



# Troop Travel Guide



# Why Travel?

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.

In Girl Scouting, trips are:

- A means through which girls can experience the fun, learning and adventure of Girl Scouting.
- A way for girls to broaden their horizons and engage in the world around them.
- A method of enriching an ongoing program.
- The incentive to, or highlight of, a good Girl Scout program.
- A method of teaching girls the skills of planning, budgeting and evaluating.

Everything girls do in Girl Scouting is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and Girl Scout trips are no different. Girls will discover, connect and take action from budgeting to traveling. In your role as a supportive adult, you can shape girls' adventures by infusing the three processes of keeping activities girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning. By doing this, you are guaranteeing that girls will have a meaningful, relevant and fun experience.

As you partner with girls, keep in mind that your enthusiasm and support in the travel process are essential to helping girls build confidence and leadership skills.

Start off on the right foot by:

- Creating a safe and open environment for girls to communicate with each other and you.
- Establishing roles. How do you envision your role? How do the girls envision theirs? Encourage girls to give input – make it a two-way conversation.
- Helping girls reach solutions by asking questions. Asking questions will guide them in the right direction.
- Having fun!

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# Letting Girls Lead

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Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It's true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary gets more complex, the trip gets longer, and the details become richer. But planning every trip — from a day-long event to 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 visiting hours and are reservations needed?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What is the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What is 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 our story when we return?

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

For more ideas on following the Girl Scout Leadership Experience through the travel process, see page 8 of the appendix.

# Group Dynamics

The blend of the group is as important, or more important, than the individuals involved. A successful trip is dependent upon the ability of the group to work and function together as a team. Certain factors are crucial:

- 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 group leaders than they are used to at home.

A group needs to establish a working relationship prior to traveling together. This can be done through planning meetings, activities such as cooperative games or a challenge course, 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.

Prior to leaving for a trip, establishing a team agreement on how the group will function and make decisions is important.

Here are some things to consider:

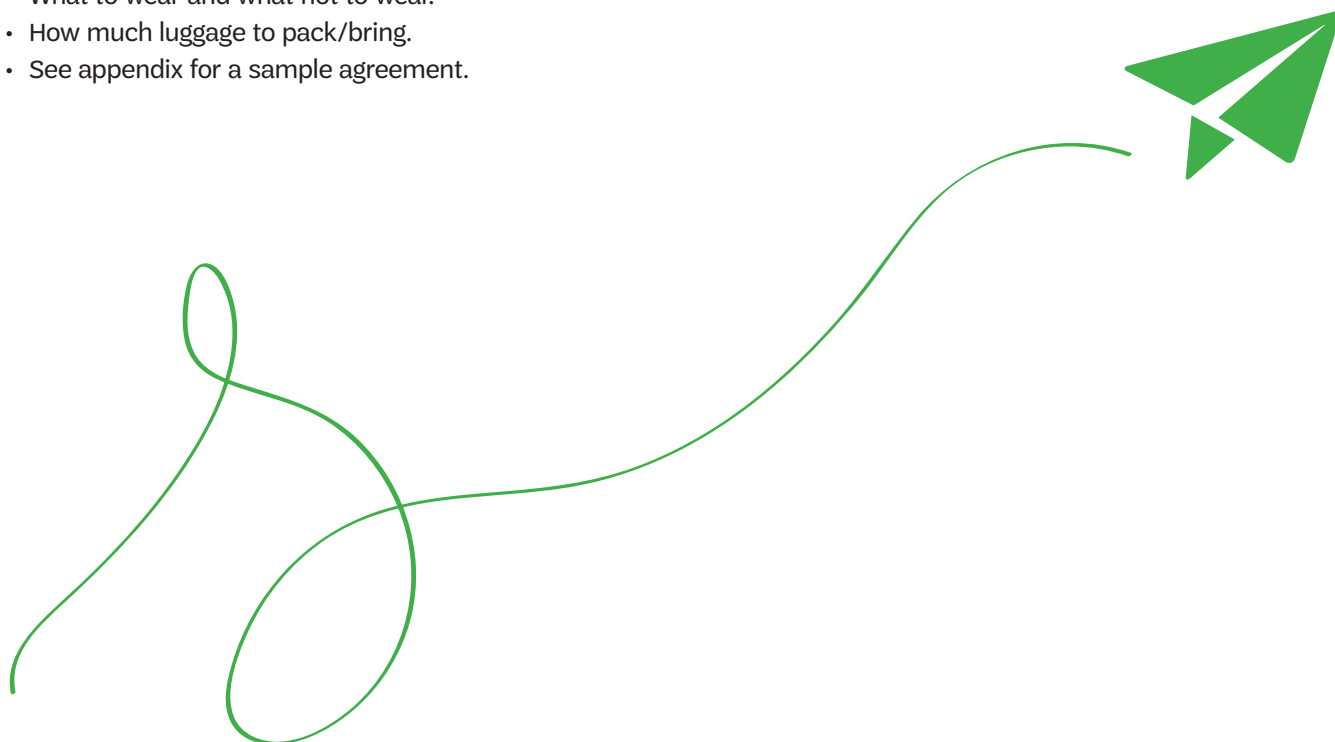
- Safety rules and expectations. What are your rules for the buddy system, and what if two girls band together for the whole trip?
- Curfews and consequences for breaking them.
- Policy on bringing extra money for souvenirs or snacks.
- Rules/expectations about cell phones and other electronic devices.
- Mealtime decision making: where and what the group will eat, how much food is suitable to order and restaurant behavior expectations.
- What to wear and what not to wear.
- How much luggage to pack/bring.
- See appendix for a sample agreement.

## READINESS

If your group 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 home.
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations.
- Ability to make decisions well.
- Previous cross-cultural experience.
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges.
- Ability to work well as a team.
- Skills, interests and language skills (where applicable)



# Troop Travel Progression

Girls love experiencing new places through travel and Girl Scouts provides the structure for girls to build on past experiences. As girls develop their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips:

<b>Level 1</b>	Level 1 trips are short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies through Ambassadors): A walk to a nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse. Level 1 trips usually take place during the regular troop meetings.	
	Girls are ready when they can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the buddy system</li> <li>• Function as part of a group</li> <li>• Follow proper etiquette and safety</li> </ul>	To prepare, adults must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have signed permission slips from guardians</li> <li>• Secure appropriate transportation</li> <li>• Have an adult first aider attend</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	Level 2 trips are all-day visits to a point of historical or natural interest or day-long trips to a nearby city within the state of Ohio (Brownies through Ambassadors). Younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip planning, while never being too far from home. Level 2 trips usually take place outside of the regular troop meeting and are not overnight.	
	Girls are ready when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed two or three Level 1 trips</li> </ul>	To prepare, adults must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have signed permission slips from guardians</li> <li>• Secure appropriate transportation</li> <li>• Have an adult first aider attend</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b>	Level 3 trips are one or possibly two nights away within Ohio to a state park or nearby city for sightseeing and staying in a hotel or campground. These trips are long enough to get girls comfortable with traveling but not so long as to generate homesickness. A Daisy troop MAY participate in an occasional one-night camping experience, if ready.	
	Girls are ready when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed two or three Level 2 trips</li> </ul>	To prepare, adults must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have signed permission slips from guardians</li> <li>• Have an adult first aider attend</li> <li>• Complete troop camp certification, if camping.</li> <li>• Submit Level 3 Overnight Activity Application</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b>	Level 4 trips are two or more nights away in and/or outside Ohio. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer an educational component — this can include some incredible cities, historic sites and national parks around the country. Extended overnights are best suited for Juniors through Ambassadors.	
	Girls are ready when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed two or three Level 3 trips</li> </ul>	To prepare, adults must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have signed permission slips from guardians</li> <li>• Have an adult first aider attend</li> <li>• Complete troop camp certification, if camping</li> <li>• Complete Troop Travel Training</li> <li>• Submit Level 4 Extended Travel Application</li> </ul>
<b>Level 5</b>	Level 5 are trips anywhere outside of the United States, often requiring one or two years of preparation. When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, download the Global Travel Toolkit. Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations.	
	Girls are ready when they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully completed two or three Level 4 trips</li> </ul>	To prepare, adults must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete troop camp certification (if camping)</li> <li>• Have an adult first aider attend</li> <li>• Complete Troop Travel Training</li> <li>• Complete and submit a Level 5 Extended Travel Application Part One 1 year in advance</li> </ul>

# Planning

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Traveling can be an incredibly enriching experience, but it takes extensive planning to ensure a successful trip. Any traveling troops or groups planning an international trip should start at least two to three years in advance of the time they are planning to travel.

For a full timeline as it pertains to travel paperwork, see page 21.

## Collaborating with local travel agents

As your group develops travel experience, they will be ready to work with professional travel agents.

Instead of booking whatever plan the agent may offer, girls can come up with their own ideas about what they want to do, where they want to stay, and how they can cut costs. The agent can contribute their professional expertise while maintaining a girl-led planning process by answering questions and advising on whether the travel plan is workable or whether the budget is overlooking anything.

The agent can help you select the best flights and purchase tickets. They can book the first hotel in the arrival city.

If you are planning to stay in budget accommodations, such as a bed-and-breakfast or hostel, be prepared to make your own reservations, as the travel agent does not receive commission on such reservations.

To have the special kind of travel experience that meets your needs and interests, girls must be willing to work in partnership with the travel agent and do a large part of the planning themselves. Working together, the group and travel agent can plan a trip that is a very special Girl Scout experience and the girls will learn skills that will make them wiser and happier travelers for the rest of their lives.

**PLAN AHEAD:** All these steps take time, so contact the travel agent well in advance — at least six months before departure, if possible.

## Planning tips to include girls with special needs

- Include the girl's parents/guardians in the planning of your trip. They have the best understanding of the girl's needs and abilities and can share travel experiences with you.
- Identify well ahead of time the kinds of accommodations that you may need for the girls to fully participate.
- If wheelchair access is a necessity, remember to consider every aspect of your trip: transportation, stops en route to your destination, access to lodging, meals and restroom facilities, and any activities you do or sites you plan to visit during your stay.
- Make sure the child and/or the adult responsible for her know her daily routines, personal care needs, and how to care for and operate any adaptive equipment.
- Double check that needed medication has been packed. You'll also need to know the medication schedule, even if the girl is responsible for administering her own medication. Make sure the appropriate trip leader has been educated on how to administer emergency medications.
- Provide adequate supervision to meet the needs of all the girls in your group. Know which ones may need reminders or more time to complete personal care needs. It is a lot less frustrating to build in extra time than to have a very tight schedule that is not realistic!
- If you are visiting public places (museums, state or national parks, historic landmarks, etc.), call ahead to arrange for special accommodations. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a public place must make their services, as well as facilities, accessible. Tell them if you will need a sign language interpreter, audio assisted listening or amplifying devices, braille or large print materials, etc. Check with the girl's parents/guardians for the types of assistance she might need and how to request services. (It helps to know the correct name for things!)



# Seeking Council Permission

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Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission. Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland requires travel applications for the following travel experiences:

- Overnight trips: Submit an Overnight Activity Application form at least four weeks prior to the trip.
- Extended overnight trips: Submit Extended Trip Application Part 1 at least six months before the trip, Part 2 at least six weeks prior to the trip and an After Troop Travel Report no more than four weeks after your trip.
- National trips: Submit Extended Trip Application Part 1 at least six months before the trip, Part 2 at least six weeks prior to the trip, and an After Troop Travel Report no more than four weeks after your trip.
- International trips: Submit Extended Trip Application Part 1 at least one year before the trip, Part 2 at least six weeks prior to the trip, and an After Troop Travel Report no more than four weeks after your trip.

In addition, Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland requires troop travel training for any troop or group planning an extended overnight, national, or international trip. Troop Travel training can be found on gsLearn.

Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

- A detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the volunteers participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved
- Participants' skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)



# Participant Expectations

## Participant Responsibilities

You will be traveling and living as a group and will spend a great deal of time together prior to the trip. Each group member has strengths and weaknesses, good and bad days, and fortunate and unfortunate things that happen to them. To make the experience enjoyable and beneficial for everyone, each participant needs to be willing to make compromises. Everyone has to leave a little bit of individuality behind and become part of the group. Everyone has to share their strong points and work to compensate for weaknesses. You need to work together, help each other, and create an experience that each of you, with all your differences, can enjoy and learn from. All participants must:

- Be courteous, cooperative and willing to help other group members.
- Be punctual, and responsible for oneself and one's belongings.
- Use the buddy system so no group member goes somewhere alone or is left alone.
- Not leave the group or the activity area without permission from an adult in charge.
- Immediately notify an adult in the case of illness or injury.
- Notify an adult in charge of any medications brought on the trip and notify when taken.
- Not smoke, use, or possess unprescribed drugs or alcoholic beverages.
- Maintain a clean, neat, complete Girl Scout uniform throughout the event (if applicable).
- Regularly attend pre-trip meetings and stick to the payment schedule.

## Adult Responsibilities

- Complete Troop Travel Application forms.
- Call parent meetings to discuss troop plans and get necessary permission and support.
- Oversee planning and budgeting to ensure practicality.
- Call parent meeting for final briefing.
- Upon return, evaluate trip with participants and seek opportunities for the group/individuals to share their experience.

# Parent/Guardian Meetings

Meetings with girls and parents/guardians provide opportunities to learn about the troop/group trip plans, costs to the parents/guardians and to obtain their approval of activities and written permission.

## Discuss:

- Itinerary (copy to each parent/guardian)
- Transportation
- Participant list (copy to each parent/guardian)
- Permission forms for:
  - ◆ Troop/group travel
  - ◆ Troop/group money earning
  - ◆ Activities requiring specific permission such as swimming, horseback riding, etc.
  - ◆ Traveling with minors
- Standards for behavior and dress
- Health examination and immunizations
- Packing and equipment lists
- Insurance — accident and illness coverage
- Emergency procedures:
  - ◆ Emergency contact person for each participant
  - ◆ Back home contact person
  - ◆ Health examination and health information form
  - ◆ Emergency return home before trip completion
- Trip payments — provide families with dates for scheduled amounts
- Passport and visa obtained (if necessary)
- Best options for carrying and/or converting spending money (i.e. cash, prepaid card, etc.)





# Staying Safe

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Be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip. You may even want to put this information in writing and have the girls sign it:

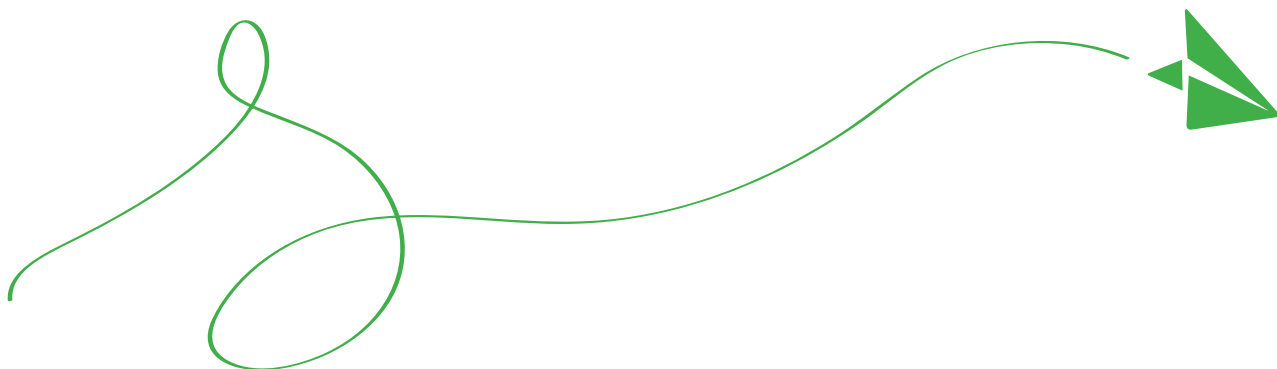
- Who her buddy is — and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant — money, passport, luggage
- How to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
  - ◆ Have the girls help develop an emergency plan for different situations
- How to perform basic first aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd
- What behaviors you expect — and the consequences that exist for behaving inappropriately




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## Hotel, motel, hostel, and dormitory safety

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and chain.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff is at the door call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't shout out or display your room number in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train station).
- Contact the front desk to clear out any minibars or refrigerators in girls' rooms, ensure that inappropriate movies are not accessible through TVs, and to disallow any long-distance calls from being placed from girls' rooms. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel and ask them to contact you if any girls are out of their rooms after bedtime.
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits and obtain the hotel's contact information.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible without stopping to pack your suitcase. Before leaving your room, feel the door: if it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.



# Girl Scouts of the USA stance on use of rental properties

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Troops can use rental properties if certain conditions are met. Troops can reserve properties through Airbnb, Vrbo, and HomeAway. However, because these are privately owned properties, it can be difficult to qualify safety and credibility. For these reasons, additional steps for Airbnb, Vrbo, and HomeAway are required. Confirm the following ahead of time:

- The rental is for exclusive use of the home. No other renters will have access to the home during the rental period.
- The space has smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers (these are noted as amenities on booking sites).
- The home and host have substantial, positive visitor reviews. Don't book places with negative, few or no reviews. Look for Superhost status on Airbnb.
- The liability insurance from the host covers premises for commercial use, with a minimum of \$1,000,000 general liability insurance.
- Check the host's profile or identity verification. You may be asked to do the same, as a renter.
- The local host or manager contact information is available for immediate needs. Share this information with an in-town contact (a person not on the trip).
- Check state laws to see if Airbnb, Vrbo, and HomeAway are mandated to meet hotel laws and standards so that you know there is an extra layer of protection.

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## 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 contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel 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, iPads, and tablets) that are attractive to pickpockets.



# Emergency Checklist

- Consider these items when developing your emergency plan:
- Make sure all adults in attendance understand the GSOH emergency procedures and specific procedures for this trip. Each adult should have a copy of the GSOH Emergency Numbers card and troop/group emergency contact information.
- Ensure that all girls understand expectations and rules – for example:
  - ▶ Should they stay with a certain adult?
  - ▶ Where is it OK to go? With whom?
  - ▶ What should they do if they become separated from the troop/group?
  - ▶ What are the bathroom procedures?
- Design a plan for managing emergency situations, defining how each possible situation would be handled (by whom, who would be notified – when and how) including consideration of:
  - ▶ Natural hazards (lake, cliffs, etc.)
  - ▶ Natural disasters (earthquake, storms, floods, fire, etc.)
  - ▶ Each program activity
  - ▶ Injuries or medical emergencies
  - ▶ Lost children
  - ▶ Strangers or intruders
- Establish and communicate an emergency evacuation plan with all participants. Let them know who is in charge in these situations prior to travel. Where should participants go? Who should they speak with?
- Establish and communicate an emergency evacuation plan with all participants. Let them know who is in charge in these situations prior to travel. Where should participants go? Who should they speak with?
- Specific emergency plans for this trip should include evacuation plans in situations where girls have been dropped off. This is especially important if there are not enough vehicles on site during the activity to evacuate all participants.
- Establish a security plan, adult supervision and placement of adults.
- Establish an emergency communication system. Who should be notified in case of an emergency?
- Establish a back-home emergency contact person.
- Determine how parents/guardians will be communicated with in the event of an emergency.

## Back Home Emergency Contact Person

A back-home emergency contact person must be established for every trip. The back-home emergency contact person must be a person who will NOT be attending the trip, and should know:

- Which girls and adults are present on the trip.
- Where the troop/group is going.
- Dates and times of the trip.
- Where and when the group will return.
- Contact information for the adults present on the trip.
- Contact information for service unit leadership.
- Contact information for all families.
- GSOH Emergency Numbers card.
- Contact information for the hotel/motel/hostel at the destination.



# Involving Chaperones

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the adult-to-girl ratios in the Volunteer Resource Guide. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Registering as a Girl Scout member and completing a background check.
- Being a positive role model.
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment.
- Creating a safe space for girls.
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls.
- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement.
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor.
- Creating an experience for and with girls.

Remind chaperones to be aware of the type of conversations they have in front of the girls. Girls at all ages are very impressionable and comments made in generalization may be taken out of context.

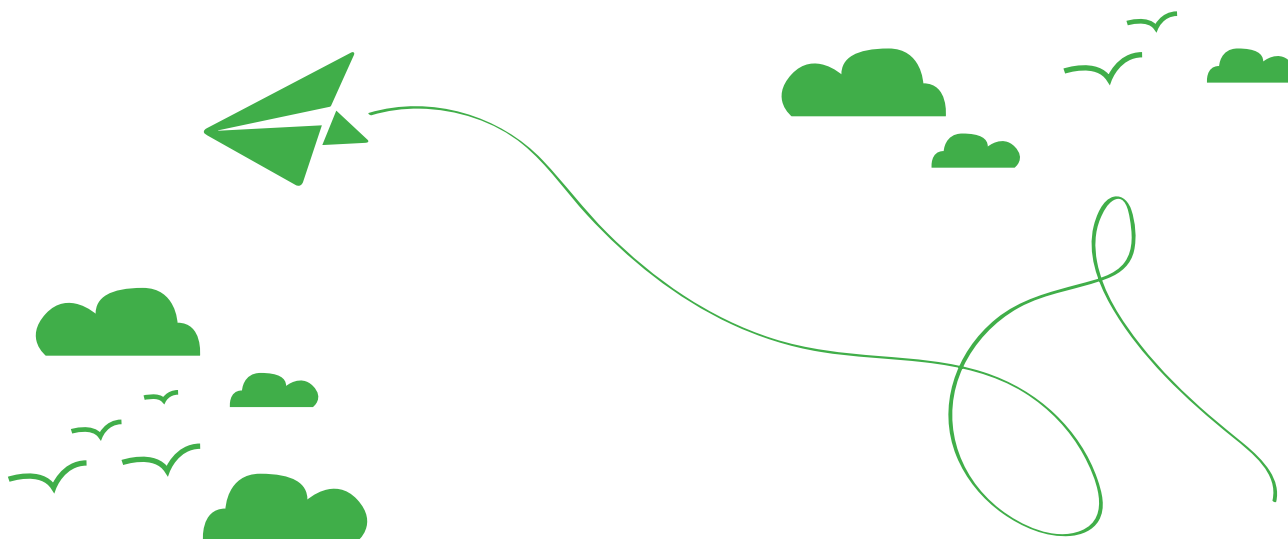
Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available in the Volunteer Resource Guide.

Troop funds may be used for adults to attend but only the minimum number needed based on safety ratios (usually two). Girls should be aware of what their troop funds are going toward and agree.

**NOTE:** In effort to maintain the educational, girl-led component of travel programs, mother-daughter trips are discouraged. Stick to safety ratios!

Men are often involved in the leadership of a troop/group. It is not uncommon for a man to be a troop/group leader, committee member, certified first aider, or the outdoor trained adult. There are no rules that preclude a male adult, who is invited by the troop/group, from traveling with Girl Scouts. Common sense and prior planning will make traveling with a male troop/group adult a positive experience. Follow these simple guidelines:

- Separate sleeping quarters are required. Make sure the facility you reserve has separate accommodations for men to sleep in. It is not appropriate for men to sleep in the same space as girls and women, especially in a Girl Scout setting.
- Adult men do not supervise sleeping areas. A minimum of two unrelated adult women must be present at all times.
- Separate bathroom arrangements are required. Men need to have bathroom facilities available that are not used by the girls or adult women. If only one bathroom is available, coordination of usage is of the utmost concern. A sign posted when the bathroom is off limits to girls and adult women is a must.
- Separate sleeping arrangements are required for spouses. Use common sense when married couples participate in overnight travel. Girl Scouts should be sleeping in separate sleeping quarters from parents/guardians while traveling.



# Transportation

Transportation decisions are an important aspect to any event or trip planning, and your greatest concern is always safety. If you or the girls are arranging group transportation, whether for a day trip or for a much longer travel event, consider the basics of both private and public transit.

## Public transportation

Public transportation includes trains, subways, buses, ferries and airlines. Public transportation is regulated, which makes it preferable to chartered vehicles, but this mode of transportation is not without challenges.

The biggest challenge with any public transportation is staying together as a group, so be sure everyone has directions and a map, and always designate a meet-up area if anyone gets separated.

Girls also need to stay vigilant for criminals, both those who might do them bodily harm and those who are interested in stealing their money, jewelry and electronic devices.

If girls are prepared for their exciting journeys on public transportation, they will have an adventure that they will remember for years.

## Private transportation

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights.

Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old, hold a valid operator's license appropriate to the vehicle, and have a registered/insured vehicle and a good driving record. State laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.

## Checklist for Girls

Girls need to adhere to the following behaviors when riding in vehicles. You may want to create a contract listing the following that girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

- Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
- Assist with reading signs and maps, when asked.
- Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
- Not argue, yell or throw things.
- Play games or listen to music quietly with other passengers.
- Stay with the group during stops.
- Alert the driver to a missing buddy, an obstacle, or an open door or trunk.



## Checklist for drivers

When driving a car, RV or camper take the following precautions and ask other drivers to do the same.

- Every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid operator's license appropriate to the vehicle, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Ensure all drivers are adults — girls may not transport other girls.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date, such as your driver's license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspection, insurance coverage, etc.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip; check them periodically on long trips.
- Wear your seat belt at all times and insist that passengers do the same. Keep girls under 12 in the back seat to avoid injury from airbag deployment. Adhere to Ohio state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in Ohio and in any other state in which you are driving (following

the speed limit, keeping a length of two cars between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone, not using ear buds or headphones, etc.).

- Avoid driving for extended periods at night or when taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours. If driving with others, prearrange stopping places.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-to-adult ratios must be followed as outlined in the GSOH Volunteer Resource Guide.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-to-adult ratios must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.
- Avoid caravanning or traveling as a group of vehicles in a single file. Travel at a safe distance within visibility of the group's other vehicles.

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## Other recommendations

It is recommended that you create a folder for each car that will be transporting girls during your trip. This folder should include for each participant:

- Parent/guardian trip/event permission form
- Health history forms
- GSOH Emergency Numbers card
- Girl Scout activity insurance information
- Accident/injury report form
- Incident report form
- Troop roster with phone numbers of other drivers and back-home contacts
- Trip itinerary
- Map, directions or address of destination
- Contact information for lodgings at destination



# Budgeting

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Girl Scout trips should be affordable to all the girls in the troop/group. The girls should be involved in all financial decisions. Parental support is essential. Discuss travel plans, budgeting and money-earning projects with families before finalizing plans.

When creating the budget, be sure to calculate all costs, which may include event registration, admission, duplication of materials, transportation, parking, gas, insurance, lodging and food. Indicate the amount paid by the troop and the amount paid by each girl. **Passports and spending money are personal expenses – troop funds may not be used.**

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Regarding spending money, having discretionary funds is great for girls! They can make decisions about spending their money and learning to manage it themselves. While you cannot demand that parents send a certain amount of spending money, you may provide a suggested minimum. You may (and should) set a limit. It is important to have a consensus on an amount of spending money appropriate to the trip.

All money belongs to the troop/group, and not to the individuals. Girls should decide how different possible situations will be handled ahead of time, including:

- Should everyone have to participate equally in all of the money-earning projects? What if someone doesn't?
- What should happen if a girl leaves the group before the trip, or a girl/girls are unable to go on the trip?
- What percentage of money should be held to cover regular troop/group expenses and other activities?
- Not all families can afford to spend the same amount for activities. Will there be some money set aside for financial assistance?
- How could a confidential system be set in place to allow girls to apply for the funds?
- How should it be handled if a new girl joins the troop/group sometime before the trip?
- What will the money be used for if travel plans fall through?





# Money-Earning

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Not all trips involve money-earning projects, but if yours does:

- GSUSA and GSOH policies and guidelines must be followed. Everyone must understand that the money earned by the troop/group does not belong to individual girls. If a girl cannot go on the trip, she forfeits any portion of the trip funds she helped earn, and all money is kept in troop/group funds.
- The troop/group must submit a Troop/Group Money Earning Activity Application.
- All monies must be reported on the Troop/Group Finance Report.
- Contact your membership manager if you need help sorting out financial questions.

## General money-earning ideas

In addition to product program (cookies, etc.), girls earn money for Girl Scout trips in many ways, including some of the following examples that provide girls with public speaking, financial literacy, and marketing skills, among others.

- Garage sales
- Bake sales
- Car washes
- Pet walking
- Craft bazaars and sales
- Specially designed T-shirt sales
- Seasonal sales: holiday wreaths, poinsettias, cards, wrapping paper and homemade ornaments
- Face painting at community events
- Group babysitting for community events and church groups
- Pancake breakfast or spaghetti dinner at a school or church event for the general public
- Odd jobs in the neighborhood such as raking leaves or shoveling snow
- House cleaning or painting for senior citizens
- Gift wrapping
- Concession stands at local neighborhood sporting events
- Planning a service unit event for younger girls
- Homemade pizza or sub sales

Additional troop money-earning projects should take place only after fall product and cookie programs have taken place. Advanced approval is required from your membership manager. If you have questions about the appropriateness of particular troop money-earning opportunities, please contact your membership manager.

**Girl Scout groups are not permitted to participate in product demonstration parties, raffles, drawings, games of chance, the sale of commercial products (other than those offered during council sponsored sales), and door to door solicitation.**

Girl Scout groups and individuals must have permission from GSOH before asking organizations, foundations or individuals for financial or in-kind gifts.





# Insurance

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## Girl Scout activity insurance

Basic activity accident insurance covering minor medical injuries is included in each member's annual registration dues. Coverage applies to members AND non-members when participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities which includes approved troop travel experiences. Direct travel to and from troop meetings is also covered. Basic coverage does not cover illness and is secondary in line to pay any claim behind the injured member's health insurance.

Supplemental activity insurance is necessary to add sickness coverage, or to make the insurance primary (the first to pay).

Note that Girl Scout Activity Insurance is not a substitute for health insurance coverage, because the total benefits available are very low. It provides no coverage for automobile owners and/or driver liability. Read the vehicle insurance

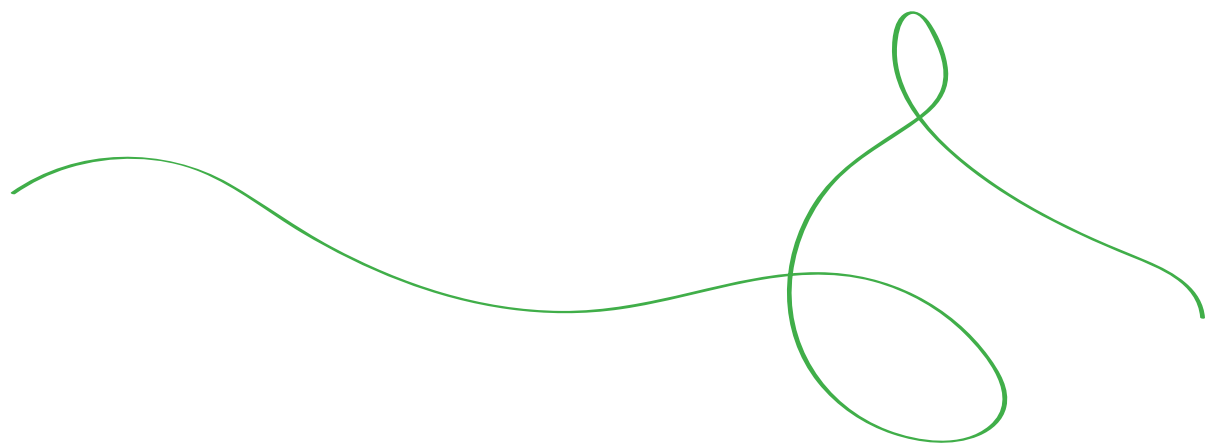
section of this guide to determine what coverage, if any, applies to your situation.

Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland is never responsible for payment of medical expenses incurred by a member. GSOH's only role is to verify insurance coverage for any member's claim. After coverage is verified through registration or a supplemental policy, the claim is forwarded to United of Omaha for processing and payment.

To purchase supplemental coverage, contact the GSOH Property Director at least six weeks before the event/trip by emailing [riskmanager@gsoh.org](mailto:riskmanager@gsoh.org). Please refer to the Insurance Purchase Request Form on our website to find a list of required information. **Supplemental insurance is required for all international travel.**

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To file a claim, fill out a claim form (found at [www.gsoh.org](http://www.gsoh.org)) and keep a copy for your records. Return the completed form to the GSOH properties director, who will forward the verified claim to United of Omaha. When giving insurance information to the health care provider, you must provide your primary health insurance coverage information to that provider. The secondary coverage will be United of Omaha. Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland is never a responsible party for payment. Be sure to inform the health care provider that it will take 30 days for United of Omaha to receive and review the claim, so they may need to delay billing until that time has passed. If United of Omaha hasn't received claim information from GSOH, it will reject the claim, and the provider will look to the patient for payment. Be sure to file claims in a timely manner to avoid being sent to a collection agency by the health care provider.



# Girl Scouts insurance plans

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## AUTOMATIC PLAN 1

### Activity Accident

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member has this insurance. Coverage is automatic upon registration in the Movement and payment of dues. This coverage is for any approved and supervised Girl Scout activity and covers domestic trips of any length (does NOT include cruises).

## PLAN 3P

### Optional Plan 3P- Accident plus Sickness

This plan provides accident and sickness primary coverage. This coverage is for any approved and supervised Girl Scout activity or domestic trip. The premium cost is \$0.70 per participant, per day or a minimum premium of \$5. (Most common use of this plan is for accident and sickness primary coverage)

## PLAN 3PI

### Accident and Sickness Insurance for International Trips

Plan 3PI includes essentially the same coverage found in Plan 3P but with a Travel Assistance Service feature added. The premium cost is \$1.17 each day or a minimum premium of \$5. (Most common use of this plan is for accident, sickness and Travel Assistance primary coverage for trips outside of the US, including any and all cruises).

# Insurance

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## Transportation and vehicle insurance

Girl Scout members and volunteers are responsible for maintaining adequate levels of liability coverage required by Ohio for their vehicles. Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland does not provide vehicle insurance coverage. Troops who rent vehicles are highly encouraged to purchase additional coverage through the rental company.

Troops/groups are responsible for selecting their own rental, charter bus, or airline companies in accordance with Safety Activity Checkpoint guidelines. GSOH does not endorse or recommend any particular company. If you have questions regarding rental and charter arrangements, contact the properties director.

Your group may want to purchase travel insurance in the event your trip is canceled due to illness, company closing, or the like. This is especially good if you are chartering transportation. Please check with your travel agent or with the organization planning your trip.

Girl Scout volunteer drivers are expected to follow the appropriate guidelines as established in the Safety Activity Checkpoints regarding vehicle transportation. Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland checks automobile driving records at the troop level only upon request. Contact the properties director to put in a request.

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## In case of serious accident, emergency or fatality

1. Care for any injured/ill persons and obtain emergency personnel, such as police, fire or emergency squads.
2. If any children are injured, contact their parent or guardian immediately. Inform them of their child's condition, the nature of the injury, and where the child has been transported for emergency care. If the child does not require emergency transport, follow the parent's instructions regarding care. When in doubt, call for an emergency squad.
3. In the event of a fatality, call the police immediately. Secure the area and see that no one disturbs the victim or their surroundings. A responsible adult should remain at the scene until the police arrive.
4. Contact council representatives at 614-487-8101 or 800-621-7042 when calling from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
5. If the office is closed, call 614-447-7092. This is a message service that will contact council representatives. Please leave your name, contact phone number and a brief summary of the situation. A council employee will contact you as soon as possible.
6. Do not discuss questions of responsibility or liability. Cooperate with law enforcement and medical personnel, but do not talk to media representatives. Please refer them to council.

**Please take this information with you on the trip.**

# Preparing to Pack

Deciding what to pack for a trip can be a big challenge. When you are standing in front of your closet you think you need so many garments, yet not all of them will fit in your suitcase, backpack or duffle bag. Your wardrobe will have to be carefully planned so clothes can be mixed and matched, hand-washed and dried. You will want to minimize the number of bulky items you bring, such as shoes, coats, and sweatshirts.

So, how should you proceed? Let's unpack a few ideas:

- **P**ut together a wardrobe that consists of clothes with complimentary colors that can be worn together in different combinations. Consider using plastic baggies to sort and compress clothing.
- **A**lways remember that airlines have specific regulations about permissible size and weight for luggage, and these requirements are firmly observed. Review the list of things you cannot take with you — or that you must pack in your checked bag.
- **C**hoose the type of bag you will use — make sure it's not too bulky. In general, girls have been happy with frame packs that convert into suitcases.
- **K**eep in mind that you should leave your expensive jewelry at home. Also, if you wear glasses or contact lenses, you should bring an extra pair with you, along with a copy of the prescription.
- **L**abel your luggage, clothing and equipment inside and out with both your name and address. It is also advisable for each participant to take out short-term travel insurance just in case something gets lost or stolen.
- **I**magine all the SWAPs you will collect and the souvenirs you may buy — leave room in your luggage for these items.
- **G**et extra batteries, SD memory cards, and sanitary supplies because these may be expensive during your trip.
- **H**eed the advice of veteran travelers and keep all important documents — airline tickets, identification, medicines, contacts, glasses, etc. — in your handbag. Also, pack your carry-on luggage with one spare change of clothes just in case your checked luggage gets lost.
- **T**ake a walk around your block carrying all your luggage. If you come back huffing and puffing, start to unpack some of those things that might not be so vital after all.

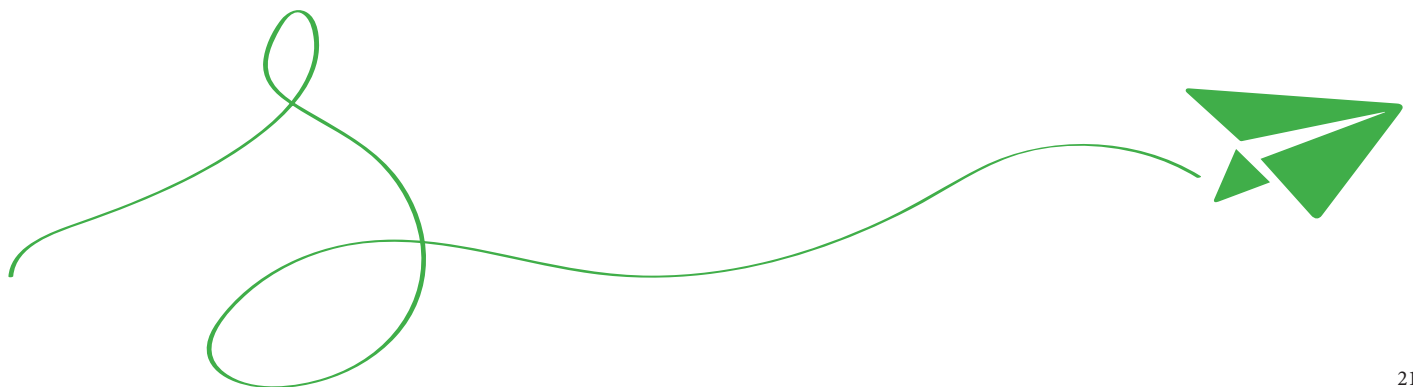
And most importantly, remember to **pack light!**



# Travel Forms Checklist

This chart only pertains to those going on Level 4 and 5 trips.

Six months to two years in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read and understand the information in this packet as well as the Global Travel Toolkit (<a href="http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/resources/global-travel-toolkit">forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/resources/global-travel-toolkit</a>). Questions may be directed to the GSOH program team at <a href="mailto:travel@gsoh.org">travel@gsoh.org</a>.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notify GSOH of your plans by completing the Extended Travel Application Part 1. If your service unit has a travel position, notify them as well. GSOH program team will review and approve your application or make suggestions for improvement.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be certain that GSUSA and GSOH policies and standards related to troop travel and money earning are known and observed. The troop/group money earning application is to be completed and returned to your membership manager.</li> </ul>
Six months in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be sure that the troop travel permission has been obtained. If this trip includes unusual risk, controversial issues or situations not covered in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, you should seek GSOH guidance in creating a special permission form.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional insurance: GSUSA requires that additional health/accident insurance be obtained for major trips. This insurance is in addition to the usual Girl Scout coverage, and is a standard package arranged by GSUSA. The cost is minimal. For more information, see page 17. Allow six to eight weeks for processing.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All health and emergency contact information should be obtained for each girl and adult participant. Health and emergency forms are to be taken with you on the trip. Make a copy for the back-home emergency contact person.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure a certified CPR and first aid person. If camping, secure a certified troop camper. Trainings are scheduled through GSOH.</li> </ul>
Two to three months in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete and submit the Extended Travel Application Part 2 to the GSOH program team. This form indicates your departure and travel details.</li> </ul>
Forms to keep for your records and take on your trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health History Form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Travel Insurance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Troop Travel Permission</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Permission to travel with minors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Photo Release Form</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In case of serious accident, emergency or fatality information</li> </ul>
One to three weeks after the trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete, along with travel participants, the Extended Travel Application Part 3 and submit to the GSOH program team.</li> </ul>



# International Travel

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Traveling abroad can be an incredibly enriching experience, but the actual trip is only the icing on the cake when it comes to the amount of preparation time required to ensure a successful trip. Any traveling troops/groups planning an international trip should start planning at least two to three years in advance of the trip.

Troops/groups interested in planning an international travel experience need to follow the usual Girl Scout planning guidelines. In addition, arrange for lots of extra planning time for:

- Researching and planning the trip
- Money-earning
- International ticketing and booking
- Becoming a cohesive group that can work and play together

This planning document and the Safety-Wise chapter in Volunteer Resource Guide (VRG) should be studied carefully by you and the girls as you plan together and shared with group members' parents/guardians through information meetings, newsletters and email updates.

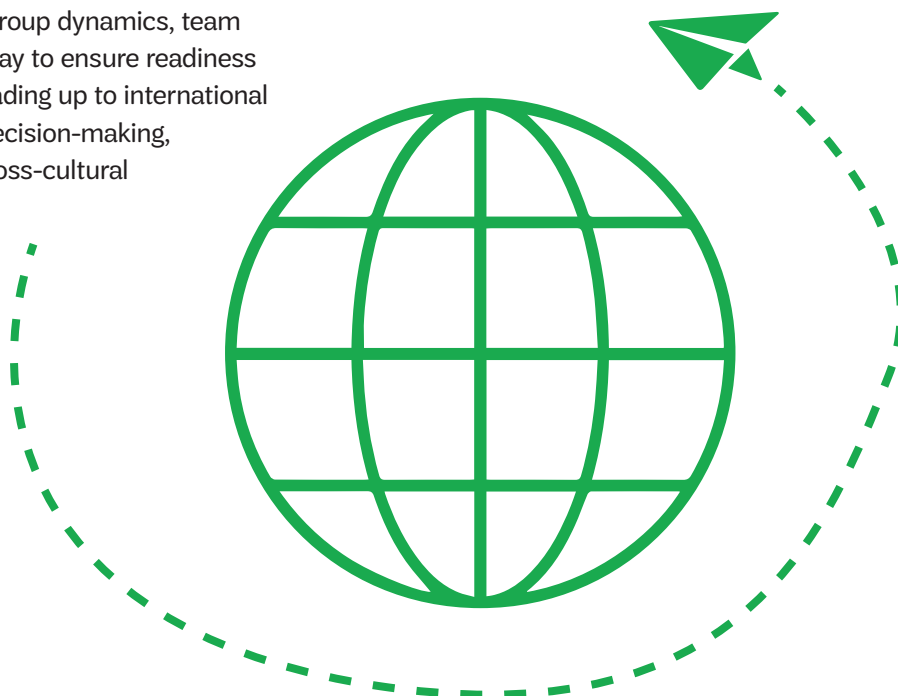
It is of utmost importance that any group planning to travel abroad learns about the political and social climate, environment, and culture of the country they will be visiting. Additional resources for doing this may include recent travelers who have visited the country, people who have lived in the country, the U.S. Department of State, the Center for Disease Control, travel sites, newspapers, hosteling organizations, museums and other points of interest, and individual WAGGGS World Centers.

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## Readiness for international travel

There are several factors to consider when deciding if you are ready for international travel. GSUSA recommends that girls be 14 years old and above at the time of travel for major international trips, particularly because there are age recommendations for WAGGGS program facilities. With age comes maturity and experience that leads to good decision-making. Other factors to consider are adaptability, previous cross-cultural experience, group dynamics, team capability, and language skills. One way to ensure readiness is to build activities into your time leading up to international travel that focus on team-building, decision-making, overnight travel, skill-building, and cross-cultural understanding.

It is your responsibility to ensure that girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Positive experiences away from home and family should be a prerequisite. It is advisable when traveling outside of the United States that there be an adult at least 25 years or older to accompany every group of eight Girl Scouts ages 14 to 18 years old.



# International Itinerary

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Consider these factors when planning an international trip:

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## Length and time of overseas flights:

Flying time to European countries runs between five and 10 hours; to Asian countries it may run 10 to 20 hours or more. Mexico and Caribbean nations are closer, but flights to South American and African countries can be very long. Flying east or west across time zones may cause jet lag. These date and time factors must be incorporated into the group's itinerary, and adequate allowances must be made for procedures at international airports (lengthy!), transfer to and from airports, and time to recover from travel fatigue and jet lag.

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## Arrival and departure cities:

At least one full day and night should be allowed in the cities of arrival and departure. This means booking accommodations for the first and last nights of the trip in the city of international arrival and departure. Too many unexpected things can delay travel — weather, accidents, strikes, etc. Because groups will probably use non-transferable tickets to save money, a missed flight could be very costly. Added ticket insurance is highly recommended. Remember to confirm your flight no later than 72 hours before departure.

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## Expanding the international experience:

Girls might wish to expand the international opportunity by traveling to places of significant interest beyond the Girl Scout purposes of the trip. A good way to do this is to plan a few days of activities at the beginning and/or the end of the group's time in the host country. In most instances, it is best for independent group travel/sightseeing to be limited to only one country. Girl Scout international experiences are more than mere tourism; they provide opportunities to get to know Girl Guides, Girl Scouts, and other people from different countries and cultures. Girls usually develop a real feeling of belonging after attending an international encampment or visiting a World Center, and despite what they may imagine before the trip, they won't really want to go to another country when they have spent time with, and made friends in, the host country.

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## International budget tips

Preparing to travel abroad is a major undertaking and financial commitment for girls, their families, and the adults traveling with them. The budget should be reasonable, without causing undue hardship on individual families. Considerations to bear in mind when planning the group's budget:

- The event, project or session fee, if attending international encampments or sessions at World Centers. Normally, this fee includes the cost of food. If food costs are extra, the amount is usually reasonable.
- Lodging and meals for the remainder of the time not spent at encampments or World Centers.
- International airfare, baggage fees, etc.
- Local travel within the host country (trains, buses, streetcars, taxis, etc.)
- Sightseeing tours and/or museum fees.
- Emergency funds.
- Personal expenses (passport, souvenirs, postage, etc.) from \$300-\$600 each.
- International phone service fees or phone cards.
- Tips/gratuities



# Required documents

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One of the most important aspects of planning an overseas trip is securing the necessary travel documents. Generally, a passport is required to enter any country. Sometimes a country stipulates that visitors must obtain a visa or provide other documentation. Travel agencies should have the latest requirements, but it is advisable to double-check with the U.S. Department of State website ([state.gov](http://state.gov)).

To prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documented evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the absent parents/guardians. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

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## Passports

There are several places where you can apply for a passport. First, you can apply in person before a clerk of a state or federal court that is authorized to accept passport applications. Some post offices also accept passport applications.

Before you go to apply for a passport, inquire about exactly what you should bring with you as identification. The federal government has specific requirements about the proof they will accept to attest to your identity and residence.

You will need your birth certificate and passport photos. You must present an official copy of your birth certificate, one with a raised seal — a photocopy will not be accepted. If your original birth certificate has been misplaced, you should write to the local health department's bureau of vital statistics and/or the town hall in the town or city of your birth. They will tell you what you must do to obtain another birth certificate.

There are also regulations regarding passport pictures. The photography must be 2 inches by 2 inches and the person must be posed at a specific angle. To ensure that your pictures will be acceptable, have them taken by someone who specializes in passport photos. The whole process of obtaining your passport is a lengthy one, so make sure to give

yourself plenty of time. In fact, it may take four to six weeks for a passport to arrive. Also, remember that your passport is an extremely important document and should be signed immediately upon receipt.

If you already own a passport, it is extremely important to check the expiration date. It is recommended that your passport be valid for at least six months beyond the conclusion of your international trip. If it is not, you should contact the passport agency to inquire about the renewal. Before leaving on an international trip, travelers are advised to make two photocopies of their passports. The copies should be kept separate from your official passport — keep one set in carry-on luggage or a handbag and leave the other set at home. If a passport is lost or stolen, the photocopy will expedite its replacement. At minimum, a record of the passport number should be kept. (Similarly, you will also want to make copies of important documents such as all IDs, credit cards, and travel arrangements and leave a copy at home.)

*CAUTION: Passports should be guarded carefully! The loss or mutilation of a passport is considered a serious matter by the U.S. Department of State and could result in significant delay should the passport require replacement.*

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## Visas

Persons requiring visas for a country they are visiting should check with the country's embassy or consulate for instructions on obtaining the visa. Passport and processing fees must be sent to the embassy or consulate, after receiving instructions from them. Passports should be sent by certified mail only. Four to six weeks should be allowed for processing and return mail.



# Documents Con't.

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## Foreign travel for minors who are not traveling with parents/guardians

Minors traveling without their parents/guardians must carry with them two copies of a notarized letter, signed by both parents or legal guardians, giving permission to travel to a foreign country. Where there is only one parent/guardian, the letter must state that parent/guardian has full legal custody of the young person in question. If parents are divorced or separated but have joint custody, they must both sign the letter.

If you are unsure about any steps regarding passports, visas or official government travel paperwork, visit [travel.state.gov/passport](https://travel.state.gov/passport).

Citizens of other countries traveling in your troop should contact the embassy of the country you'll be traveling to for special instructions.



# Staying healthy for international travel

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Although immensely exciting and fun, traveling abroad can also be physically strenuous and emotionally tiring. You will constantly be in new situations, meeting new people and eating new food, and all of this can be overwhelming. It is quite important for you to recognize the signs of fatigue or ill health and to communicate any of these problems to the leaders of your group. Also, it is important for you to embark on your international journey in the best shape possible to avoid illnesses.

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## Before travel

**Health forms:** All participants who travel abroad under the name of Girl Scouts are required to complete a health form. The information on this form must be thoroughly and honestly filled out. It is important to address any pertinent health issues before they become a problem.

**Immunizations:** When traveling to some countries, you may need current immunization against diseases. For details, visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

**Dealing with prescription drugs:** If participants are bringing any prescription or non-prescription drugs, these should be properly labeled so that they will not be mistaken for illegal drugs by customs officials. A copy of the prescription should be carried as well, using generic names rather than brand names for the ingredients. Brand names may not be known in another country.

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## During Travel

You should eat sensibly, get enough rest, and take care of any health problems promptly. If these three things are done, the group should have a healthy trip. An international opportunity is not the time to go on a crash diet, go off medication, or stay up for nights on end. An illness affects not only the individual, but the entire group as well. Again, it is important to follow council and Safety Activity Checkpoints when traveling as Girl Scouts. Use judgment when deciding between a host country's norms — whether to drink the local water, rappel down a mountainside, or ride the local public transportation.

Water borne diseases can easily endanger your health and the success of your trip. Whether traveling to Mexico or Europe, do some research on local water supplies and health issues and act accordingly:

- Only purified (bottled or boiled) water should be used for drinking, brushing teeth, and cleaning wounds when water quality is in doubt. Hot tea and bottled soft drinks are safe to drink, but ice should not be used unless you are certain it was made with purified water.
- Raw vegetables (including salads) or fruit that is not peeled should not be eaten.
- Meat should be ordered well-done.
- Milk or dairy products (including ice cream) should be avoided unless you are certain they come from a dairy farm where the milk is pasteurized.
- Prepared food from street vendors should be avoided.

Only clean, chlorinated swimming pools should be used for swimming, unless water has been tested and certified by a public health organization. Salt water and fresh water bodies (rivers, lakes and ponds) can contain parasites and bacteria, especially in tropical countries.

# Packing for international travel

Packing for international travel is a skill, and like any skill it is acquired only with practice and experience. As a Girl Scout troop/group planning an international trip, you will most likely have followed a progression of travel, taking local trips together and packing for camping trips and other opportunities. Packing for international travel, however, is different. The following criteria must be met:

- Because of deregulation, different airlines have different luggage limitations for international flights. A travel agent or airline itself should be consulted. Whatever the limitations are, they must be met. Airlines are strict about carry-on luggage, and many airlines have weight restrictions for luggage.
- Each participant must be able to independently carry everything she decides to bring. That includes daypack, camera, suitcase and/or backpack. Girls must be able to maneuver their belongings easily enough to run for a train, if necessary.
- A versatile, easy-care wardrobe is needed that can be adjusted to unexpected occasions and unpredictable weather. A few items that can be mixed and matched to create different looks are the most useful. Hand-washables and clothing that dries quickly are good travelers.

Obviously, if luggage must be lightweight and easily portable, and yet clothing and equipment must be adaptable to or for a variety of conditions (many of which cannot be determined before leaving), then the whole matter of what to take and how to pack requires some extra-careful planning. Layering can be very important, especially when traveling at different altitudes.

The most common mistake of the inexperienced traveler is packing too much and then having to lug around a heavy bag.

It is helpful to consult travel books, websites and people who have traveled to the same country. Also consider the type of event being planned and what type of clothing might be needed. For example, campers in northern Europe in the summer-time must plan for warm, wet and cold weather all within the same day. Visitors to the West Indies won't need an overcoat at any time of the year — just a light sweater. In India, during the winter, it can be hot down south but very cold up north.

## Additional packing hints

- Liquids should be transferred to plastic bottles. They should never be filled to the brim —allow for expansion at high altitudes. Bottles should be taped closed and then placed in plastic baggies.
- Do not pack non-essential electrical devices. Current and voltage differs in other countries. To safely use a device, you may need to bring a voltage converter.
- Plastic bags of different sizes can be used to organize clothing and other items by type or day, and to compress air from clothing for tighter packing.
- A portable clothesline can be very useful.



# WAGGGS

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## Communication with World Centers and WAGGGS member associations

Although there are currently 144 member organizations in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), Girl Scouts of the USA, with a membership of more than 3 million girls and adults, represents approximately one-third of the total WAGGGS membership. Our large size enables us to provide our membership with a variety of supports not always available in smaller Girl Guide/Girl Scout organizations.

In all communication with the World Bureau, the World Centers, or other WAGGGS member associations, it is important to remember that:

- GSUSA is a member of WAGGGS, not vice-versa
  - Individuals, troops/groups, and councils should NOT contact individual WAGGGS member countries. All contacts must go through GSUSA.
  - Other member associations may do things differently from GSUSA because their resources, needs and cultures are different from ours. Our expectations must adjust to these realities; however, Safety Activity Checkpoints should govern GSUSA members' planning, decision-making and actions in other countries. (i.e., you can't go on the hot air balloon ride offered at a WAGGGS encampment).
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## Contacting a World Center

Each of the four World Centers has its own website that can be accessed through the WAGGGS website ([www.waggggs.org](http://www.waggggs.org)). Because of the small staffs at the World Centers and the high volume of visitors, it is strongly requested that only essential communication be sent.

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## Contacting the World Bureau

The World Bureau is not a source of information for troop programs. It is an administrative office serving the 144 national offices of the Girl Guide/Girl Scout organizations around the world. Its offices are small, and tours are not generally offered. Individuals and groups should not contact the World Bureau.

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## Contacting Girl Guide/Girl Scout Associations in Other Countries

Each national organization is responsible for responding to its own membership through its own system. A special worldwide practice has been in effect for many years to ensure that the small staffs are not overburdened with correspondence. This practice requires that only the international commissioners carry out all correspondence between Girl Guide/Girl Scout organizations. This includes email correspondence. Girl Guide and Girl Scout association addresses in other countries are not available to the general membership of GSUSA or to the general membership of any other Girl Guide or Girl Scout association.



# WAGGGS Con't.

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## The World Centers

When traveling to Pune, India; Adelboden, Switzerland; London, England; and Cuernavaca, Mexico, girls and adults can enjoy the four World Centers owned and operated by WAGGGS. Visits to the centers offer unparalleled opportunities to explore other cultures because guests not only experience the customs and traditions indigenous to the regions, but they also benefit from interacting with other international travelers.

Each World Center offers an information atmosphere that encourages interaction among visitors. Each guest is

**Our Cabaña (Cuernavaca, Mexico):** Sessions feature community service projects, folk arts, tours to nearby historical sites, and fiestas.

**Pax Lodge (London, England):** Sessions focus on English history and culture, with a special emphasis on the roots of Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting.

**Our Chalet (Adelboden, Switzerland):** Sessions are focused on the outdoors, and include skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer, all with skilled instructors.

**Sangam (Pune, India):** Sessions feature Indian culture, family lifestyles, religions and the arts, as well as service opportunities in nearby urban and rural communities.

**Kusafiri (Africa):** Kusafiri World Center uses existing facilities to bring World Center experiences to Africa. The 'center' has no fixed site, changing location for every event.

These descriptions are only a brief overview of the types of activities or topics that might comprise an event at a particular World Center. In the months preceding your event, you will receive more specific information from the center that you plan to visit. You are also encouraged to visit each center's website.

expected to contribute to the daily operation of the center and most chores are performed through the patrol system. Because storage space is limited, visitors are asked to bring only those items that are essential. The World Centers are an incredibly valuable resource for all members of the Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding community and they should always be treated with care and respect.

Activities at the World Centers generally focus on a theme and will have a seminar or discussion component.



# WAGGS Con't.

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## Important things to know when visiting a world center

Although GSUSA is only one of 144 member associations in WAGGS, it makes up almost one-third of the entire world membership.

For this reason, it is very important that United States visitors to the World Centers exercise the utmost cultural sensitivity. Visitors should not expect or request special treatment, nor should they impose American cultural values upon other visitors or staff at the centers.

Although the United States is a country of great informality in dress and manner, this is not acceptable at the World Centers. The uniform is given greater importance, respect and significance in most other Girl Guide and Girl Scout associations and this is especially true at the World Centers.

Complaints have been lodged in recent years about the dress habits and manners of U.S. Girl Scouts visiting the centers. Incorporate this into a group discussion prior to traveling.

Although GSUSA doesn't require ownership of a uniform for membership, when visiting the World Centers Girl Scout visitors are expected to wear the complete, correct, and official Girl Scout uniform. Unofficial or "made-up" uniforms are not acceptable, nor are camp or council T-shirts (if worn as "official" uniforms).

Sports clothing should be neat and tidy and of conservative length and style. Shorts are not acceptable dress outside of the World Centers, but in most cases well-pressed, neat, conservative shorts may be worn inside the World Center grounds.

Flag ceremonies are an important part of daily life at the World Centers, and visitors should be familiar with flag etiquette. It is necessary to learn the World Song and World Association handshake.

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## Giving gifts to the World Center

It is sometimes the custom for World Center visitors to bring small gifts. While gifts are always appreciated, the World Centers receive many similar items from well-meaning visitors and often do not have the necessary room to store such items. A monetary gift to a World Center, however, can be put toward whatever is needed most and will be most gratefully accepted. If a Girl Scout visitor is determined to bring a gift, it is best to write ahead and ask if anything specific is needed.



# Cross-Cultural Experiences

## Previous cross-cultural experiences

It is helpful if travelers have been exposed to people from other cultures and countries, have had some kind of language training, and most importantly, are actively interested in learning about new cultures and new ways of approaching the world. They should be willing to try new ways of doing things and new foods. Travelers should be accepting of others' religions and values and that people view the United States from a different perspective abroad. It is important to avoid creating anti-American feelings because of perceived attitudes reflected through dress, actions and bad manners. Travelers should do their homework beforehand about the customs and cultures they will be encountering.

## Cultural similarities and differences

A trip abroad can be compared to the images seen through a kaleidoscope, where each of the crystals and colors represents a different region of the world, type of food, attitude, behavior and value. With each turn of the kaleidoscope's knob, the pattern changes and looks different, but neither is right or wrong, better or worse. The same is true of the variety of cultures that you will encounter on your travels abroad.

During your travels you will probably experience some measure of "culture shock," or bewilderment, about the things you see, hear, taste or smell. But those very differences are what make traveling so exciting! So, take the time to ask questions, explore, and even compare how people are the same, or different, than we are here in the United States. While you can be proud of your nationality, you want to avoid the belief that the "American way" is the best way and that any other method, approach or idea is wrong, rather than simply different.

Remember, too, that the "American way" is as different, complex and confusing to visitors from other cultures as other cultures are to us!

Traveling internationally opens the door to cross-cultural understanding, and a connection to a global community. Part of what makes these experiences so amazing are the differences between what we are used to and what we discover through travel. Girl Scout travelers need to be prepared to accept differences and new challenges, and ready to open their minds to new ways of life. Girl Scouts should especially take the following into consideration when preparing for an event abroad:

The **food** you will be served will almost certainly be different from that which you are used to eating. Remember to be gracious even if you do not like a particular dish or if you find a certain type of food unappetizing. Also, the way food is prepared or consumed varies from country to country, so follow the lead of people who are native to the area you are visiting. For example, in many developing countries the left hand is considered dirty, and therefore is not used in eating or in other types of transactions. Before you go, you and the

other members of your group may want to explore the types of food you might be served as well as the etiquette surrounding meals in the country that you will be visiting.

What you wear derives, in large part, from your cultural affiliation. You will need to carefully consider what **clothes** you will bring with you. Travelers usually pack as lightly as possible while at the same time bringing clothes that will allow them to appear neat and presentable in a variety of formal and informal settings. In general, jeans are a norm and are quite comfortable and versatile. In places where warm weather prevails, skirts can be very common. There are often differing opinions about shorts; but as a rule, very short or very tight shorts (or any other kind of similar clothing) are not appropriate.

**Space** is a commodity in many places around the world and people live in closer proximity than may be usual in some areas of the United States. It is important to be aware that these conditions might exist so that you are not surprised if your living arrangements are not quite as private or as comfortable as you might expect or like. Don't be upset if someone stands very close while talking to you. Again, this is simply a cultural difference — try to be sensitive and understanding.

Coed friendships in other areas of the world often have very different parameters or associations than they do in the United States. Sometimes, groups of young women and young men go out together much the same way that they do in our country. In some places, single dating is not a regular practice and if a man and a woman go out alone together, that means they are engaged. Do a little research about the customs and traditions of the country you will be visiting so that you can ask your new international friends meaningful questions when you arrive at your destination.

This is just a start of the kinds of new experiences you will have in a foreign country. With an open mind and heart, you will benefit and grow by identifying and appreciating the differences and similarities of the new cultures that you will encounter.



# Reengaging Girls

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The end of this trip doesn't have to be the end of a girl's time with Girl Scouting. Some girls participate in Girl Scouting in all sorts of ways; others are excited only about travel. What lies ahead for them — and for you?!

Girls who have never been involved in any other way besides travel may be looking for longer-term opportunities closer at home. Younger Cadettes may want to participate in resident camp, while Seniors and Ambassadors — as well as older Cadettes — will want to hear all about upcoming series and events at your council.

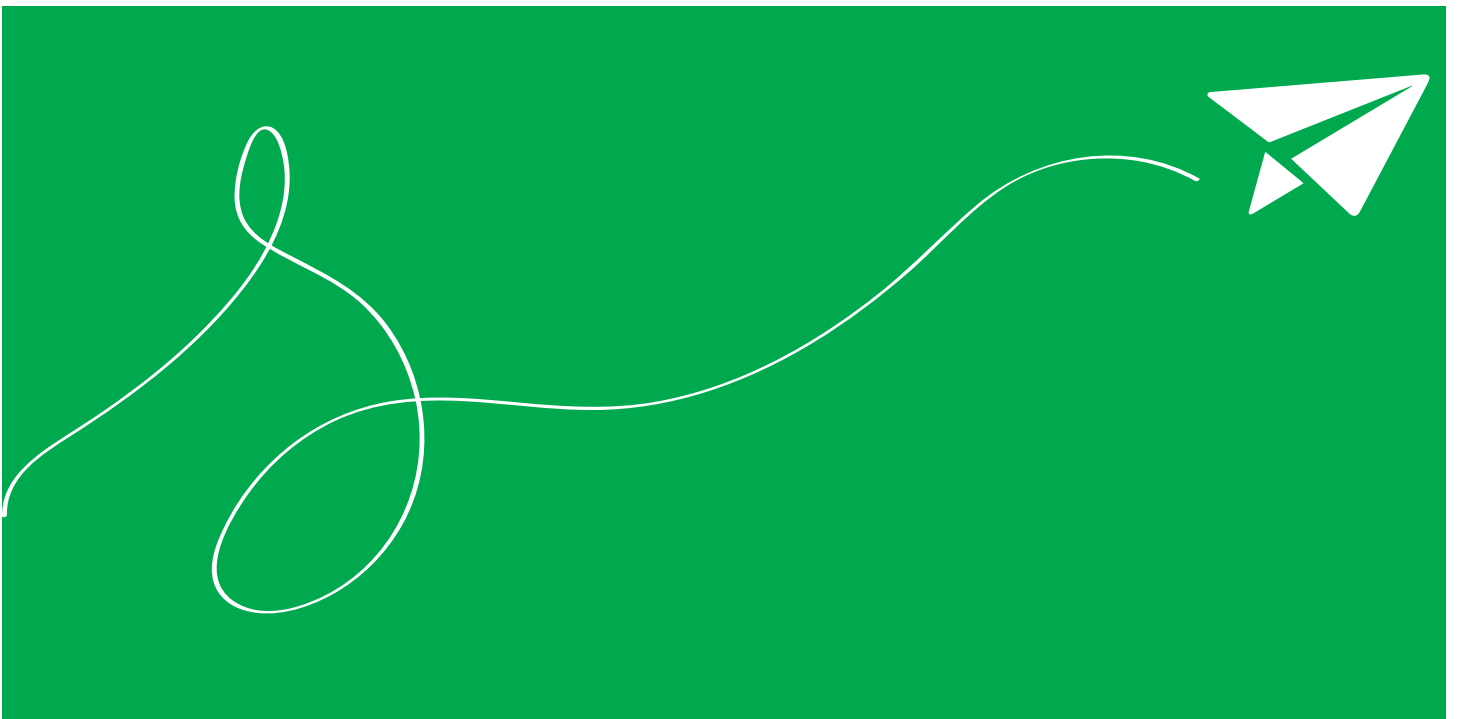
Girls who have traveled once likely want to travel again. Be sure girls are aware that other travel opportunities, such as Destinations, will exist for them in upcoming years. The great experiences they had on this trip may have prepared them for longer and more global trips in the future.

Girls may want to hear about the Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities — and to give them an edge with college admissions, too!





# Appendix



# Resources

Publication of this listing does not imply endorsement by GSUSA.

Culture Crossing Guide — cultural facts by country:  
<http://guide.culturecrossing.net/>

Kwintessential Country Profiles — a British website with cultural etiquette information by country:  
<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html>

Popular guidebooks\*:

- Lonely Planet — <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>
  - ♦ International and domestic destinations, including large cities and regions such as New England, the Rocky Mountains, and the Southwest.
- Rough Guides — <http://www.roughguides.com>
- Frommer's — <http://www.frommers.com>
  - ♦ Destinations include San Francisco, Las Vegas, New York City, Boston and Orlando, as well as international destinations.
- Rick Steves — <http://www.ricksteves.com>
  - ♦ Off the beaten path European destinations.
- Eyewitness Travel — <http://www.travel.dk.com>
  - ♦ In-depth coverage of many domestic and international destinations, with great pictures and pull-outs. Great for planning ahead, less great for packing!
- Fodor's — [www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)
  - ♦ Includes articles about very specific domestic destinations — including Columbus!

“National Geographic” is a fantastic resource for culture, geography, history and travel. The travel website that may provide some inspiration in the early planning stages:  
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/>.

**TIP:** Do not use guidebooks that were published more than a year or two ago, unless you double-check information against a more current source! Travel books change very quickly, and you could encounter problems if you try to reserve a room in a hotel that's been permanently closed or reference an out-of-date museum schedule for your sight-seeing!



# Suggested Packing List

Ask any seasoned traveler, and they will tell you that it is rare to not have enough items on an extended trip — in fact, most people will admit to bringing items they never used and wished they hadn't hauled the extra baggage along. Here are some ideas of what you may want to bring:

- Official Girl Scout uniform (if visiting a World Center or attending a WAGGGS-sponsored event)
- Walking shoes, dress shoes. (Shoes should be well broken-in and comfortable. Never take brand new shoes on a trip — you'll get blisters! Sandals are not recommended at Our Cabana due to scorpions.)
- Copies of all travel and identification papers, insurance information, parental permission forms, etc.
- Phone card that allows for international calls
- Money belt or fanny pack and small zippered day pack
- Several plastic bags of various sizes for wet items
- Rubber flip flops for shower
- Five pairs each of underwear and socks — you can hand wash them as you go
- One heavy sweater or lined windbreaker
- One to two sportswear outfits
- One more formal outfit (besides your uniform)
- One set of sleepwear
- Alarm clock, flashlight
- Toiletries: washcloth, lightweight small towel, toothbrush and toothpaste, sanitary supplies, shampoo, soap, sunscreen. Remember you can probably buy things at your destination if you forget something or run out! You might also double up and share items like shampoo with a friend. Note: Tampons can be hard to find and expensive.
- Necessary medications, marked with any special instructions
- Swaps and small token gifts: The exchange of swaps is a well-established custom among Girl Scout travelers. When staying with host families, it is gracious to bring a small gift. These should not be expensive. For this gift, a local craft or product typical of one's home community or something homemade would be especially welcome. At gatherings, the exchange of swaps prevails. Gifts and swaps should be lightweight and small.
- Camera: keep in mind that different countries run different electrical voltages through different outlets. Do your research before traveling, and make sure you have the right outlet adaptor/voltage converter for your destination. You don't want to fry your camera or phone by plugging it into an outlet it's not made for!
- Team items: First-aid kit, small sewing kit, and US flag.

## Camping or Hostelling

- Sleeping bag/liner
- Mess kit
- Sweatshirt
- Several shirts such as council T-shirts to be worn for group identification
- Rain poncho/pants/boots
- Day pack
- Hiking boots or sturdy running shoes (broken-in!)
- Durable plastic water bottle

## Cold-Weather Visits

- Woolen or cold-weather clothing
- Thermal underwear
- Warm pajamas
- Ski jacket or warm coat
- Warm cap and gloves
- Sweaters (to be worn in layers for warmth)

## Tropical Countries

- Wide brim hat
- Water purification tablets
- Medication for diarrhea (group first aid kit)
- Bug spray (non-aerosol)
- Baby powder



# Sample Participant Agreement

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NOTE: Please edit this example to fit the needs of your troop. Include the girls in drafting the agreement to encourage responsibility and ownership of attitude/behavior.

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**I understand that my attitude and behavior are critical to the success of this trip. Therefore, for the good of both the trip and my travel mates, I agree to the following:**

1. In preparation for this trip I must attend scheduled planning meetings and complete assignments for my own benefit as well as the group's.
2. I agree to participate in money-earning activities to help cover the cost of this trip. If I do not participate, I must make up the budgeted amount in a different way.
3. I will make any payments on time, unless I've prearranged otherwise, to keep the troop's account up to date.
4. I will respect the people and places with whom I come in contact.
5. I understand that use of alcohol and/or drugs is not tolerated and use during the trip will result in being sent home.
6. I am responsible for my personal belongings and will not hold my council, troop, or leader responsible for loss or damage due to my own negligence.
7. I understand that sometimes activities will be physically and/or mentally demanding, but they will benefit both me and the troop.
8. I will be an active and considerate troop member and will include everyone in activities.
9. If I am sent home early due to misconduct, it will be at my family's expense. My troop leaders will make the travel arrangements and notify my parents/guardians of those plans.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

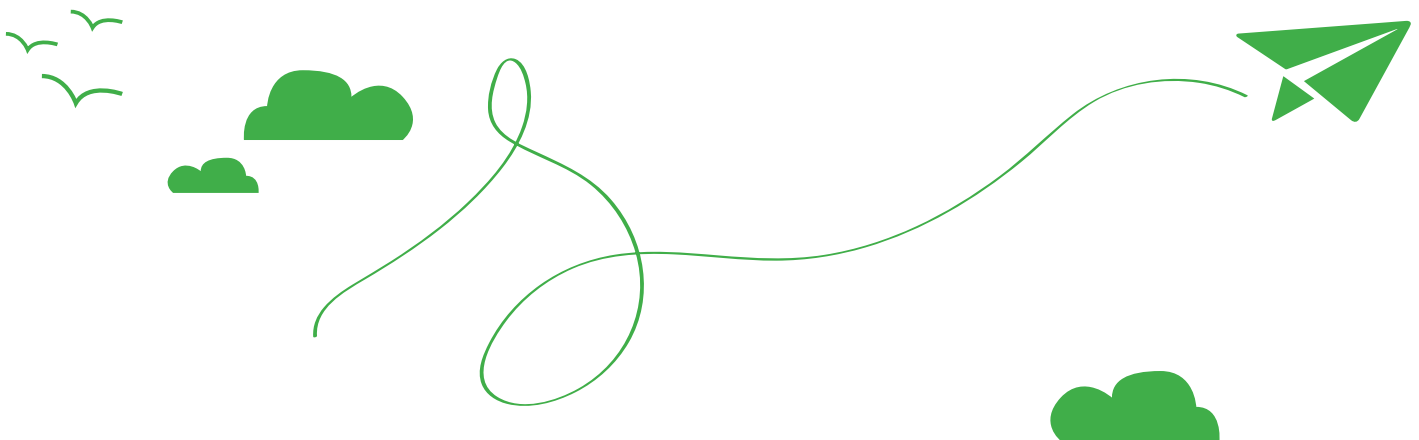
I understand and agree with the above responsibilities for my Girl Scout.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Tips for Traveling with Girls

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- Always check Safety Activity Checkpoints before making any plans. Make sure you follow the checklist and have all the required training. You don't want your trip to be denied later, and you also don't want to put your girls in danger by not being adequately prepared and trained!
- Start your money-earning before you think you need to. Fundraising can be difficult.
- Book transportation and hotels early, sometimes at least six months in advance (but after obtaining trip approval).
- Look for hotels that provide breakfast and have a fridge or microwave.
- Hostels are a great way to save money. Try Hostelling International: [www.hiusa.org](http://www.hiusa.org)
- Connect with troops/councils in the area the group will be visiting. They will have information about council camping facilities and can help you find local lifeguards.
- Get maps before your trip and share them with the girls.
- Look for discount prices online and ask when purchasing tickets if there are group discounts or Girl Scout/non-profit discounts. Check for a AAA discount if you qualify.
- Senior troop? Earn your Traveler badge as you go through the planning steps!
- If you take the overnight train/plane, you'll get there in the morning and have the whole day ahead of you, and you will save on accommodations! But beware, if you can't sleep on the trip, your day might be miserable.
- Don't forget a first aid kit! Include supplies for taking care of blisters from walking.
- Bring plenty of sunscreen!
- Before you travel, check out a movie set in the location the group will be visiting.
- Don't wear new shoes! If shoes are already broken in, girls are less likely to suffer from blisters.
- Be prepared for a lot of walking.
- Carry a water bottle in a daypack. Consider a flat/collapsible water container that is light and easy to carry.
- Try new foods you may encounter before your international trip.
- Ride the subway, just for the experience!
- In larger cities, see if there is a pass for public transportation — it may seem like a large expense at the beginning of the trip, but it will probably pay for itself.
- Carefully review the public transportation schedule and plan your day around it.
- If camping/cooking out, budget emergency funds in case of severe weather.
- Make a schedule of your trip but be flexible and allow for downtime. Girls appreciate free time in the hotel, or extra time to experience something they didn't know about before the trip.



# Sample Personal Travel Safety Plan

## The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,	I promise to proudly represent Girl Scouts and maintain the positive image of the organization and practice good manners.
To help people at all times,	I commit to being helpful and holding others responsible for our rules of travel.
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.	I will use the buddy system at all times, stay with the group, dress appropriately, keep my door locked, and not roam the hotel halls alone or open a door to strangers.

## The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

Honest and fair,	I promise to know and practice the emergency plan and to be aware of escape routes for each new place visited.
Friendly and helpful,	I will be aware of people's behavior, dress and body language and make sure no one feels left out or unwelcome.
Considerate and caring,	I will learn and respect the local customs of the countries to which I travel.
Courageous and strong,	I will step outside my comfort zone by trying new foods and new activities and asking questions when I have them.
And responsible for what I say and do,	I promise to eat sensibly, get enough rest and take care of health problems promptly.
And to: Respect myself and others,	I will keep a positive attitude, be open-minded and flexible.
Respect authority,	I promise to respect my chaperones and fellow travelers.
Use resources wisely,	I promise to carry only as much money as I need inside a pocket or money belt and store the rest of my money in a hotel safe.
Make the world a better place,	I pledge to protect and respect the environment. I will be sensitive to others' needs, habits and customs.
And be a sister to every Girl Scout.	I will thank my host and show my appreciation. I will leave a place cleaner than I found it.

# Activity: Culture Quest

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Explain that when traveling to another country, or even a different part of the United States, travelers are often experiencing a different culture. Invite participants to discuss what a culture is (a set of shared beliefs, attitudes, values, etc.) by considering what distinguishes your culture from another culture including aspects such as language, music, foods, family traditions, manners and acceptable behavior, special occasions, holidays and ceremonies.

Ask participants to discuss what parts of culture are obvious (dress, markings, food, etc.) versus those that are not so obvious (personal space, religious views, family roles, etc.) and how values might differ from one culture to another (respect for elders, focus on education or tradition, etc.).

This activity explores the interaction of two cultures — one outgoing and casual, the other more reserved and formal — with different social norms.

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1. Ask participants to imagine they are foreign exchange students who arrived in the United States yesterday and will be attending school together. Explain to the group that half of the participants are from a country called Pandya, and the other half are from Chispa.
2. Explain that the Chispas and the Pandya have different cultural norms. Demonstrate what a cultural norm is by offering your hand in a handshake by several participants. Next, try bowing to a participant as a form of greeting. How does she react? It is not normal in our culture to bow, but in many places in the world it is.
3. Explain to the group that they will have a welcome party, and they will interact with each other using the cultural norms of their country as listed on the handouts.
4. Divide the group in two, then send each group to opposite corners of the room. After cutting the sheets in half, distribute copies of the Pandya cultural norms to one group and the Chispa cultural norms to the other group. Ask the members of each culture to read these sheets and to discuss the norms among themselves.
5. The simulation: Announce that the two groups from imaginary countries have been invited to a party sponsored by an international student exchange organization. The party organizers hope the two groups will get acquainted and learn about each other. The participants should mingle, dance and talk.
6. Start the music and let the two cultures interact.
7. After five minutes, call time and end the party.
8. Give Chispas a chance to state their thoughts about the Pandyas. Then, let the Pandyas tell the Chispas what they thought of them.

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## Debriefing:

- How did you feel about the behavior of the members of your own group? Of the other group? Did your group's culture use positive, negative or neutral terms to describe the other group?
- Read the cultural norms sheets of both groups. Ask participants if they had known a little about one another before the party, how do they think the party would have been different?
- What lessons from this activity would participants want to keep in mind if they were going to spend time in an unfamiliar culture? What should they remember as they meet fellow travelers?



# Culture Quest: Cultural Norms Lists

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## Pandya Cultural Norms

- Pandyas prefer to interact with members of their own culture.
- Pandyas do not initiate conversation. They speak only when spoken to.
- Pandyas have very formal speech patterns. For example, they always use “sir” and “ma’am.”
- Pandyas do not like eye contact.
- Pandyas pat themselves on the back when they feel uncomfortable.

## Chispa Cultural Norms

- Chispas are outgoing. They love to contact people from other cultures.
- Chispas speak loudly.
- Chispas’ sense of personal space is small. They stand very close to others while in conversation.
- Chispas greet each other by touching elbows.

# Using Journeys and The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting 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, 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 empower 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 example, 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 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 must, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

