

# 8-12 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 7 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?

### 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
  - Council-specific training
- Have an emergency plan.
- Check status and apply for passports (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

18-24  
Months

12-16  
Months

8-12  
Months

3-8  
Months

6-8  
Weeks

4-6  
Weeks

On Your  
Trip

Back at  
Home

# 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

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On Your Trip

Back at Home



# 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

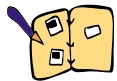
Speak the truth

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.

# 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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On Your  
Trip

Back at  
Home

Girl Scouts of the USA The Adult Guide to Girl Scout Global Travel

Page 20

# 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 21 of *Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Global 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 Global Travel*



## Trip Tip:

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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On Your  
Trip

Back at  
Home



# 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 your Girl Scout council 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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On Your Trip

Back at Home

# 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 19 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?
  - a. I can talk comfortably and could run up another two flights.
  - b. I'm too winded to talk.
  - c. Where's the ambulance?
- 02** Endurance  
Take a three-hour hike. How do you feel?
  - a. I could do another three hours.
  - b. The first hour and a half was a breeze. But, now I'm tired.
  - c. I'll just lie here until someone rescues me.
- 03** Muscle Strength  
Carry a 30-pound bag for 20 minutes. How do you feel?
  - a. No problem. Where to now?
  - b. I did it, but I'm ready to put this thing down now.
  - c. I had to ditch the bag after five minutes.
- 04** Overall fitness  
How do you feel after completing this test?
  - a. What test? I feel great!
  - b. I'm a little bit sore and tired.
  - c. 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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On Your  
Trip

Back at  
Home



# Get Fit!

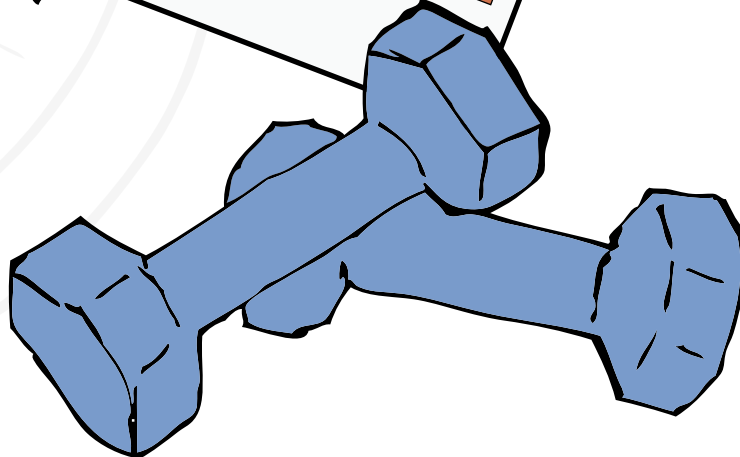
Next, guide girls through the “How Strenuous Will Your Trip Be?” activity in Exploration: The Girl Scout Guide to Global Travel. This activity engages girls in looking critically at each itinerary item and rating its physical activity level.

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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On Your Trip

Back at Home