Sharing Is the Kind of Support I've Been Looking For

Brett Berk

11–14 minutes



Artist Jane Gregorius used ride-sharing for the first time when she was stranded at Los Angeles International Airport and had a great experience. Back home in Santa Cruz, California, she plans to use it more in the future. **Gabriela Hasbun**

I'm not a technical person, so I hadn't tried ride-sharing because I was kind of afraid of it. Of course, I'd heard of Lyft and Uber, but I didn't understand. I figured I'd probably screw it up. When I did finally try it, it was forced upon me!

My sister Mary and I had flown to Los Angeles to go to art museums and galleries — I'm an artist in Santa Cruz. But we didn't want to rent a car because neither of us wanted to drive in L.A.

I know my way around. I went to grad school in Long Beach and lived there for 10 years. But I'm older now — I just turned 80 — and navigating and parking seemed like a handful.

Mary had reserved a car service to pick us up, but they never showed. It was a local company, and they seemed legitimate, and they didn't take our money, so I don't know what happened. But there we were at this huge airport with no way to get to where we were staying. So we were kind of wandering in front of the terminal, and somebody said there's this place called LAXit, and you go there and there's taxis and buses. We went over there thinking, "What are we going to do?"

But when we got to LAXit, there was this young kid who worked there. I said to him, "Excuse me. How do I get an Uber?" He said, "Give me your phone," and he put the app in and put in the address where we were going. I just had to enter my credit card number. You better believe I gave him a great tip!



Gregorius waits to be picked up by Uber, suitcase in tow. She loves the convenience of ride-sharing — no more finding a place to park or slow airport shuttles. **Gabriela Hasbun**

The driver took us right to our hotel, no problem. After that, whenever we [wanted to ride-share](#), we just typed into the app where we wanted to go. It has a map, and it knows your location from your phone. Then the app gives you an alert, and it says the driver's name, when they'll be arriving, the kind of car they're driving, and the license plate is XYZ. And they tell you the price in advance, which is good.

It wasn't expensive. It felt extremely safe. And our drivers were very patient and kind with us. They would even point out things along our routes, kind of like they were our tour guides. They were almost like friends. Their job was to get us someplace and they were protective of us, and they were going to get us there. They were our allies.

Most Popular

I think the only thing I didn't quite understand was after you get out of the car, they send you two notifications: One is just your trip, and the next one is the trip with the tip added in. I always add a tip because I think the drivers don't get paid that much. You just have to remember: Even though you get two emails after you add a tip, you're not getting charged twice.

I haven't tried ride-sharing since I got back home to Santa Cruz. But now that I have experience, I definitely would. I think it would be great to have it instead of [having to drive at night](#) or to any place where it's kind of complicated to get to or it's a problem to park. I also saw a thing on the app about how you can order a car ahead of time, so if I needed to be at an airport at such-and-such a time, I could order it in advance. It would get rid of some of the hassles of parking and being worried that the shuttle bus trip might make me late.

Also, I love Mexico and go there fairly frequently. It would be great to use it there. I wouldn't have to worry about finding a taxi or getting the name of the street right with a taxi driver. You just type it in, and they come to you.

I just got my driver's license renewed, and I thought, *Oh, God, what would happen if I lost my driver's license and I couldn't drive anymore?* And that's a real panic. But with ride-sharing, I could go to the grocery store that way. And I could get to things I wanted to go to. I don't want to give up driving. But if I had to, it's a very comforting thought that I could use Uber. It gave me confidence that I could actually hop into the fray, maybe, with other apps.

I will say that having that kid show me how to use a ride-sharing app is what rescued me. It seems to me that what I needed in the past was somebody to ask, "How do I do this?" All the younger people know. You just have to ask one.



Gregorius, an artist, says ride-sharing has given her peace of mind; she no longer worries about how she will get places when she can't drive anymore. Gabriela Hasbun

Jane Gregorius is an 80-year-old artist based in Santa Cruz, California, where she has lived since 1979. Before retiring, she worked as an art educator, first with junior high and high school students, and then, for 25 years, at Cabrillo Community College in nearby Aptos. Gregorius has led painting excursions throughout Europe and Mexico and is a founding member of Printmakers at the Tannery, a co-op of 22 artists housed in a refurbished local tannery.

Brett Berk is a contributing writer who covers auto and other topics. His work appears regularly in Architectural Digest, GQ, The New York Times and Vanity Fair.