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UberXL Launches in Boston Today



An Uber app is seen on an iPhone. *Credit: (REUTERS/File photo)*

By Matt Rocheleau

The popular, yet controversial business Uber announced it is rolling out a new service in Boston starting today: UberXL, which will expand the company's low-cost offering to allow more passengers to catch a ride together.

The new service will let up to six people to ride together, charging a base fare of \$3.50, plus 35 cents per minute and \$2.45 per mile plus a \$1 "safe rides" fee, the company said in an email.

However, fares can rise significantly during "surge pricing" periods, which go into effect based on real-time demand for rides.



The service, an expansion of the company's cheapest, no-frills UberX service, launches today, May 8.

Uber, founded five years ago and now in more than 70 cities, runs a smartphone app that lets people hire private livery drivers who use their own cars to shuttle riders around.

It became available locally in 2011 and about a year ago added UberX, which offers cheaper rides than its standard service by using less-glamorous vehicles.

Uber, and other similar companies, have gained fans for often charging riders less, and for its drivers sometimes being friendlier and having cleaner vehicles, than standard taxis.

But, the young company has also faced sharp criticism because its setup — claiming it is simply a way for drivers and passengers to connect — allows it avoid safety and other regulations that cab companies and drivers are subject to.

Some have also said that the service's cheap fares undercuts the ability for its drivers to earn a fair wage and reduces pay for livery drivers at other companies.

Meanwhile, riders have complained about the high fares that Uber can charge during "surge pricing" periods.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at matthew.rocheleau@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mrochele](https://twitter.com/mrochele).



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Panel finalizes recommendations to ease drug abuse



BOSTON (AP) — A state panel charged with finding ways to address Massachusetts' drug abuse epidemic is set to finalize its recommendations for Gov. Deval Patrick this week.

Health  24 min ago  Share



Holder: Subtle Racism Worse Than Bigoted Outbursts



Attorney General Eric Holder says subtle, institutionalized racism has a more “pernicious” effect than the occasional bigoted outburst.

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Harvard Prof. Henry Louis Gates Gets Unreal Housing Perks From NYU

Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s side gig as a consultant to New York University has apparently won him some enviable New York City housing benefits.

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Three Injured in Fitchburg Shooting



Three people were shot at KC's Pub on River Street in Fitchburg after midnight Saturday, NECN reports.

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Boston Celtics Owners Invest in Skateboard League

There might not be many obvious similarities between high-tech electric car racing and some dude in a hoodie riding a skateboard.

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BDC Now - Weekend Event Picks

Looking for something to do this weekend? Check out some events that





include plenty of wine, a chance to meet some Red Sox players, a burger bash, and more. Watch BDC Weekend with Jenny Johnson.

Entertainment  2 hours ago  Share



US Ordered Not to Force Feed Guantanamo Prisoner

A federal judge in Washington ordered the U.S. military on Friday to at least temporarily stop force-feeding a hunger striking prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay naval base.

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Genetically Modified Foods Confuse Consumers

Genetically modified foods have been around for years, but most people in the United States have no idea if they are eating them.

Food and dining  3 hours ago  Share

Vt. Sex Offender Faces Sentencing in Niece's Killing

A convicted sex offender who killed his 12-year-old niece after luring her to his house with a ruse about a pool party is due to be formally sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

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Hike with Caution at White Mountains

Campgrounds in New Hampshire's White Mountain National Forest are open, but the Forest Service is warning people that some areas still have snow, and





spring melt-off can lead to some slippery footing.

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Will Connecticut Schools Ban Chocolate Milk?


Connecticut lawmakers moved forward this week on a new nutrition bill that could remove chocolate milk from public schools.

Health  3 hours ago  Share



Lacrosse Team Honors Fallen Officer and Coach



The girls lacrosse team at Exeter High School is honoring their late coach Stephen Arkell, a New Hampshire police officer who was killed in the line of duty.

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Celebrating 10 Years of Gay Marriage

On May 17, 2004, Massachusetts offered the first marriage licenses to same-sex couples. We asked five couples to talk about what they've learned about themselves and their relationships over the past decade.

Life  4 hours ago  Share




10 Parting Shots at SNL Heading Into The Season Finale

Here are "10 Parting Shots at SNL" as the show's 39th season comes to a close Saturday night with Andy Samberg as host.

Obnoxious Boston Fan  4 hours ago  Share

Environmentalists in Portland Oppose Tar Sands Oil

Environmentalists will rally at the Deering Oaks Park bandshell in Portland to oppose the Keystone XL oil pipeline and the shipping of tar sands oil through Maine.

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Broke Beats: F.Stokes – ‘Liquor Sto’ Diaries’



Broke Beats is BDCwire’s open-source hip-hop column. Every Saturday, we showcase the best new albums, EPs, and mixtapes available for free stream or download. The Midwest has long been a stronghold for spirited rappers and producers who haven’t quite pierced the East Coast market. F.Stokes is among the most fearless of of these artists, and the... [Read more »](#)

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Oprah’s Network Postpones Sam Documentary



The planned documentary by the Oprah Winfrey Network on Michael Sam, the NFL's first openly gay player, has been postponed.

Sports  4 hours ago  Share



Woman Falls Down Elevator Shaft at Fenway Park

A 22-year-old woman is hospitalized after falling down an elevator shaft at Fenway Park Friday during a Red Sox game, according to the Boston Fire Department.

News  5 hours ago  Share



Obama, Congress Move to Address Veterans Affairs Firestorm


The Obama administration and Congress are moving quickly to respond to a growing political firestorm over allegations of treatment delays and falsified records at veterans hospitals nationwide.

Business  5 hours ago  Share





Conn. Exhibit Looks at Benedict Arnold as Hero

A new exhibit on display at the Slater Memorial Museum is the latest effort to bring heightened visibility to a subject Norwich has deliberately ignored for centuries.

Travel  6 hours ago  Share

Testing Inconclusive, Suspected Bobcat Returned

A judge has returned a 38-pound feline to a New Jersey woman after DNA testing couldn't conclusively say whether it was a purebred bobcat.

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Clearing This Afternoon with Sunshine for Sunday

Weather Wisdom  6 hours ago  Share





Nissan's Taxi of Tomorrow Hoping for a Fare Future

Members of the New England Motor Press Association had the dual experiences





of driving and riding in this Taxi of Tomorrow when Nissan brought a pair of the hackney versions of its NV200 van to town.

Cars  13 hours ago  Share



Teen's Arm Reattached After Pasta Accident



Four surgeries later, 17-year-old Brett Bouchard can move his arm after it was severed below the elbow.

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Red Sox Fall to Tigers, 1-0, Back Under .500

The loss drops the Sox back below .500, at 20-21, and 10-12 at home.

Extra Bases  13 hours ago  Share

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