

*Mind The Gap - The world of Nate and his love for the train.*

In the sleek and glitzy newly built train that helps shuttle passengers all across the Qatari capital of Doha sits a curious boy. As passengers embark and disembark at each station, there is Nate Gho, a 19-year-old who's just spent the last few hours riding through the different stations that compose the Doha Metro. "Ride around the trains and walk around the stations." Nate says. What most people would find to be a mundane task, to Nate it's a therapeutic way to spend his weekends, cruising through the weekend with the sound of a calm announcer's voice .

Nate is a self described train-enthusiast and his passion for the public transit system has taken over his life. It all began in 2009, when Nate was only 4 years old, a family trip to Singapore led him to the MRT, the transit system that connects Singapore together. This one ride was the spark that would become Nate's raison d'être. The Doha Metro, built to expand the city's transport capabilities for the World Cup, seems like it was also built to be Nate's labyrinth of wonder.

As a young boy he started expressing his new interest in public railways through the acquisition of toy train models, a natural first step for any child, he would later delve deeper into his new passion by consuming YouTube and DailyMotion content on a daily basis. While some might view this as excessive, this opened up a new understanding for Nate since it wasn't just videos of trains passing by that captured his attention. It was the consumption of videos that taught him about the ways that trains simply function.

“That’s all I could really do at the most” It was also one of the few ways a young Nate could partake in his biggest hobby, as the young boy grew up in Doha, a city which for the longest time, did not possess any metros or public transit system. These forms of online content served as a wealth of knowledge and information to Nate and worked to further his passion for the world of public transportation as the years went on. The acquisition of knowledge would eventually lead him to making the decision to seek employment with a metro service in the future. This prompted him to study IT security in Melbourne Australia which he tells me is a degree that can open up doors for him in the world of public transportation. This wealth of knowledge on the inner-workings of the public transit system is even unique to Nate who tells me that throughout all these years he’s simply never met anyone as passionate or knowledgeable about trains as he is.

Nate wouldn’t have to wait long to realize his dreams of working with public transit, in the lead up to the 2022 World Cup Nate had an exciting opportunity. He was able to volunteer as a train expert to assist tourists in navigating the web of lines and stations. “It was fun and I got the chance to actually experience being a staff not a customer” This experience exposed him to the network of people that help keep the [36 billion dollar project](#) running, the other employees.

Made up of people from the Philippines, Kenya, Uganda, India, and Nepal, most were only there temporarily to deal with a surge in demand for the World Cup, but Nate’s intense interest in the Doha Metro piqued the curiosity of the regular employees who had worked there for years.

“They got curious to know more about me.” Nate relayed to me.

To them it was interesting to see someone who is as knowledgeable about their own careers as Nate was. From then on Nate's time in the metro, whether volunteering or simply riding the rails, was further spent getting to know the unsung heroes who assist passengers or keep the trains running. Nate tells me that while some of the employee's come and go, he found himself building more personal and deeper connections with some of the staff members. Over time his discussions went from how brakes in trains work to the lives of these employee's and what their lives were like back home.

Soon Nate was spending time with these Metro employee's not in a vast metro station but in the streets of Doha. He would see these people a few times a month eating at one of the cafe's frequently enjoyed by the different immigrant communities that made up Qatar. Nate recounted that his friendship with these employee's grew to a group of 6, including himself. Most of them were older than him, as most were migrants looking to pay for their families, but there were also some as young as 21 years old. For Nate the friendships he made during his long hours riding the was a highlight during his time spent on the Doha Metro.

In high school, Instagram became a platform for Nate to share his passion and connect with others. Through his profile he found that micro-blogging was a great way to let all the people had met throughout his life know about his day to day adventures. Nate says that while some of the posts he shares may be carefully curated. He enjoys sharing things spontaneously and in the moment to his audience of hundreds of followers. One of his favorite things to do on his

Instagram micro-blog has been to share interactive stories. Some of them have asked his followers to suggest songs to listen to on his weekend train rides or asked them to pick which lines he should pursue for the day.

Nate even tells me that his social media posts have opened him up to becoming a bit of a travel guide to people, with some of his followers making a point to message him for directions on how to get around Doha using the public transportation system. To Nate it's one of the easiest but greatest ways he can express himself to a wider audience not only about his love for the Doha Metro, but even recently about his travels across the world. In his account you can see an archive of all the years Nate has spent cruising through Doha.

Nowadays Nate spends half the year in Melbourne Australia, while pursuing his studies, Nate makes a point to explore Melbourne's public transport though he says it's more expensive so he can't spend as much time navigating the city via train. He also filled me in on one of his new hobbies. Bar hopping. His late nights are drowned in fun and colorful booze when he has free time to spare. Yet Nate tells me he still thinks about his time spent in the Doha Metro and can't wait to get back to Doha and share his journey on his Instagram micro-blog exploring every nook and cranny that the public transit system has to offer.