

# Travel: Safety Activity Checkpoints



**Approval:** Girl Scouts San Diego requires leaders to obtain advance approval before participating in travelling. Send an [Activity Approval Form](#) to your service unit activity consultant. See [sdgirlscouts.org/travel](http://sdgirlscouts.org/travel) and the *Let's Go Resource* booklet for approval process. Allow additional time for approval of advanced travel (involving air transportation, leaving California, or more than 3 nights) and all international travel. See [sdgirlscouts.org/travel](http://sdgirlscouts.org/travel) for specifics.

Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, and travel offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. The following Safety Activity Checkpoints can help you and girls prepare for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

## Travel Progression and Recommended Ages for Travel Experiences

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

## Travel Progression Checklist

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

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

**The Journey Adult Guides** have a lot of ideas about trips that bring the Journey to life. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting:

- Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride

by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.

- **Day trip (Daisies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.

**Note:** Full-day trips may be challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.

- **Overnight trips (Daisies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights. This could start with backyard camping, and progress to camping at a Girl Scout property, or a visit to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground – or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. (Note: A Daisy troop may participate in an overnight camping experience if the girls are ready. Girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.) **Travel camping (also known as “road trips”), defined as overnight camping in multiple locations during the trip, is not recommended for Girl Scouts Daisies and Brownies.**
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three nights or more camping or staying 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).
- **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. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the Girl Scout Ranger program!
- **International trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring two or three years of preparation.
- **International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors,** but only to those who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight trips with Girl Scouting. When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Visiting one of the [four World Centers](#) is a great place to start, but girls might also consider traveling with international service-learning organizations to perform community service, or meeting up with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world at an [international scouting event](#). All international groups should register with [S.T.E.P. - the U.S. Department of State travel registry](#). Be sure to also read the Travel Section of your council’s Volunteer Essentials guide to learn about specific policies related to travel.
- \*NOTE: WAGGGS World Centers or your Girl Scout Council may have additional guidelines regarding age requirements.

**Beyond troop opportunities.** 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. Girls might join a trip with other girls from around their council, or form a new troop with other girls who like to travel. Girl Scouts of the USA also offers individual Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors the chance to travel independently through [Destinations](#).

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Make sure that reasonable accommodations are made for girls with disabilities. Be inspired by stories of people with disabilities traveling by visiting [No Barriers](#) and [Wilderness Inquiry](#).

## Trip/Travel Gear

- Packing. Girls and adults plan together what clothing and any equipment to take and how to pack it.
- Share resources. Encourage girls to make a list of the gear and supplies, and then determine which can be shared. Support girls in creating a checklist of group and personal equipment and distribute to group members.
- Uniforms. When the group wears their uniforms, all travelers wear it correctly. Girls and adults are encouraged to be in uniform at WAGGGS World Centers and at Girl Guide/Girl Scout events.
- Luggage. Individual limits on luggage and equipment are set and adhered to. Each person is able to carry her own individually identified belongings except when a special consideration, such as a disability, warrants alternative plans. Leave valuable at home.