



A DRIVER'S STORY

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the **Way**

Vacation Destination

Many people envision visiting Southern California as part of their vacation destination. The beaches, the food, the museums and the malls make it a great place to visit. However, for those like Ruben Salazar, who find themselves exhausted after spending all day working in the sun, it's difficult for them to enjoy the attraction that Southern California has to offer.

For the past 30 years, Ruben has travelled from Calexico, located east of San Diego, to as far North as Salinas making stops along the way in the Central Valley. His migration journey will span over 1,000 miles throughout those areas, not including the daily trips to the jobsite.



Ruben Salazar, CalVans driver

Working temperatures range from 120 degrees in the Valley to a cool 65 breeze off the coast, but the work is almost always the same. Ruben explained that the heat of the Central Valley is nothing compared to the heat in Calexico, in the Imperial Valley.

"In Calexico the heat never seems to go away," he says. "In the Central Valley, it's a little warm... here. You feel the heat for an hour or so, then it goes away, later you feel a breeze."

Ruben's specialty is the cantaloupe; he started working in the fields at age 14 and has well over 35 years of experience. The work he does is year round, starting in May in Calexico, traveling up to the Central Valley in June, and in mid-July, they start working their way up to the Salinas Valley to finish up the cantaloupe in the area. By September, they are well on their way back to Calexico to work on the winter cantaloupe thru May of the following year.



During the months of November through April, they pick lettuce and corn. Although Ruben works mostly with cantaloupe, he is no stranger to working with other types of produce. His list includes: broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, corn, apple, grapes and onions just to name a few. This cycle repeats itself year after year.

You can tell by the way he talks about his work that he really enjoys what he does. "I like work a lot," he says. "All my life I've done this type of work."

Besides having many years of experience working in agriculture, Ruben takes great pride in being an exceptional driver. He has been driving people to and from work for 30 years; 25 of those years with the same company. Maintaining a clean record is very important to Ruben, he has to be very cautious and well rested. Many people depend on him. "One travels comfortably in the van," he says. "You get out of work [get in the van] turn the AC on and you're cool on your drive home."

Staying cool is very important, especially to someone who works in extreme heat. We at CalVans are very grateful that we can make that happen for Ruben and his co-workers.



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