

Outings, Trips, and Travel

Benefits of Trips

A Girl Scout trip is an opportunity for girls to have fun, to experience adventure, and to enrich their ongoing Girl Scout program. A Girl Scout trip is defined as any time a group has an activity at a location other than the regularly scheduled meeting place. If the group will start and end at the regular meeting location, but will walk to a local park or other destination, this activity is not defined as a trip.

Safety Activity Checkpoints and the guidelines in this booklet should be consulted when planning a trip of any length. Care should be taken to determine if troops are ready to participate in troop travel and trips. Safety and money-earning procedures are also available in this resource.

Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. The following few sections help you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

Letting Girls Lead

Although it's tempting to do all the planning and take care of the logistics, your girls would miss out on a great opportunity to build their life skills. Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It's true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary longer and more complex, the planning specifics become richer and more detailed, but planning every trip—whether it's a day-long outing or an international trek—starts by asking the following:

- What do we hope to experience?
- Who will we want to talk to and meet?
- What will we ask?
- Where are we interested in going?
- When are we all available to go?
- Will everyone in our group be able to go?
- Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
- What are hours and the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What's the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What's the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?

- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- How will we share the Take Action story?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls can make specific arrangements, attend to myriad details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. Later, after they've returned from an event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

Include Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Make sure that reasonable accommodations are made for girls with disabilities. Learn more about the resources and information that Global Explorers and Wilderness Inquiries provide to people with disabilities.

<http://www.nobarriersusa.org/spread-the-word/> and <http://www.wildernessinquiry.org/tag/accessibility/>

Using Journeys & The Girl's Guide in Their Travels

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the three series of National Leadership Journeys. The Journey's theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the adult guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel.

Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen MEdia, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they're traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using SOW WHAT?, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using BLISS: Live It! Give It! can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

If girls also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

To find out more about the exciting series of Journeys and The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting, go to [\[PROGRAM: National Program Resources\]](#).

For additional Outdoor and STEM Journeys with even more trip and travel opportunities, please see the [Volunteer Toolkit](#).

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making

mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Travel Readiness (Progression)

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. The Journey Adult Guides have a lot of other ideas about trips that bring the Journey to life. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting:

- **Local Field Trips** (Daisies and older): A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- **Day Trip** (Daisies and older): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home. **Note:** Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergartners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.
- **Overnight trips:** This could start with one-night camping or staying at a Girl Scout property and progress to a visit to a state or national park, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground- or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. **Note:** A Daisy troop may participate in a one-or two-night overnight experience if the girls are ready. Brownie troops can participate up to three nights. For camp, girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.
- **Regional Trips** (Juniors and older): Three nights or four nights camping or staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region (for example, Southern California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington).
- **National trips** (Cadettes and older): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the [Girl Scout Ranger program!](#)
- **International Trips/ Independent Travel** (Cadettes and older*): Travel around the world, often requiring two or three years of preparation. International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight trips with Girl Scouting. When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, fill out the online [Trip and High-Adventure Approval form](#) to get permission to plan your trip. You can also download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#) to help with trip planning. Adult volunteers should ensure that girls are mature enough to participate in the trip. Factors to consider are adaptability, good decision-making, previous cross-cultural experience, group dynamics, team capability,

language skills (where applicable), and specific skills and interests related to the trip. Visiting one of the [four World Centers](http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/global/world-centers.html) is a great place to start (www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/global/world-centers.html), but also consider traveling with international service-learning organizations to perform community service, or meeting up with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world at an [international scouting event](#). All international groups should register with [S.T.E.P.-the U.S. Department of State travel registry](#). Be sure to also read the [Travel and Trips Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), the Travel Section below and the [Outings, Trips and Travel Section](#) of the Safety-Wise chapter of Volunteer Essentials to learn about specific policies related to travel and ensure you meet all GSNorCal requirements for international travel.

- **Tips for Girls Traveling Alone:** If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself, and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip less stressful, and ask parents to consider contacting the airline which can make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, not wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as smartphones or iPads) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Travel Progression Checklist

If your troop is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Determine a group's readiness for travel by assessing the girls':

- Ability to be away from their parents and their homes
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions for themselves and the good of the troop well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges
- Ability to work well as a team
- Skills, interests, and language skills (where applicable)

Group Dynamics & Team Capabilities

A successful trip is dependent upon the ability of the troop to work and function together as a team. The team includes girls and any adult chaperones who will be participating in the trip. Certain factors are crucial, including:

- the ability to function as a team member
- the ability to follow as well as lead
- the ability to accept more direction and leadership from the troop leaders than they are used to at home.

A troop needs to establish a working relationship prior to traveling together. This can be done through planning meetings, activities, and electronic correspondence prior to the trip. Ways of addressing differences and emergencies, whether life-threatening, cultural, or due to individual attitudes, should be discussed prior to travel.

Establishing a team agreement prior to leaving for the trip on how the troop will function and make decisions is very important.

Here are some things to consider:

- Safety rules and expectations.
- What are your rules for the buddy system, and what if cliques begin to form during the trip?
- Curfews and consequences for breaking them.
- Policy on bringing extra money for souvenirs or snacks.
- Rules/expectations about cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices.
- How will the troop decide where/what to eat?
- Expectations regarding restaurant behavior, and how much food is suitable to order at one meal.
- Expectations on how to behave in public, e.g. visiting museums, participating in a tour, etc.
- What to wear and not wear.
- How much luggage to pack/bring.
- For adults: What is the role of a chaperone? What is expected of a chaperone?