



## **Appendix: For Travel Volunteers**

# **Volunteer Essentials**

**2010**

## Appendix: For Travel Volunteers

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. This appendix helps you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

### Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Click [here](#)\* to find out more or to donate to the fund!

\* [http://www.girlscouts.org/who\\_we\\_are/global/juliette\\_low\\_fund.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/juliette_low_fund.asp) — referred to above

### Traveling with Girls

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

- Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older): A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- Day trip (Brownies and older): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- Overnight trips (Brownies and older): One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not so long as to generate homesickness.
- 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 (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.

- National trips (Cadettes and older): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors): Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and 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. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to witness the devastation of poverty in urban slums.

\*\* [http://www.girlscouts.org/who\\_we\\_are/global/travel\\_toolkit.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/travel_toolkit.asp) — referred to above

Taking trips is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. The three processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) work beautifully as girls lead their own trip-planning, cooperatively plan every aspect of the trip, and learn through their travels what works and what doesn't. In the same way, the three leadership keys (discover, connect, and take action) stretch girls as they spend weeks, months, or even years group-planning a trip, which includes an extensive take-action component.

Although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, opportunities exist for girls who are not otherwise involved in Girl Scouts to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally, and even internationally. Girls can travel regardless of how else they are—or aren't—participating in Girl Scouting.

### From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers

[The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#)\*\*\* in Savannah, Georgia, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older girls to visit. Reservations and council approval are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace, and most educational opportunities are booked at least a year in advance, so book early! Families and individuals, however, do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

In addition, four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. These centers are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world. Visit [www.wagggs.org](http://www.wagggs.org) for more information.

Closer to home, check with your council to see whether council-owned camps and other facilities can be rented out to the group of girls with which you're working.

\*\*\* <http://www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org/> — referred to above

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

## Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission, although your council may not require this information for trips shorter than a day or two. Check with your council for specifics, and also see whether specific forms must be filled out before traveling. For Extended Out-of-Council Trips, troops are required to complete a packet of forms available online at [www.citrus-gs.org](http://www.citrus-gs.org).

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

- 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 adults 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)

### Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone at 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, also discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip that much 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 high-end cell phones and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

## Involving Chaperones

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

- 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
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip)

## Letting Girls Lead

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 more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, 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 you 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 the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What's the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What's the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- How will we share the Take Action story?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls begin to make specific arrangements, attend to a myriad of details, create a budget and handle money, 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.

### Travel Progression Checklist for You

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. In determining a group's readiness for travel, assess the group's:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their home
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions 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 and interests
- Language skills (where applicable)

### Staying Safe During the Trip

Also be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have 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
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What to do in the event of a crime
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

## Travel Security and Safety Tips

Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or ancho
- 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 when 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, for that matter, in an airport or train station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- 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.
- Also contact the front desk to clear out any minibars or refrigerators in girls' rooms, to 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.

## Reengaging Girls

The end of this trip doesn't have to be the end of a girls' 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 tend to want to travel again. Be sure girls are aware that other travel opportunities, such as [destinations](http://www.studio2b.org/escape/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.

\*\* <http://www.studio2b.org/escape/destinations/> — referred to above

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- 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 have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too!
- And what about you? If you're ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future. Are you ready for a year-long volunteer opportunity with a troop? Help organize a series or event? Take another trip? The possibilities are endless.