

Planning Girl-Led Trips

Oh, the places she'll go! Girl Scouting opens the door for all sorts of new experiences for girls, including the opportunities to visit places near and far on troop trips. As a Girl Scout volunteer, it's tempting to plan an amazing trip that you know will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the girls. However, by inviting girls to take a primary role in the trip planning, they gain experience in budgeting, goal setting, breaking down tasks, working in teams, list-making, and more! Even better, they get to build the trip of their dreams and gain the knowledge that they can make their dreams a reality!

Stuck on how to let girls take the lead in trip planning? Follow the handy tips below!

Brainstorming

Girls may have very specific trip ideas (Dollywood! Disney World! Washington, D.C!), or they may be unsure where to start. Encourage some outside-of-the-box brainstorming by asking girls to bring in objects that represent something that makes them think of another place. Girls might bring in sea shells, photos, international food, art, and more. Ask them what excites them about what they brought in, or what about their object they like. You may find lots of girls are excited by the beach. Great! Now, they just need to decide which beach!

Researching

Several of the girls brought in photos of stars and the moon, so they've decided they want a trip that helps bring them closer to space. Divide the girls into groups and ask them each to come up with one suggestion, like going to space camp, visiting the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., or visiting the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Ask groups to play "travel agent" and create a trip package that includes information about the location, general costs, travel time, and more. Devote some time in a couple of meetings to research (but not the whole meeting), or ask girls if they'd like to do this on their own time. After each group finishes, ask them to present their trip package to the troop, then ask the troop to vote on their destination!

Budgeting

So, the girls have decided they want to go to New York City – awesome! After researching hotel, transportation, activity, and food costs, they estimate they will need to raise \$3000 through product sales in order to go. This is a great goal, however, it's also important to discuss what will happen if they don't meet their budgeting goal. They may decide to wait until next year and combine this year's and next year's resources, or they may decide to go on a less-expensive trip, and try again for NYC next year.

Planning

Planning a trip takes some time, so, instead of trying to plan everything in one major session, spread troop planning across several meetings. Girls may choose to spend ten

minutes per meeting on trip planning, or they may choose to work in planning committees on their own, outside of regular meeting time. Sample committees include: Activity (ask the girls to use the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) when planning), Transportation, Food, Fun, Memories, Safety, and more.

Trip Kaper Chart

Before you hit the road, ask the girls to create a kaper chart for the trip and either volunteer or draw names for who will do what. Ask girls to think about what will help their trip run smoothly, safely, and fun. Sample roles might include: photographer, head count master, tour guide (each girl can be an expert of a different site/activity), first aid kit holder, and buddy-for-the-day (someone another girl can talk to if she's feeling homesick).

Packing

Ask the girls to create a pre-trip packing list, and spend some time in a pre-trip meeting going over the list. You may need to ask questions to help them see any gaps they may be missing, like “What will we need if it rains?” or “Are there any kind of footwear requirements for paddleboating?” By creating the list themselves (with your help), girls gain the ability to plan for both the expected and unexpected!

Post-Trip

Plan a post-trip review and celebration session for girls to discuss what they liked, disliked, or would've done differently. Then, as a troop, decide how you'd best like to capture your trip memories. Girls may decide they want to create a scrapbook, tell other troops about their trip, or build an album on social media. You may want to plan for this session to be a few weeks after the trip in order to give girls the opportunity to reflect on their adventure.

Use these tips and your troop trip will truly be girl-powered! As their guide along the way, you may find yourself offering helpful suggestions and guidance – especially if they're planning a trip for the first time. The more trips the girls plan, the more it will become second-nature to them, and before you know it, they'll be thinking of rainy day gear before the thought of a dark cloud even crossed your mind!

As a final note, as the girls plan, remember to complete the [Troop and SU Activity Approval Form](#) and collect [parent permission forms](#). The girls and you may even organize an informational parent meeting!

Have fun, and safe travels!