

# The Adult Guide



The Girl Scout Guide to Travel

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# Inside the Adult Guide to Girl Scouts Global Travel

**This resource is created especially for you—adults ready to guide girls on travel adventures in Girl Scouts. Thanks to you, girls can experience unforgettable, life-changing adventures.**

Through travel, girls gain enormous benefits. They develop self-confidence and learn leadership skills by planning, earning money, and venturing to other countries or parts of the United States. They make lifelong friends—not only with the girls they travel with but new girls they meet overseas. They gain cultural insight, an appreciation for differences and similarities, and a broadened perspective. As girls mature in Girl Scouts, many consider travel one of the most exciting aspects of their membership.

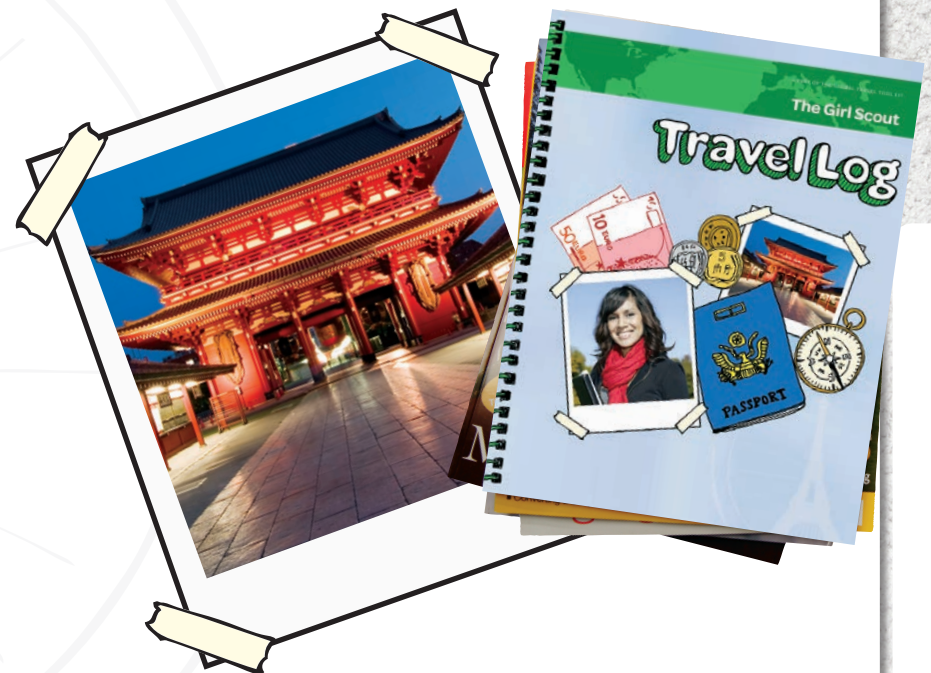
Consider this guide your manual to coaching girls through the travel process from beginning to end. And keep in mind: *The Adult Guide to Girl Scout Travel* serves as a companion to *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel* and *The Girl Scout Travel Log*.

*Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel* introduces girls to travel and sends them on a chronologically organized adventure. Each section provides girls with information and fun tools and tips to accomplish tasks in the given time frame. Topics covered include:

Trip Planning at a Glance  
Getting Started  
Money Earning and Budgeting  
Adult Network  
Travel Readiness (Maturity Level)  
Itinerary Building  
Representing Girl Scouts  
Group Behavior  
Safety

Health and Fitness  
Cultural Exchange  
Last-Minute Details  
Packing  
Reflection Before Travel  
Safety  
Sharing the Experience  
Taking Action  
Reflection on Leadership

The Girl Scout Travel Log is a journal for girls to record their travel experiences—before, during, and after their trips. Girls can use their travel logs to capture memories, reflect on insights, and jot down ideas about how to educate and inspire others back home. Support journal work by giving girls time to write as well as debrief after each step.

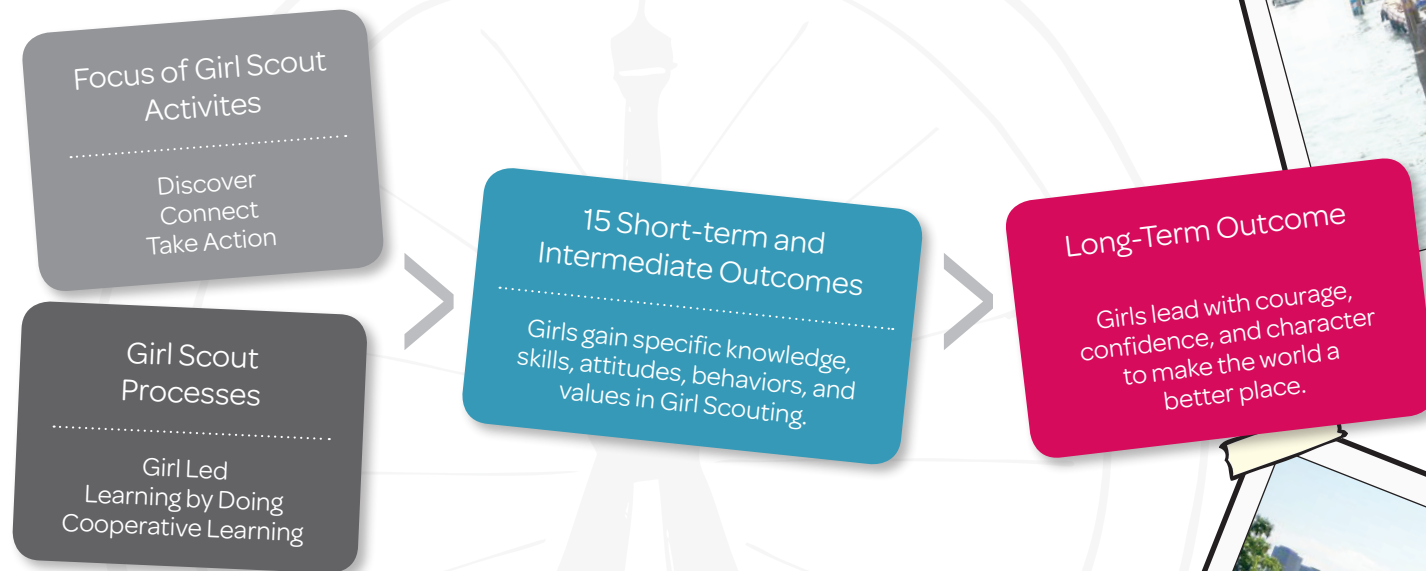


*Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC)* and *Volunteer Essentials* are the other companion resources that will help you protect and maintain the well-being of girls. This publication provides program standards, safety guidelines, and basic leadership resources. These materials can be found online through [www.gssjc.org](http://www.gssjc.org). *The Adult Guide to Girl Scout Travel* refers you to *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

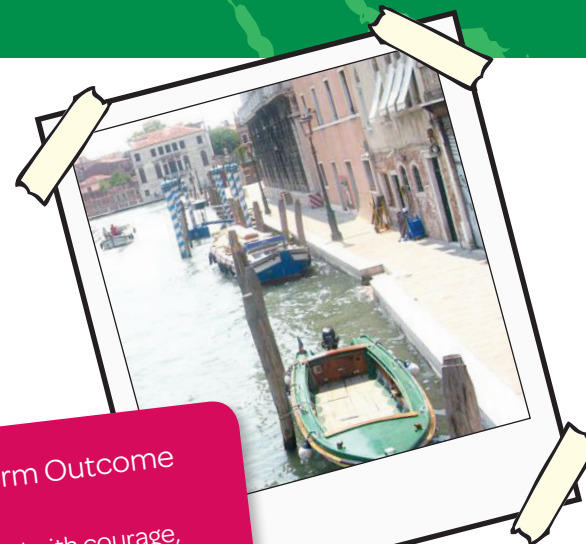


# Travel Through the Girl Scout Leadership Lens

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 at every stage, from budgeting to traveling. In your role as a supportive adult, you can shape girls' adventures by infusing the processes of girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning into activities. The diagram above shows the components of the leadership experience and how they tie in with the larger goal of Girl Scouts: developing the courage, confidence, and character to make the world a better place.





# Benefits to Girls

## Benefits to Girls (Outcomes)

Outcomes are another way of saying “benefits to girls”—what girls may gain as they plan and carry out trips. As it states in Transforming Leadership, a Girl Scout resource that adults can use to help incorporate the Girl Scout Leadership Experience into all activities, “As girls take part in Girl Scouting, facilitators [Girl Scout adults] can review the outcomes, and the signs of those outcomes, to gauge the benefits of the experience. The signs of the outcomes reflect what girls might think, say, or do—during and after a leadership experience—and help adults determine the success of the experience. The chart below shows the leadership outcomes and indicators specific to girl travel.

In the appendix, you’ll find forms to use with girls to evaluate their travel experiences. Use these forms as a means for you and girls to explore how they’ve grown from this experience.

|             | Outcomes                                                         | Indicators<br>How will you know when girls are working toward the intended outcome? You may hear them say something like...                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Discover    | Girls develop a strong sense of self.                            | I learned it’s okay to be different from other kids around me.<br>I did things that made me feel good about myself.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|             | Girls gain practical life skills.                                | I learned how to do things I didn’t think I could do.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|             | Girls seek challenges in the world.                              | I tried new activities even if they were hard to do.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|             | Girls develop critical thinking.                                 | I tried to solve problems for myself before asking for help.<br>I was willing to change my mind about something if I learned new information.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Connect     | Girls develop healthy relationships.                             | I learned that I could disagree with someone and still be friends.<br>People made me feel like I belonged.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|             | Girls promote cooperation and team building.                     | I worked together with other girls in towards a common goal.<br>I volunteered to help or lead during this program.<br>I helped plan the activities I did.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|             | Girls feel connected to their communities, locally and globally. | Connecting with other girls helped strengthen my feelings of being a part of the Girl Scout community.<br>This travel helped increase my interest in being a leader in my local or global community.<br>I interacted with people of different races or cultures. As a group we had an opportunity to discuss what we learned at our destination. |
| Take Action | Girls educate and inspire others to act.                         | I will share with others what I learned from my destination.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|             | Girls feel empowered to make a difference.                       | I made decisions about what we were going to do.<br>I feel empowered to make a difference in my community.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

# High-Quality, Fun Adventures

What's so great about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is that by infusing the processes of girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning into activities, you're guaranteeing that girls will have a meaningful, relevant, and fun time.




You'll see icons for girl led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning throughout the guide. When you see these icons (which represent the three Girl Scout processes), you'll know which process to emphasize during that activity.

## An Open, Inclusive Environment

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!

| Process                                                                                                    | What It Means                                                                                                       | Why It Works                                                                                                                                                                           | What It Looks Like                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Girl Led<br>            | Girls make decisions and choices about what they do and how they do it.                                             | Girls feel they “own” their group and experiences. They’ll also have more fun.                                                                                                         | Girls plan, organize, and implement their travel projects with as little supervision as possible.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Learning by Doing<br>   | Girls have opportunities for hands-on activities followed by reflection and discussion time.                        | Girls strengthen their critical-thinking skills and are more likely to apply what they learn to their lives.                                                                           | Girls reflect on what they’re experiencing by journaling and being part of group discussions.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Cooperative Learning<br> | Girls share work towards a common goal as well as knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation. | Girls build healthy relationships and communicate effectively. This will help in their travel experiences and in other areas of their lives.<br><br>Plus, cooperative learning is fun! | Girls create a team agreement, reflect, and speak openly and often about how they are functioning as a team.<br><br>Girls do activities in pairs or small groups.<br><br>Girls set group goals that can only be achieved through interdependent efforts (e.g., sharing resources, helping). |





# Welcoming Girls with Disabilities

Girl Scouting embraces girls with many different needs at all age levels, and is guided by a very specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits all: Each girl is an equal and valued member of a group with typically developing peers.

If you're not sure how to accommodate a girl with a disability in any aspect of travel, simply ask the girl and/or her parents or guardians what she needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating a better experience for everyone.

It's important for all girls to be recognized based on their best efforts—not completion of a task. Give a girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way.

Here are two examples:

- Invite a girl to perform an activity after observing others doing it first.
- Encourage the girls to come up with ideas on how to adapt an activity as needed.

Every individual with a disability does not need an adaptation. What counts most is staying flexible and varying your facilitator style.



## TripTip:

Set the Right tone  
Remember, girls take cues from adults. So, once you're on the road, stay positive. If you're negative about the quality of the tour or cranky about the food, girls will replicate that attitude.

This is a trip of a lifetime. When they look back, will girls remember their lunch was cold or that they climbed the Eiffel Tower? Put it in perspective.

# 12-24 Months Prior to Trip

## From Day Trips to Globetrotting

Progression is the backbone of Girl Scout international travel. Girls build on positive basic trip experiences and learn new skills over time.

Start with simple local trips such as visits to the park or firehouse. Walk, use cars, or ride public transportation.

Take day trips to a nearby city. Then travel to neighboring states, if doable.

Progress to overnight trips—one to two nights in a nearby state. Stay in a hostel,\* hotel, motel, or on campgrounds.

Venture across the U.S. for multiple days. Use different accommodations and modes of transportation.

Trot the globe in Girl Scout style.



See the “Is She Ready” guide in the *Appendix* to evaluate your girls’ experiences and help them progress to the next level.

Even though two and half years sounded like a long time to plan, it was well worth it. The girls could see how they were progressing and how much more they had to do without being overwhelmed. —Linda, Illinois



### Coach Girls Through:

- Charting their past travel experiences
- Choosing a travel location
- Determining the purpose of their trip
- Working out general trip details

### Your To-Do's:

- Get familiar with this guide: *Explore: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel, Girl Scout Travel Log and Appendix*.
- Submit a Notification of Intent to Plan (F-453) to [travel@sjgs.org](mailto:travel@sjgs.org). You can find the form in the *Appendix* and online at [www.gssjc.org](http://www.gssjc.org)



### Trip Tip:

\*Hostels are affordable accommodations with dormitory-style rooms and common spaces in which to meet fellow travelers. See the *Appendix* for more information about GSUSA's partnership with Hostelling International USA.

#### Progress

12-24 Months

8-16 Months

6-12 Months

2-8 Months

6-12 Weeks

2-6 Weeks

On Your Trip

Back at Home





# Experience Counts

Ask girls to complete the Chart Your Experience activity on page 4 of *The Girl Scout Travel Log*. This activity will help girls gauge their own progression and experiences. Assist girls as they reflect on trips they've taken, awards they've earned, events they've participated in, and experiences they've had in their Girl Scout group and beyond. Encourage girls to think specifically, but also big picture—travel requires practical knowledge and skills as well as patience, adaptability, and the ability to problem solve.



## Travel Guidelines

- Be registered Girl Scout Juniors or above recommended for national extended trips. Be registered Girl Scout Cadettes or above for international trips.
- Align trip purpose to Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Travel as a group.
- Make sure there are at least two adults (see SAC adult-girl ratio).
- Obtain your Girl Scout council's approval and adhere to council safety standards.
- Submit all the required forms.



### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

On Your  
Trip

Back at  
Home



# Purpose, Place, and Time

According to Girl Scout volunteers who have taken girls on international trips, trip planning takes 22 months on average, but can range from 6 to 36 months depending on money-earning strategies and location. The planning process is girls' time to shine, and with your coaching, they'll surely be stars. When girls take the lead, the trip becomes much more meaningful. Start with the three basics of trip planning: purpose, place, and timeline.

## Purpose

Girls may have the purpose of their trip already in mind. If so, this will guide their choices in location. Or they may decide on the location first then develop the purpose.

## Place

Ask girls to decide how they want to work together to come up with their travel location.

## Resources

There are several guidebooks specific to youth travel planning, such as Let's Go or Lonely Planet series, as well as the online site Trip Advisor.

## Timeline



Suggest girls create a group timeline using the "Trip-Planning Timeline" on page 6 of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Global Travel*. Girls may also want to create a personal timeline for individual tasks.



To help incorporate the "learning by doing" process into the initial planning phase of the trip, build in reflection time at meetings and during activities. As girls plan, make progress, and check off items on their to-do lists, ask them to consider the skills it took to complete those tasks. Then inquire how they can apply those skills to other areas of their lives.

Are girls interested in visiting England, India, Mexico, or Switzerland?

These countries are home to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) four world centers.

At the centers, girls from around the globe learn about each other, the Girl Guide/Girl Scout movement, and the countries they are visiting. Centers offer special programs and the facilities provide inexpensive lodging for members of WAGGGS, of which GSUSA is a member.

See the *Appendix* for more information on WAGGGS and the four World Centers.

The Birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts in the USA, in Savannah, GA is another popular location Girl Scouts often visit. For more information, see page 11 of the *Appendix*.

## Progress

12-24 Months

8-16 Months

6-12 Months

2-8 Months

6-12 Weeks

2-6 Weeks

On Your Trip

Back at Home



# Partnering with Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council

## You must notify GSSJC about planning an extended trip.

You must notify GSSJC about planning an extended trip. Check with the GSSJC travel coordinator as soon as you begin planning. It's best to work with her from this initial planning stage by establishing a timetable and reporting benchmarks of progress as plans develop.

To receive Council permission, you'll need to be ready with logistical information and paperwork. You'll be asked to provide some of the following:

*We planned all parts of the trip with minimal adult guidance. We learned how complicated an international trip can be but also how to accomplish every step."*

—Brenna, 17

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- Where are we going?
- Why are we going?
- When are we going?
- How will we get there?
- How much will it cost?
- How can we get ready?
- Will everyone be able to go?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do when we get there?
- What will we do when we return home?

As girls answer these questions, they'll be planning their own trip.

See the *Appendix* for all forms.



- ☐ An itinerary (including specific activities)
- ☐ Location and accommodations
- ☐ Dates and times
- ☐ A list of girls traveling
- ☐ A list of adults traveling, including gender and their roles
- ☐ Description of the girls' skill levels
- ☐ A list of consultants or resource people who will be involved
- ☐ A list of groups or other organizations that will be involved
- ☐ Description of planned safety precautions
- ☐ Description of specialized equipment to be used
- ☐ The mode of transportation you will be using
- ☐ Any required special agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus or using designated premises)

Progress

12-24 Months

8-16 Months

6-12 Months

2-8 Months

6-12 Weeks

2-6 Weeks

On Your Trip

Back at Home

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# 8-16 Months Prior to Trip

## Coach Girls Through:

- Budgeting
- Building adult networks
- Money earning
- Increasing travel readiness

## Your To-Do's:

- Submit Initial Plan Form (0-883) to [travel@sjgs.org](mailto:travel@sjgs.org).
- Provide families with general information about the trip.
- Get trip and money-earning approval from GSSJC
- Set up a group travel bank account, if necessary.
- Make sure you have at least two adults—one of whom is female—for every 16 Girl Scout Juniors, 20 Girl Scout Cadettes or 24 Girl Scout Seniors/Ambassadors on the trip. Add one adult for every 8 additional Juniors, 10 additional Cadettes or 12 additional Seniors/Ambassadors.
- With girls, expand the group's adult network by considering and reaching out to possible chaperones.
- Integrate progression into trip preparation by planning smaller trips that build up to the international or extended trip.
- Consider girls' maturity by evaluating their adaptability, decision-making abilities, previous cross-cultural experience, group dynamics, team capability, language skills (where applicable), and other specific skills and interests.



## Notes & Ideas

### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

On Your  
Trip

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# Money Smarts



Before girls can figure out how much money they'll bring on their trips, they'll need to know the total cost of their travel as well as how to afford it. In fact, they'll learn a lot about financial literacy—earning, saving, and allocating dollars—through trip planning.

Thinking about travel expenses provides a good opportunity for girls to look at their own spending habits. Remember, there are Girl Scout resources such as financial literacy badges in the **Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting** to pull from. (To get copies, visit the Girl Scout shop online at [eshop.gssjcschap.org/store/](http://eshop.gssjcschap.org/store/).) In the meantime, do the following "individual spending plan" activity with girls to get them thinking about where their everyday dollars go.

## Crunch the Numbers

Print out copies of the chart below, found in the appendix, and hand out to the girls.

Say: "Please estimate the total amount of money you spend in one week based on the categories in the chart."

Then say: "Use the Other category to account for expenses that occur occasionally (such as makeup, activity fees, or dues). Figure out, on average, how much you spend per week on all those things and add them to your list."

And lastly: "Take each category's total and multiply by 4.5—that's about how much you spend in one month. Then, take the weekly total and multiply by 52—that's about how much you'll spend on everyday items in a year."

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- What surprised you most about your totals?
- Did you think the amounts would be more or less? Why?
- If you spread the cost of your trip out over the period of one year, how much will it cost you each week?
- How could the cost of your trip affect your spending?
- How can you save for your trip? What categories can you spend less on?

## Weekly/Monthly/Yearly Expenses

|                                              | Food | Transportation | Fun | Clothes | Other |
|----------------------------------------------|------|----------------|-----|---------|-------|
| Total for one week                           |      |                |     |         |       |
| One-week total x 4.5<br>(equal to one month) |      |                |     |         |       |
| One-week total x 52<br>(equal to one year)   |      |                |     |         |       |

## Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

On Your  
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# Travel Budget



Review “Money Makes YOU Go Round the World” on page 8 in **Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel**. Use the budget worksheet (find a printable version in the appendix) to work with girls as they build the full budget for their trip. Encourage them to think through the details of each expense. This activity may take several group meetings to complete as girls do research on their own.

When girls feel like the budget is workable, ask them to review it with parents or guardians. You might consider a parent/guardian sign-off on the initial budget.

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- Where are you going to stay?
- Will you be attending events?
- Are there registration costs?
- Will you sightsee?
- How much do the museums, performances, etc., cost?
- How much will you need to spend on food?
- What if you get the midnight munchies?
- Don't forget to include personal expenses, such as souvenirs, film, postcards, gifts, etc.
- Airfare
- Local travel within the host country (trains, buses, streetcars, taxis, etc.)
- Sightseeing tours, museum fees
- Emergency funds
- Personal expenses
- Tips for guides
- Travel documents: passport, visas, and other IDs
- Vaccinations or other entry requirements
- Travel pack/luggage
- Guidebooks or other resources



### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

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# Group Money-Earning

When girls participate in money-earning projects, they build practical skills that benefit their groups, councils, communities, and, most importantly, themselves. Girls learn:

- Budgeting
- Goal setting
- Marketing
- Customer relations
- Good business practices

To support girls in money-earning projects for travel:

- Create, with girls, a detailed and realistic budget. Include figures for transportation, food, tips, insurance, recreation, admission fees, taxes, fees for travel documents and vaccinations, and emergency funds.
- Get council approval for all money-earning projects and follow *Safety Activity Checkpoints* (SAC). SAC outlines everything troops, groups, and individuals need to know to begin money-earning projects.
- Check with your council before soliciting funds from local organizations, foundations, or businesses.
- Encourage girls to present travel plans to potential contributors—but leave the “ask” to adults.
- Define for the girls personal and group expenses.
- Set up a group travel bank account to be overseen by a designated adult.
- Have just one person responsible for group funds and keep a daily account of expenditures. However, all funds should not be held by just one person at any time during the trip.
- Make decisions in advance about how to pay bills that occur before, during, and after the trip.
- Review the money-earning information in GSSJC Resource Guide Chapter 7.

## Build Support

With the approval of GSSJC, talk to local organizations and media outlets about the girls' travel plans. Planting seeds here and there can bring an unexpected harvest of financial support.

## Group Money-Earning Ideas

Girls can:

- Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Babysit at special events
- Collect litter after sports events
- Wash cars
- Do face-painting at community events
- Hold a bottle and can drive
- Care for pets
- See *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Global Travel* for more ideas



*Our troop has always worked on a one-third, one-third, one-third plan. The girls earn one-third individually, parents contribute one-third, and the troop earns the final third. It is amazing how much the girls can earn babysitting!*

—Pam, Massachusetts

### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

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# Guiding Principles



## Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

On Your  
Trip

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Home

Money earning as part of a group is a great cooperative learning experience. To guide the process, suggest girls create guiding principles. For example, what happens if one girl doesn't earn the same amount of money as others?

Consider posing questions to girls like:



- How will you hold each other responsible?
- How will you motivate each other?
- How can you have fun while earning money?

## The Power of Goal Setting

Don't be discouraged if girls' families cannot contribute. Many Girl Scouts reach financial goals through hard work and perseverance. A volunteer from Texas reported that the girls in her troop earned half the money they needed from troop activities and the rest from after-school jobs. And one very committed Girl Scout from Massachusetts spent almost three years collecting cans and bottles to redeem. The money she earned not only benefited the environment, but covered the cost of her trip to Australia, including spending money.

## The Adult Team

While girls are getting ready to explore new people, places, and things, they need support from adults.

## Families

Planning a trip is a big undertaking and girls will need parent or guardian buy-in from the beginning. Once trip basics are decided on, ask girls to organize a meeting so the group can discuss itinerary, timelines, and finances with their families. Consider holding family update meetings every two to three months. See *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel* for more tips on helping girls prepare for the meeting and communicate individually with their families.

## Chaperones

Start by asking who would make the best chaperones. Chaperones will have a big impact on girls' experiences, so it's important to let girls have their say. If you have your heart set on your sister being your co-chaperone but the girls prefer someone else, you'll have to compromise.

Let girls take the lead on discussing, selecting, and reaching out to potential chaperones. Of course, candidates will need to be approved by the council and become Girl Scout members, if not already. Launch the chaperone search by referring girls to page 13 in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*, where they'll find tools to help determine the best candidates. Make sure you have at least two adults—one of whom is female—for every 16 Juniors, 20 Cadettes or for 24 Seniors/Ambassadors on the trip. Add one adult for every 8 additional Juniors, 10 additional Cadettes or 12 additional Seniors/Ambassadors.

## 5 Things to look for in a Chaperone—

Quality/Characteristic

Sets a positive example

Has prior traveling experience with girls

Is someone I could trust/turn to for help

Is knowledgeable (or willing to be) about Girl Scout travel

Handles pressure and stress well

## Reality Check

Are you the best travel chaperone for your group? Your instinct is probably to give a quick yes, but really think about your answer. If you can't be objective, ask another adult who is for her/his opinion.



# 6-12 Months Prior to Trip



## The Itinerary

Support girls as they take the lead in building the itinerary. Use the purpose of the trip as a focal point. Stay open-minded: You might be inclined to squash an itinerary item right off the bat because you don't see its value, but give girls a chance to explain how it relates to the purpose of the trip.

### Include Everyone

Every girl should own some part of the trip. Ask girls to complete "\_\_\_\_\_, Expert of \_\_\_\_\_," on page 6 of *The Girl Scout Travel Log*. Encourage them to go beyond the basic Internet search and really get inside the location they'll be visiting. Plan a good old-fashioned trip to the library. Spark girls' interests by reminding them that they can search for music, audio interviews, documentaries, news broadcasts, and other videos, in addition to books. While on the trip, let the girl who is the "expert" take the lead when her area of expertise comes up.



## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- What sites are "must-sees?"
- How much can we really fit in a day?
- Do we need to buy tickets in advance or book additional travel?
- Do we need to build in time for travel delays?
- How much will that cost?
- What are the opening and closing times of that attraction?
- What is our backup plan?
- Are there any free days?

### Coach Girls Through:

- Building the itinerary
- Team building
- Preparing for safe travel
- Determining fitness levels
- Getting a passport

### Your To-Do's:

- Make sure reservations for transportation and lodging are made.
- Determine fitness level of trip and make necessary adjustments.
- Determine training needs.
  - CPR
  - First aid
- Have an emergency plan.
- Check status and apply for passports if travelling internationally (must be valid up to six months after trip).
- Apply for visas if needed.
- Arrange for notarized parent/guardian permission to travel.
- Remind girls and their families to obtain needed immunizations or health exams for the trip.

### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

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# Team Building

How well girls blend as a group will play a major factor in how smooth the trip will go. Allocate ample meeting time to focus on activities that promote team building. Even if the group has been together for years, trip planning offers a whole new dimension to the Girl Scout experience.

What are the dynamics of your group? Have an open and honest conversation about it with girls. Girls will feel a sense of ownership and pride in their group by determining what the group dynamic is now and where it needs to be for the trip, and by charting their own progress along the way.



## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- As a group, what are our strengths and weaknesses?
- Can everyone follow as well as lead?
- Can each participant function as a team member?
- Will everyone accept the group leader's direction?
- Are there some girls who work better with one another than others?
- What parts of team building do we need to work on?
- How will we handle emergency or unexpected situations?



### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

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Months

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# The Group Agreement



Create a group agreement on a large piece of paper or newsprint before you leave for your trip. This tried-and-true activity encourages girls to be accountable to themselves and each other. The group agreement can also serve as a reference point to make certain the group is on target with its goals or to see if the group needs to modify its plan.

## Discuss It!

Guide girls on developing their group agreement by asking:

- How do I want to be treated and how do I want to treat others?
- How will we give each other honest feedback?
- How will we deal with broken rules?
- How will we support each other in sticking to the agreement?
- How will we track our progress as a group following the agreement?

As girls come up with ground rules, they'll be discussing their own values and expectations. Therefore, ask girls to explain fully to be sure that everyone understands all the ideas. Remind girls about the value of the Girl Scout Promise and Law and that they can use these principles as the framework for the group agreement.

## The Girl Scout Law

*I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.*

If the girls need help developing their group agreement, use the ideas below. (Also see the "Standards of Conduct and Community Behavior" template in the appendix.)

*A group may agree to:*

Respect each other

Listen (not hold side conversations)

Treat what is said as confidential

Give members the right to pass (meaning "I'd rather not" or "I don't want to answer")

Maintain a non-judgmental approach

Be sensitive to diversity

Be accepting

Have a good time

Be present

Pay attention

Speak the truth

Be open

Create a safe environment

When consensus is built around the written agreement, have each girl sign her name. Keep the group agreement posted in a prominent place whenever the group meets. Ask girls how they want to "bring" the group agreement on the trip. One suggestion is to write the agreement on index cards and have each girl (and adult) carry one.

See *Appendix* for an example of Girl and Adult Agreements.

### Progress

12-24  
Months

8-16  
Months

6-12  
Months

2-8  
Months

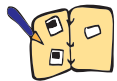
6-12  
Weeks

2-6  
Weeks

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# Team Building Activities



Team-building activities can help refine group dynamics. Ask girls to lead, change the activities to their liking, or come up with their own. When girls take turns leading, they practice skills they'll use when leading the group on the trip. Include adequate reflection and discussion time at the end of the activity.



## Stranded on an Island

Have girls break into groups of five or so. Then say: "You will be stranded on a desert island for an indefinite time. You may bring only one item, and you only have a few minutes' notice. What will you bring?" Give the girls about a minute to think, then ask them to share their object with the group.

Ask:

- What made you chose it?
- Why is it important to you?
- What do you plan to do with it?

Have each girl share briefly about her item. After everyone has shared, instruct the groups to figure out how they can improve their chances of survival by combining the items in creative ways. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for brainstorming. Then have each group present its ideas. End by asking the girls, "Would your item be different if you had talked with your group before choosing?"

## Two Truths and One Lie

Ask all of the girls to think of two truths and one lie about themselves. Then have each girl share her statements, with the others guessing, in turn, which is the lie. When every girl has made her choice, the person who shared reveals the lie.

## Lean on Me

Ask each girl to find a buddy. One person is the "artist" and sits behind her partner. The artist is given a short list of simple items and shapes (e.g., heart, star, face) that she will then use her finger to trace one at a time onto her partner's back. The object is for the partner to identify as many of the shapes as possible. This activity forces girls to pay attention and use visualization skills.



## Obstacle Course

With girls, set up a simple obstacle course that involves items to walk around, step over, and duck under. Ask each girl to find a buddy. One member of each team is blindfolded and must rely on her partner to verbally direct her through the course. Leaders must give clear, specific directions, and followers must listen carefully as their partners help them navigate the course.

## Human Knots

Ask girls to stand in a tight circle. Instruct each person to reach out with her right hand and grab hold of the hand of somebody across from her. Then tell girls to reach out with their left hands to hold someone else's hand. (The hands they are holding should not be of someone standing next to them.) Now, direct girls to slowly and carefully try to untangle the group without letting go of hands.

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- How can team-building activities help the group become stronger?
- What can you take from the activities that will help you on the trip?
- What was it like to lead the group?
- What was it like to be a follower?

Be mindful of safety as girls climb over each other, and instruct that it's okay to momentarily release hands to get a more comfortable grip. Have girls start in small groups, then work their way up to one big knot that includes everybody.

## Back to Back

Ask each girl to find a buddy of equal height and weight. Tell partners to sit on the ground back to back, then instruct the pairs to stand up in unison while communicating. Tell girls not to place their hands on the ground, as injury may occur. Once all groups have accomplished the goal of standing in unison, have girls form groups of four, then eight, and try it again until the entire group succeeds in standing together.

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# Safe Travel

Safety can be a big source of anxiety for girls, even if they don't mention it—and it's a concern for parents, too. Put everyone's mind at ease by preparing for safe travel.

Consult your council's *Volunteer Essentials* to make sure your trip meets Girl Scout program standards and guidelines. Contact your council for additional safety guidelines.

## Preparation is Key

Here are a few things you and the girls can do to prepare for safe travel:

- Have girls create emergency contact cards, referencing the sidebar on page 18 of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*.
- Encourage girls to role-play potentially unsafe situations and brainstorm solutions. Have girls create a "worst-case scenario" game, with each girl imagining an emergency situation. Girls write their ideas on index cards then discuss as a team how to handle each one. This will reinforce safety and risk management. It will also give girls a chance to discuss some of their travel fears.
- Quiz girls, game-show style, on travel safety guidelines. Reward winners with small, funny prizes. Girls can create the concept of the game themselves. Play the game several times, say, once a month, leading up to the trip.



Before the trip, girls should know:

- What to do if they accidentally get separated from the group
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to navigate a crowd
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- Appropriate behaviors
- How to appropriately represent Girl Scouts
- Which adult they are accountable to while on the trip
- Contents of the "Stay Safe" section of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*



## TripTip:

Designate a back-home contact person. This person would be responsible for calling parents or guardians in case of an emergency, scheduling conflict, or transportation delay. The contact person should have the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all parents and guardians. Having a contact person back home allows advisers and chaperones to stay focused on the girls and their travel.

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# Transportation

As part of trip preparation, discuss considerations for drivers and other passengers. Wherever possible, arrange for assigned seats in buses, trains, planes, or cars, so everyone knows her seat. On longer trips, have girls rotate seating so everyone gets a chance to sit next to the window, for example. Remember to practice emergency evacuation procedures from vehicles.

Find out whether there is a special procedure for pre-registering a large group at hostels, hotels, lodges, etc. If there is, one person can check in for the entire group while the others remain in the bus or cars until accommodations are assigned. It is not necessary to do everything as a group while traveling. Consider breaking into smaller groups to pursue special interests and to have some unscheduled time to relax.

## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is available through Mutual of Omaha. International Plan 3PI provides accident and sickness insurance for international trips including travel assistance services provided by AXA Assistance-USA. This does not include ticket insurance. Insurance forms are available through GSSJC or can be downloaded at: [www.mutualofomaha.com/girl\\_scouts\\_of\\_the\\_usa/index.html](http://www.mutualofomaha.com/girl_scouts_of_the_usa/index.html).



Review safety issues and plans frequently in the months coming up to the trip.

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Months

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Months

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Months

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# Get Physical

Are you planning to sightsee from the bus? Or, are you expecting to walk, hike, carry bags, and fully engage physically, if able? Depending on your answer, you may need time to prepare physically for the trip. It's important for the girls, and you, to assess fitness levels.

Take the fitness quiz below. This is the same quiz found on page 16 of *The Girl Scout Guide to Global Travel*. Ask girls to take the test also. If everyone is comfortable with the idea, you can try the test together as a group.



- 01** Cardio respiratory health  
Run up two flights of stairs (at least 32 steps) without stopping. How do you feel?
- I can talk comfortably and could run up another two flights.
  - I'm too winded to talk.
  - Where's the ambulance?
- 02** Endurance  
Take a three-hour hike. How do you feel?
- I could do another three hours.
  - The first hour and a half was a breeze. But, now I'm tired.
  - I'll just lie here until someone rescues me.
- 03** Muscle Strength  
Carry a 30-pound bag for 20 minutes. How do you feel?
- No problem. Where to now?
  - I did it, but I'm ready to put this thing down now.
  - I had to ditch the bag after five minutes.
- 04** Overall fitness  
How do you feel after completing this test?
- What test? I feel great!
  - I'm a little bit sore and tired.
  - I'm ready for a vacation.

## RESULTS

**If your answers were mostly A's:**  
Your fitness level is a 3. You're in great condition. Keep it going!

**If your answers were mostly B's:**  
You're right in the middle of the fitness meter. If your trip has intense physical activities, you're going to need to bump your fitness level up a notch.

**If your answers were mostly C's:**  
Your fitness level is a 1. Your international trip will be physically challenging for you. The good news: you have plenty of time to get yourself into better condition. Ask your doctor or an adviser for health and fitness recommendations that will prepare you for your trip.

## Doctor's Orders

Prepare your body for travel. Look into vaccinations recommended for international travel.

Stay healthy before you go by eating sensibly, getting rest, and taking care of health issues. Encourage girls to do the same.

Remind girls that a big trip is not the time to start a crash diet, go off medication, or stay up nights on end. Illness not only affects the individual but the entire group.



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# Get Fit!

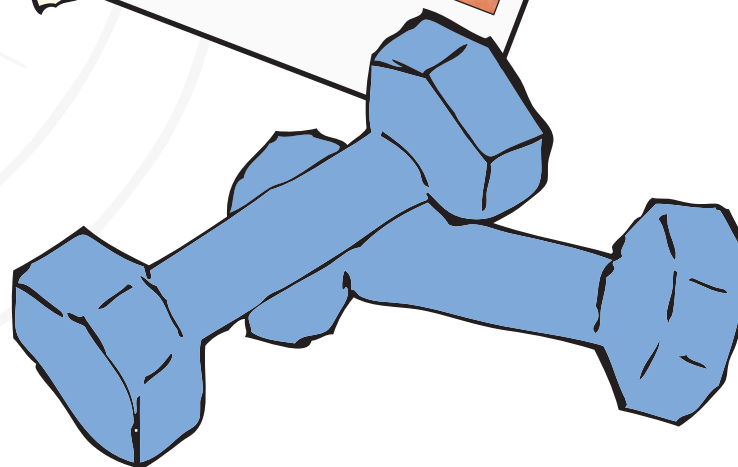
Next, guide girls through the “How Strenuous Will Your Trip Be?” activity in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Global Travel*. This activity engages girls in looking critically at each itinerary item and rating its physical activity level.

How does the physical activity level required for your trip match your personal fitness level? If there's a gap, use your preparation time to get in shape. Marathon runners don't just one day decide to run 26 miles—they build up endurance and stamina over time. You may not be running a marathon, but follow their example by gradually building up your personal fitness so you're ready when trip-day arrives. Take frequent hikes or brisk walks so you will be prepared to endure long days on the road. Work out at the gym, play sports, take a dance class, lift light weights, and take the stairs instead of the elevator. Grab a buddy and find your own enjoyable way to get in shape.

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- What fitness level are you at?
- What can you do to help a sister traveler whose fitness level is lower than what's needed?
- What if it's one of the chaperones?
- What can the group do together to get fit?



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# 2-8 Months Prior to Trip

Cross-cultural exchange is the foundation of the Girl Scout travel experience. Remember the Discover, Connect, and Take Action outcomes listed at the beginning of this guide? If you review them, you'll notice the majority of the indicators (what girls say) result from cross-cultural interaction. This exchange is one of the features that sets the Girl Scout travel experience apart from other trips a girl may take. As girls get ready for cross-cultural exchange, they'll discover things about themselves and connect with other people and places as well as their own families, communities, and culture. Cross-cultural exchange can also set the stage for Take Action projects inspired by a girl's first-hand experience.

## Culture Quest

It's pretty hard to go on a trip and not experience some of the local culture, but cultural exchange is more than that. It's sharing your culture and being open to understanding other cultures. Communicate with the people you meet and you've got a cross-cultural exchange. Cultural exchange might not be that easy to understand, but is a good place to start with girls in defining what culture means.

Open a discussion with girls:

Say something like: "Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see the world, ourselves, and others. What is culture?"

Ask girls to come up with a definition. They may find it easier to list aspects of culture than come up with a full definition. Some elements of culture:

- Culture has to do with values and beliefs.
- Culture involves customs and traditions.
- Culture is collective, shared by a group.
- Everyone has a culture.
- Culture is learned.
- Culture influences and shapes behavior.
- Culture is transmitted from generation to generation.
- Culture is often unconscious; people are sometimes not aware of how their behaviors and attitudes have been shaped by their culture.
- People in all cultures have common needs.



Next, provide the following definition:  
Culture is a system of beliefs, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are shared by a group of people. It includes customs, language, and material artifacts. These are transmitted from generation to generation, rarely with explicit instructions.



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# Discover Culture

Use the following questions to focus discussion on the role culture plays in forming our behaviors and beliefs:

- How do you think you learned your culture?
- How do you think your culture has shaped you?  
How has it influenced your values, preferences, and beliefs?
- Despite the differences in culture in our group, what are some things that everyone has in common?
- How does culture shape the way we see ourselves, others, and the world?

Take as much time as needed for girls to discuss culture. When ready, girls should move on to defining their own culture and values by taking the “Get to Know You” quiz on page 8 in *The Girl Scout Travel Log*. To understand another culture, girls first have to understand their own. While some of their responses may be very personal, encourage girls to share them with the group and ask follow-up questions. This will make for good cultural exchange practice.



## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:  
How would a girl from the culture you'll be visiting answer the “Get to Know You” quiz found in *The Girl Scout Travel Log* on page 8?

### Coach Girls Through:

- Defining their own culture
- Exploring the culture they'll be visiting
- Understanding culture shock and knowing how to deal with it

### Your To-Do's:

- Submit an Application for Approval (0-884) to GSSJC.
- Review and follow council policies and procedures on travel.
- Continue to strengthen group team-building.  
Keep girls' families updated on plans.

## More about Culture

See the Culture Quest section, page 19 in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel* for more on defining culture.

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# Cross-Cultural Exchange

The Culture Quest Challenge on page 7 of *The Girl Scout Travel Log* is the perfect activity to encourage girls to explore the culture they'll be visiting while promoting cross-cultural exchange. (In this activity, girls are asked to write about aspects of the culture they'll be visiting. It gives them a chance to really think about how much they know and might want to learn. On page 19 of **Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel**, the Culture Quest activity instructs girls to distinguish between visible and less discernible features of the culture they'll soon be experiencing first-hand.)

While this is an activity girls do individually, use group meeting time to discuss girls' progress. Each time you meet, ask girls:

- Has anyone found out anything surprising?
- Has someone learned about a facet of culture important for everyone to know about?
- Are you having any challenges in finding information?

 This culture scavenger hunt should take a good amount of time for girls to complete. When they're done, celebrate their success with a culture party that incorporates aspects of culture they've learned about such as music, food, and festivals.

## Invite a Seasoned Traveler

Invite someone who has traveled to the country of your destination to be a guest speaker at one of your meetings. Ideally, this person would have lived there for an extended period (greater than three months). They can share photos and answer questions about the culture, food, etc.

## Discuss It!

Once girls have completed the Culture Quest Challenge, guide them by asking:

- Which culture characteristics are similar to your own?
- Which culture characteristics are most different?
- How will knowing more about the culture help you on your trip?

## Share these tips to prepare girls for a culture exchange:

Meet people from other cultures and countries.

Practice basic phrases in given language (if applicable to trip).

Know about the customs and culture you'll be visiting.

Try a new way of doing something.

Learn how the country you're visiting views the United States or your region of the United States.

The local hostel may have a young traveler from the place your girls want to travel, who would be willing to come and say hello to a troop/group planning a trip there.

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# Culture Shock

No matter how much you and the girls prepare, everyone will experience some degree of culture shock. The best way to deal with it is to understand that it's a normal occurrence. Help girls get acquainted with culture shock so they know what to expect and how to deal with it.

Culture shock usually occurs in four stages:

- 01** Euphoria is the beginning stage. It is based on the excitement that builds while planning a trip and starting a new adventure with friends. Everything is new and different and wonderful. You enjoy taking it all in and being in a new, exciting place.
- 02** Anxiety (nervousness, stress) develops in unfamiliar settings. Language difficulties, unfamiliar behaviors, and new surroundings can cause frustration, anger, and sleeplessness.
- 03** Rejection of the new culture occurs when you find yourself thinking things in the host country are "wrong" and "backwards." You may start to withdraw from the local community, preferring to surround yourself with other Americans. You may feel the impulse to call a family member or friend back home, even in the middle of the night. Things you thought were interesting and different now become annoying and frustrating.
- 04** Adjustment is when things begin to come together. You recognize there are pros and cons to every culture. You try and take things as they come and learn to appreciate the differences. You may even take on some of the new culture's behaviors and attitudes.

## Possible Signs of Culture Shock

- Sadness
- Homesickness
- Loneliness
- Sleeping too much/too little
- Anger
- Irritability
- Resentment
- Sense of helplessness

In Ward Off Culture Shock also on page 22 of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*, ask girls to brainstorm ways to bring each tip to life. This way, when girls recognize the signs of culture shock within each other, they'll know how to handle them.

## Ward Off Culture Shock

- Be open-minded and receptive.
- Find humor. When does laughing not make you feel better?
- Be flexible. It's not the end of the world if things don't go exactly as planned.
- Communicate your feelings and concerns. Talking it out always helps and lets others know what's going on with you.
- Accept that things may be unclear. Don't judge because you don't understand.
- Have positive, realistic expectations about where you're going and what you'll be doing.
- Express warmth, empathy, and respect for others.
- Ask questions. If someone responds to what you say or do in an unexpected way, inquire about that response. It can lead to an opportunity for cultural exchange.

### Progress

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Months

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# 4-12 Weeks Prior to Trip

## Get Down to Details

You're down to crunch time! With less than three months to go, use this time to ensure you are up to date in completing all steps within the timeline. Go back and review the to-do list that begins each section of this guide.

Let girls take the lead on finalizing details listed below. (These categories are also found on page 24 in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*.) Step in when girls ask for or appear to need your support.

### Revisit the Itinerary

Lock in daily itinerary items. Double-check places, dates, and times. Confirm your lodging.

### Safety Check

Go over all travel safety guidelines again. Are all girls well-acquainted with procedures? Review your trusted *Safety Activity Checkpoints* and *Volunteer Essentials*.

### Family Meeting

Hold a group family meeting to go over final details. Have a communication plan so families will know where the group will be at all times. Also, discuss safety plans and use the time to have parents and guardians fill out any forms that haven't been completed.



### Coach Girls Through:

- Finalizing details
- Checking paperwork
- Confirming plans

### Your To-Do's:

- With girls, finalize itinerary and budget.
- Complete all safety and risk-management planning.
- Inform families with full and final details of trip.
- Recruit and train the back-home contact person.
- Complete other council-specific requirements.
- Check with U.S. State Department for travel warnings (refer to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)).
- Register your trip with the U.S. embassy or consulate of the country you will visit.
- Continue to strengthen group team-building.
- Continue preparation of cross-cultural exchange.



#### Progress

12-24  
Months

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Months

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# Know About the Dough



**So, you've researched where to go, saved money, and ordered a passport. Before hopping on that plane, get your monetary ducks in a row.**

Review your budget and balance it against your group funds. Is it looking good? If you're still short on cash, have the group come up with a last-minute money-earning plan. By this point, airline tickets, lodging, transportation, event fees, and whatever can be purchased in advance should have been done. All group funds should be collected.

Deciding what kind of money to bring can be overwhelming, especially when there are so many options. Weighing the pros and cons will help you decide what will work best for you.

## ATM / Debit Card

**Pro:** ATM machines abound both nationally and internationally, giving you access to cash virtually any time and generally at the best exchange rate.

**Con:** International ATMs can carry fees as high as \$5 per withdrawal, so it might be a good idea to use a bank that has a large international presence.

### TIPS

- Ask your bank about withdrawal fees at overseas ATMs. Also, let them know you will be traveling abroad so they don't think your card was stolen and block access to your account when they start seeing charges from Paris!
- Make sure your ATM card is linked through one of the major networks (PLUS, Cirrus, Mastercard, Visa, etc.).

## Travelers Checks

**Pro:** If they are lost or stolen, they can be replaced within 24 hours. They can be exchanged for local currency at a bank or used directly at stores.

**Con:** Travelers Checks have fees at the time of purchase and some places charge a set fee for each check, some merchants won't accept them, you won't get the best exchange rate for them, you'll need to find places during your trip that accept travelers checks or can convert them to local currency and travelers checks are becoming increasingly more difficult to use and old-fashioned.

### TIPS

- Travelers Checks come with serial numbers that you should record and keep in a safe place—without those numbers, there's no refund!

## Cash

**Pro:** Cash is universally accepted.

**Con:** It will need to be converted to local currency. This can be done at local banks or currency exchange bureaus. Once money is lost or stolen, you cannot replace it. Carrying a lot of cash around may not be safe.

### TIPS

- When converting US dollars to foreign currency, shop around for the best rate, as it will vary from place to place. In general, the best rates will be from major banks and the worst will be through exchange kiosks at airports or train stations.
- If you exchange some money before leaving the United States, do so at a major bank to get the best rates.

## Credit Card

**Pro:** Credit cards are like insurance—hopefully you won't need them, but if you run out of or lose your money, they come in handy.

**Con:** Not every card has the same replacement policy overseas. Plus, some credit card companies charge fees for international transactions.

### TIPS

- Most credit cards are widely accepted, but check your card's policy on international transactions and replacing a lost or stolen card.
- Call your credit card company to let them know you will be traveling abroad.

### Progress

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# 2-6 Weeks Prior to Trip

If you've followed the tips in this guide, the last month before your trip will be smooth sailing. Now's the time to confirm logistics, focus on team building, and deepen cross-cultural exchange. And don't forget to pack!

## Stress Less

Take a breather from last-minute details. Follow the five steps below for a personal "time out." Recommend this relaxation technique to girls as well.

- 01** Get comfortable. Lie down on your bed or sink into a warm bath. No phones, cell phones, TV... You get the idea.
- 02** Close your eyes and take long, deep, slow breaths. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- 03** Try to relax every muscle and joint by first tensing the muscle and then letting it relax—start with your toes and move up to your head. If you notice an area of tightness, spend extra time trying to release the tension.
- 04** Keep taking slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, imagining the stress disappearing each time you exhale. It's okay to doze off (unless you're in the tub, of course).
- 05** Stay in this relaxed state as long as possible (or until your body shrivels up, if you're in the bath!).

### TripTip:

Make copies of all forms for each traveling adult and for the emergency contact at home and save a scanned copy of passports electronically so you can access the online form anywhere in the world.

#### Coach Girls Through:

- Packing appropriately
- Reflecting on who they are "pre-trip"

#### Your To-Do's:

- Review the "checklist for travel readiness" on pages 7-8 of the *Appendix*.

Collect: (All forms in the *Appendix*.)

- Signed parent/guardian permission slips (F-204)
- Adult Health Examination Form (O-905)
- Girl Health Forms (F-185) Health forms must be reviewed by the first aider
- Power of Attorney for Girl Travel (F-318)
- Power of Attorney for Adult Travel (O-906)
- Girl Agreement (O-903)
- Adult Agreement (O-904)
- Copies of passports for all travelers (girls and adults) if traveling outside of the US
- All trip monies

#### Confirm:

- All transportation
- Lodging
- Payments made/received
- Trip details, safety procedures, contact information (with family)
- Program tour reservations

Additional insurance purchased if required.

Continue to strengthen group team building.

Continue preparation of cross-cultural exchange.

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# Packing Makes Perfect

Give everyone in your group the airline luggage restrictions and a list of must-have items for the trip. The mention of carry-ons should include TSA restrictions. For example, peanut butter or a jar of homemade jelly is a “liquid” and not eligible for carry on. Then ask them to pack a “sample” suitcase. Have each member bring the suitcase to a group meeting and see how well they’ve packed. What can be left behind? What needs to be added? Review packing tips on pages 27 of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*.

## Amy’s\* Activity: Shakedown Day

Using the already packed bags, plan a travel experience that incorporates local travel (i.e., subway, bus, ferries, walking, etc.). This gives girls and advisers a chance to lug their packed bags around to see how heavy they really are and make decisions about extra gear. If you are planning to carry on all your luggage, build a crate like the one they use at the airline gates to determine if carry-ons will fit airline requirements. Once you have reached your destination, have girls reflect on what they learned.

You can combine Shakedown Day with your final pre-trip meeting. After the reflection, invite parents and guardians to join you. Review finalized itinerary (give a copy to parents and guardians to keep at home), emergency procedures, and last-minute details (such as when to meet at the airport). This is also a good time to refer to the group agreement.

\*Amy Bierman-Rydel is the Teen Program Manager at Girl Scouts of Western Washington.



## TripTip:

Make life easier by using and referring girls to the packing list on page 9 of *The Girl Scout Travel Log*.

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# Gear Up for Journaling

Encourage girls to bring a journal with them on the trip. A journal will help girls as they reflect on the day's events. Journaling allows girls to record daily experiences, not just for memory's sake but as a way to think deeply about what they saw, did, or felt. Recording daily insights is a means for girls to observe how they've changed, and can serve as inspiration to take action on something they care about.

Girls could write their first journal entry right before the trip begins. Ask them to answer questions on "You, the Before Picture" on page 10 of *The Girl Scout Travel Log*. While this is a journal entry that girls complete on their own, it's pivotal to the end-of-trip reflection. Be sure to remind girls to fill out this page.

In case girls don't have their own *Girl Scout Travel Logs*, here are the pre-trip reflection questions:

- What three things are you most excited about?
- What three things are you most worried about?
- What three things do you predict you'll miss the most about home?
- What three things do you think you'll miss the least about home?
- My greatest single challenge on this trip will be...
- How do you think your travel experience will change you?
- Record how you're feeling at this very moment.



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# On Your Trip

## Reflection Coach

Besides being manager of logistics and safety, the most important role you play on the trip is that of Reflection Coach. To deepen their experiences, girls need to reflect on the day and apply lessons learned to future situations. The reflection process involves two components: group debrief and individual journal writing.

## Group Discussion

At the end of each day, make time to debrief as a group. Besides reflecting on the day's happenings, this is the time for adults and girls to check on group interaction (what's working, what's not) and logistics (next day's plans, meeting time).

## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- Does anyone have any questions about what we did today?
- What was the best thing about today?
- What was the biggest challenge today?
- What things went well?
- Are there any changes we need to make?
- Did today live up to your expectations? Why or why not?
- Does anyone have an issue she would like to bring up?
- How can we perform better as a group?
- Did anyone have an experience or see something today that could translate into a Take Action project?
- Is there anything you want to change—attitudes or behaviors—to make the group more like the environment you want?
- Is there anything that we are not saying to each other that we need to be saying?

## TripTip:

- While traveling:
  - Let girls take the lead as much as possible
  - Make time for reflecting on the day
  - Coach girls to solve problems together
  - Have fun

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# Journaling

Girls can use journal time to:

- Think critically about their experiences
- Record memories
- Start planting seeds for their Take Action projects

Back at home, girls can re-read their journal entries and recall issues they confronted, topics they felt passionately about, and people, places, and things that inspired them. Encourage girls to keep their journals with them at all times, so they can capture things as they happen.

## Positive Communication

- Make eye contact.
- Listen—girls want to be heard.
- Be mindful of girls' feelings.
- Ask questions, but avoid questions that begin with "why," a word that can put girls on the defensive.
- Paraphrase what you heard to be sure you and the girl are in agreement about what was said.



## G-I-R-L-S: 5 Problem-Solving Guidelines

If your group is facing a big challenge or comes face-to-face with an issue girls cannot agree on (you know it's bound to happen with travel), use the steps below. And remember: The key is to support girls in solving the problem or issue themselves.

### G—Gather the facts.

Sometimes a visual can help a group. Brainstorm and list information on a big piece of paper. Be sure that all sides of the story are represented.

### I—Indicate whether the problem is solvable by you and the girls exclusively.

Think of all the ways the problem can be solved. You may have to include other adults to act as mediators or objective listeners.

### R—Recommend possible solutions as a group.

Discuss the consequences. Some actions may have a positive impact and some may have a negative effect.

### L—Look for a mutually agreeable solution.

You can make decisions in a number of ways: by deciding for the group, by having the group vote democratically, or by having each person take a moment to share her opinion until everyone in the group reaches a consensus.

### S—Solved? Make the solution happen.

Let the girls in your group try to implement their decisions on their own. Provide guidance and reminders to keep them accountable—and thus "responsible for what I say and do"—when needed.

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# Home, Sweet Home

Welcome back! The trip is over and everyone will be excited to talk about her experiences, show photos and videos, and reflect on what she learned. Evaluate the trip with the girls: Discuss what was fun and worthwhile, decide what the group would like to change on future trips, and report back to the council with the group's evaluation. This is also the time to pay all bills promptly.

## What's Different?

After girls have had a chance to reflect individually on their trip, bring the group together to discuss the impact of their travels. Support the Girl Scout process of "learning by doing" by having girls run the debriefing themselves.

Have girls answer the following questions (also included in *The Girl Scout Travel Log* on page 12):

- What three things did you enjoy most?
- What three things did you miss from home?
- What three things bothered you or were the most difficult?
- What three things from home did you not miss?
- My greatest single challenge was:
- How do you think this travel experience changed you?
- What, if anything, will you do differently?
- What, if anything, would you change about your trip?
- What did you figure out about teamwork that you can apply to other situations in your life?
- In what other areas of your life can you use the planning and goal-setting skills you developed?
- What has your trip inspired you to do next?



### Coach Girls Through:

- Reflecting on their trip
- Sharing their travel experiences
- Creating a Take Action project

### Your To-Do's:

- Evaluate the overall trip.
- Complete and submit the evaluation (O-927) to GSSJC.

Girls will want to share their experiences. If girls have *The Girl Scout Travel Log*, they can complete the "Be a Show Off" on page 13. Here they are asked to decide who they want to share their trip with and how they want to do it. Once girls complete the activity, ask them to put a timeline to their plans—who, what, when, where—and make a commitment to following through with them.

Next, ask girls to incorporate all of their plans into a giant chart or poster. By doing this, girls will be accountable to each other and be able to see the web of people who will learn about their trip. Encourage girls to reach out to younger Girl Scouts who are planning trips of their own.

As girls share their experiences, be aware of indicators (what girls say) in relation to the Take Action leadership outcome "girls educate and inspire others to act." Look at page 5 of this guide to get reacquainted with outcomes and indicators, if needed.

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# Take Action Projects



Now is the time for girls to bring their Take Action projects to the forefront, refine them, and execute them. Support girls in organizing a Take Action kickoff party. The party will give girls the opportunity to celebrate the conclusion of their trip and to start talking about possible projects. Ask girls to bring their travel journals with them.

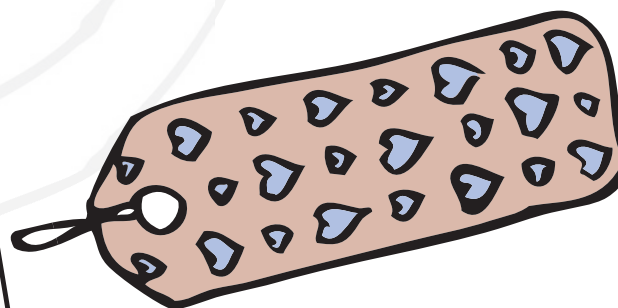
Your help will be invaluable as girls begin to identify issues they want to tackle in their Take Action projects. It's best to approach this topic in two steps, based on the activities in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*, pages 37-38.

First, go over the "You Got Issues (and Solutions)!" activity with girls as a group. This activity helps girls identify issues important to them, stating: "To take on an authentic Take Action project, the issue you're identifying must meet two requirements:

1. Your issue needs to be something you feel passionately about.
2. Your issue must meet a community need.

Start by identifying three potential issues and then narrow them down to one."

For examples of amazing Take Action projects, refer girls to "Awesome Action Projects" in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*.



## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- Do you feel passionately about something you saw or learned on your travels?
- Are there one or two ideas that recur in your journal writing?
- Who would like to share some of the issues you are interested in pursuing?
- Are you interested in working on one project or several "mini team" projects?

As girls narrow down choices to one issue, they'll need your support on size, scope, and feasibility. Emphasize that Take Action projects should reflect their passions. Projects do not have to take place in the location they visited or even benefit the people they met, but girls can draw from things they felt inspired by. For example, if girls were moved by poverty they observed in India, they could create a Take Action project to benefit residents in their own communities.

Once girls have picked an issue, they will think about the root cause of the issue and possible solutions. Then, they will zero in on one practical solution based on the time and resources they have. Your role is to coach girls to think carefully about how they can have meaningful impact. A clearly focused project can have more impact than a big campaign.

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# Home, Sweet Home Advocate

Second, as girls start to build Take Action plans, they can find help in the guiding questions in "Putting the Pieces Together" on page 38 in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel*. In this section, girls are asked to respond to the following prompts to help frame the details of their projects. The prompts are:

- My project focuses on this community issue:
- My project involves this realistic plan of action:
- My project will take this amount of time to complete:
- My project goals are:
- The impact of this project will be:
- This project could be sustainable if:
- I'll know I will have succeeded when/because:

You can help by recommending that girls write in their journals about these statements. Also remind them that the journaling they did on their trip is a treasure trove of information about their experiences: how they felt, what they noticed, and what their intentions were. Remind girls: "You'll know you have carefully focused your issue and solution when you can write it in one short paragraph. This is what success will look like."

As girls make progress on their projects, continue engaging them with reflection questions:

- While doing this project did you meet anyone new? What have you learned from that person? How is your network expanding through this project?
- What kind of impact do you think the project is having? Why?
- Have you experienced any setbacks? How did you deal with them?
- Are you on track with your time frame? Do you need to make any adjustments?
- If you were starting over, would you do anything differently?



## Discuss It!

Guide girls by asking:

- Do you want time during each meeting to devote to your project (even just for a check-in or progress report)?
- What other time do you anticipate you will need?
- What do you need help with? Whom can you ask?
- How can you break the project into achievable steps?



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# Self-Evaluation for Girls

The section “Where You’re Going, Where You’ve Been” in *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Travel and The Girl Scout Travel Log* is designed as a self-survey for girls. When they answer the questions, they will be able to see their own progress from beginning to end. While their answers are not meant to be discussed in a group, girls may want to talk about what they’ve learned—it’s a great opportunity to have quality one-on-one time with a particular girl.

The survey is derived from outcomes described at the beginning of this guide on page 5. Refer to information about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (in the GSUSA resource Transforming Leadership and on the Girl Scout website, [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)) for support.

Your current travel experience may have reached its end, but girls are probably already thinking of the next place they want to go. Keep the excitement going by encouraging girls to turn their travel dreams into reality.



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