

Travel Basics at All Levels

GSSN Fall Kick-Off 2014

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Travel Progression, Types of Trips, and Recommended Ages for Travel Experiences

- Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older)
- Overnight Camping (Daisies and older): *Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.*
- Day trip (Brownies and older)
- Overnight trips (Brownies and older)
- Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older): *Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region*
- National trips (Cadettes and older): *Try to consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises.*
- International trips (Cadettes and older): *International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight trips with Girl Scouting. When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the Global Travel Toolkit.*

Travel Progression Checklist

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

Include girls with disabilities.

Prepare for Trip/Travel

- Girls plan the activity. *Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity. Encourage girls to plan routes, activities, and rules for group living.*
- Communicate with council and parents. *Follow council procedures for activity approval, necessary insurance, required health examinations, volunteer training, and certifications as required in Safety Activity Checkpoints, etc.*

Plan the Trip

- Trip planning should be an age-appropriate, girl-led, all-participatory, team discussion on why, what, where, when, who, and how.

- Arrange for adult supervision and transportation. Ensure the recommended adult-to-girl ratios as listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints are followed. *If traveling internationally or on long distance trips, try to make sure that there are a minimum of three adults. In case a girl or adult gets sick or injured, then there will still be two adults available to support the group. Also consider that if the group wants to break into smaller groups for site-seeing or activities on the trip, each group must have two adults with them.*
- Ensure that all adults on the trip have a designated role on the trip (i.e. lead trip advisor, first-aider, camp expert, lifeguard, etc.).
- Verify Lead Trip Advisor knowledge and experience.
- Compile key contacts.
- Ensure the safety of sleeping areas.
- Contact the hotel/motel to make sure girls' rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators. Also be sure the hotel doesn't provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs and does not allow long-distance calls. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel.
- Verify adult certifications and standards.
- Verify validity of drivers and follow Safety Activity Checkpoints driving recommendations

Travel Forms and Documents

- Each Trip Volunteers carries with them at all times:
 - A copy of the group itinerary with all contact numbers
 - Personal medications to be administered in case of emergency
 - Individually signed and notarized Permission to Travel with Minor and Authorization for Medical Treatment for Minors forms for each girl.
 - Health histories (for every member of the group), insurance information, and emergency contact information.
 - Copies of reservations/confirmations for transport, lodging, activities, and so on.
 - If travelling internationally, citizenship documents, such as passports.
- Each girl carries:
 - A copy of the group's itinerary, with all contact numbers .
 - Personal medications to be administered in case of emergency, such as a bee-sting kit or asthma inhaler

Pre-Trip Orientation

Arrange a pre-trip orientation with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip to inform them of the trip volunteers, logistical details, contact information, emergency plans, and behavior expectations and consequences. Ensure all required forms are completed. *Having all of this information as hand-out(s) is highly recommended.*

Prepare for Emergencies

- File with the council a copy of the detailed trip itinerary; trip volunteers contact information; trip local volunteers contact information; drivers' licenses, insurance, and vehicle information; participants contact and emergency contact information;
- Ensure the presence of a waterproof first-aid kit and a first-aider with a current certificate in First Aid, including Adult and Child CPR or CPR/AED.
- Search-and-rescue procedures for missing persons are written out in advance, reviewed, and practiced by girls and adults.
- A fire drill is practiced on the site, particularly from the sleeping area.
- Methods of communication with sources of emergency care, such as hospitals, and park and fire officials, are known and arranged in advance.
- Ensure that there are written procedures to follow if a group member needs to be removed from the trip.
- The group communicates on a regular basis with parents, the contact person at home, or the council office about the progress of the trip.

- Phone numbers and exact locations of medical assistance and emergency help are carried on the trip.
- Share hotel, hostel, or dormitory safety precautions with girls before you leave on any trip

During the Trip/Travel

- Use the buddy system.
- Check the weather.
- Document your trip.
- Practice responsible travel. Trip volunteers and girls should:
 - Research your destination. Learn about its history, political situation, current events, cultural groups and intercultural dynamics, religion, geography, cuisine, transportation, etc.
 - Learn a few new phrases. If travelling to a place where a different language is spoken, learn how people greet each other and practice the greeting. Observe body language and adapt your body language appropriately.
 - Find out about local customs. Ask people who have traveled before you and consult guidebooks on customs.
 - Dress appropriately. Respect the dress code, especially around religious sites.
 - Ask locals before taking their photographs.
 - Investigate your interests while you travel. Find out how people in another culture approach the topic.
 - Get off the beaten path. Seek out events that are not mentioned in guidebooks by asking the locals what's good.
 - Bring small, thoughtful gifts. If you are spending time with a local family, bring them a token of your appreciation.
 - Go Local. Try to stay in locally owned accommodations, and hire local guides. Take a train or bus. Bike or walk.
 - Buy Local, Eat Local. Rather than shop at a chain store, stop by markets for local products and foods, and find locally owned restaurants that serve local ingredients.
 - Contribute to the place or community. Beyond the money you spend, explore local volunteer opportunities.
 - Consider sustainability. Learn about your host community's practices including environmental conservation record.
 - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
 - Don't disturb the wildlife.
 - Don't pick up and take home natural resources.
 - Share your experience. Write about your trip, share photos and network via your social media to encourage your friends and family to have similarly positive experiences.

Trip/Travel Links

- *Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints*
<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/volunteer-essentials-and-safety-activity-checkpoints/>
- Trip Forms
 - Trip and High Risk Activity Guide 2013-2014
 - Trip and High Risk Activity Application 2013-2014<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/forms-resources/> → Trip Forms
- Activity Insurance Form
<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/forms-resources/> → General Forms
- Universal Permission Form
<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/forms-resources/> → General Forms
- Health History Form
<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/forms-resources/> → Girl Forms
- Application for Troop Money Earning
<http://www.gssn.org/volunteer-resources/forms-resources/> → Financial Forms
- GSUSA *destinations* information
<http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/>
- GSUSA Global Travel Toolkit
http://www.girlscouts.org/forgirls/travel/global_travel_toolkit/default.asp

Girl Scout *destinations* are nationally sponsored trip exclusively designed for Girl Scouts where girls apply individually for the trip. They fall into five categories: international, outdoors, science, people, and getaways. Facilitated by Girl Scouts of the USA and hosted by individual Girl Scout councils, GSUSA, and contracted organizations, such as Outward Bound, Girl Scout *destinations* events or trips open girls up to whole new worlds and ideas. Updated details for all 2015 destinations trips - along with the timeline and applications - will be released at <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/> on **SEPTEMBER 19, 2014!** The **deadline for submitting a *destination* application to the council is November 1, 2014.**

Tentative GSSN Travel Opportunities

Pending approval, the council may be offering a trip to Savannah, Georgia (and all things Juliet Gordon Lowe) in October, 2015, and an international trip in 2016. **Watch for a girl travel survey in the next couple of weeks, submit your suggestions, and be part of the travel decision-making process.** Travel information meetings with specifics on the selected travel opportunities will be offered Sunday, October, 26, and Sunday, November 16, 2014. **Be sure and read the *Essentials* for details on up-coming council-sponsored travel opportunities and join us for a lot of fun and adventure!**