

# 6-12 Weeks Prior to Trip

## ✓ Get Down to Details

With less than three months before you leave, you've entered the nitty-gritty finalize details zone! If you're traveling with a group, now's the time to pull together a meeting; remember to include chaperones and other adults. Look at all the information you and the other girls have gathered. What's left to do?

## ✓ Revisit the Itinerary

Pull out your daily itineraries and go over them with a magnifying glass (not literally!). Has anything changed? Double-check places, dates, and times. Confirm your lodging. Even if nothing has changed on your end, it doesn't mean that the hotel you are staying at didn't have a computer failure and lost your reservation or that popular tourist attraction had a last-minute closing for renovations.

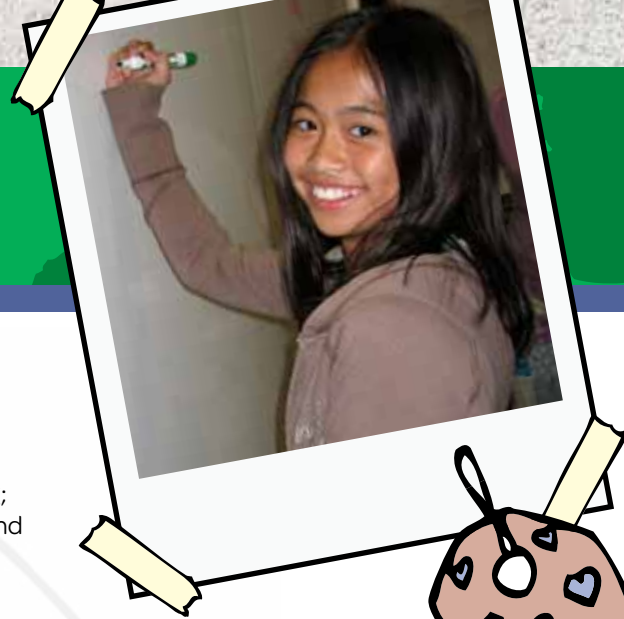
## ✓ Safety Check

As a group, go over all travel safety guidelines again. Do you know:

- What to do if accidentally separated from the group?
- What to do if emergency help is needed?
- How to navigate a crowd?
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures?
- How to represent Girl Scouts?

## ✓ Family Meeting

Just like you did all those months ago, hold a group family meeting. This time, go over the final details. Whoo Hoo! Your family will definitely be impressed with your ability to plan a solid international trip. Going over the details also will create clear communication with your family, so they'll know where you'll be at all times and be as excited as you are about the great experiences you'll be having. They'll also feel assured by your safety plans. The group family meeting is also a good time to have your parents or guardians fill out forms that haven't been completed yet.



### Progress

18-24  
Months

12-16  
Months

8-12  
Months

3-8  
Months

6-12  
Weeks

4-6  
Weeks

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# Know About the Dough

## ATM / Debit Card

**Pro:** ATM machines abound 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 many stores.

**Con:** You won't get the best exchange rate for them. And most banks add a surcharge for issuing them. Also, you'll need to find places during your trip that accept travelers checks or can convert them to local currency.

### TIPS

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

## 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.



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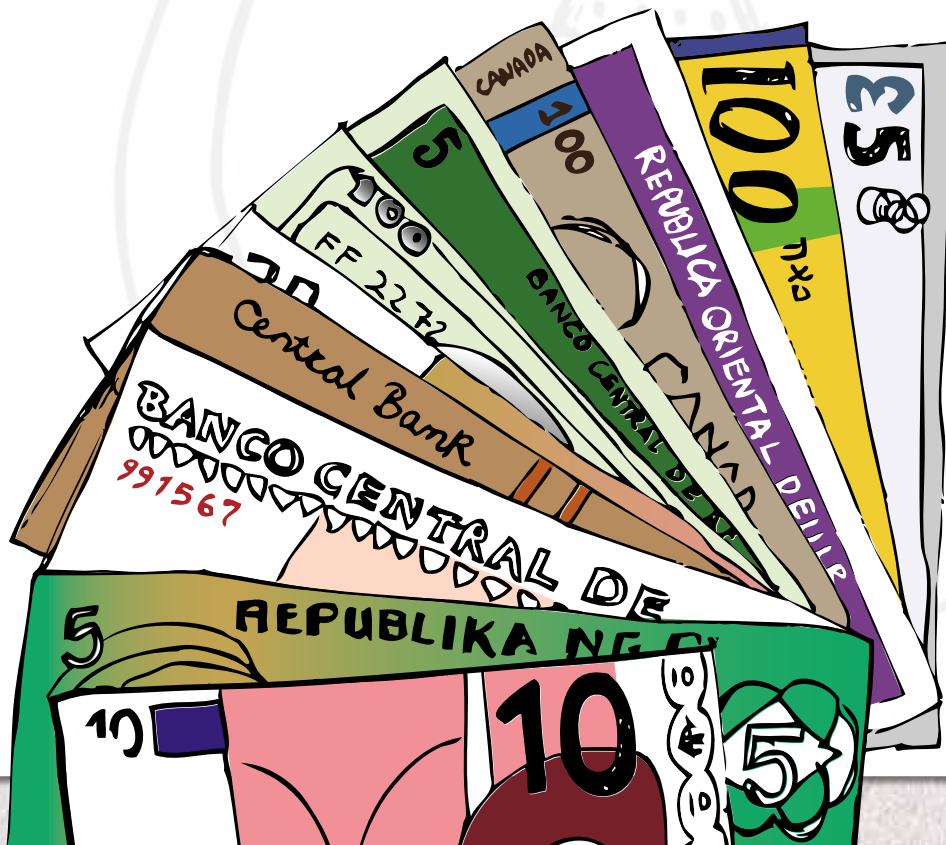
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# Know About the Dough (continued)

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 troop 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 troop 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.



What kind of money is right for you?

## 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.

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# checkpoint

6-12 Weeks

*Make sure to plan ahead of time and the experience will be amazing.*

– Katelin, 17

*I pushed myself everyday to go outside of my comfort zone and I am really glad I did. I proved to myself that I'm capable of anything.*

– MaryKate, 16

*Talk to other people that you know who have already been on a destination trip.*

– Yelean, 14

- Do you have special food needs. Visit [www.cdc.gov/travel/content/Survival-Guide.aspx](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/content/Survival-Guide.aspx) for diet and health information for travelers.



## Checklist

Before you move on to the next phase of planning your trip, did you:

- Balance and finalize the budget?
- Decide what kind of money you're going to bring with you?
- Finalize the trip itinerary?
- Meet all safety guidelines?
- Adhere to council travel policies?
- Purchase transportation tickets?
- Finalize accommodations?
- Submit all required forms?
- Review all trip information with parents and guardians?

## Notes & Ideas

### Trip Tip:

Find out which travel forms you (and your parent or guardian) will need to fill out. Contact your council.

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