

20+ Outdoor Activities for Girl Scouts

by Marlene Smith | Mar 14, 2017 | Badges & Awards, Camp & Outdoors, Ideas & Inspiration | 8 comments



With the first day of spring fast approaching, your mind may be filled with thoughts of blue skies or budding blooms. And if you're anything like me, you're extra excited because the arrival of Spring means it's time to shake off those winter doldrums and indulge in some outdoor activities with our Girl Scouts!

There are lots of ways to change up and re-energize your troop meetings with activities that girls can do outside because, hey, nobody said that every meeting has to involve an indoor table and chairs! The list of health benefits derived from outdoor activity are well known—[studies show](#) that outdoor play increases fitness levels and builds active, healthy bodies, which is something Girl Scouts is all about. As a bonus to the health benefits of spending time outside, there are *tons* of Girl Scout badges that can be completed outdoors—even if you live in a more urban or suburban area.



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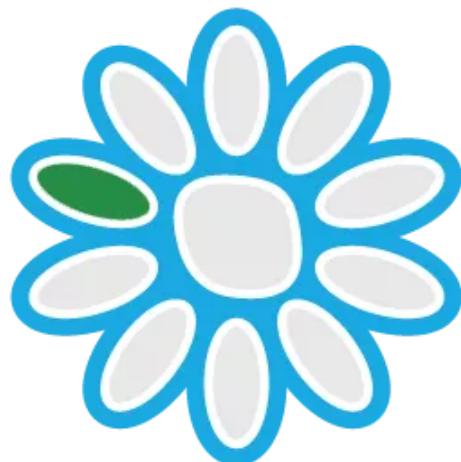
Girl Scouts of Northern Cal...
Troop Leader Resources

If you're looking for a way to add some literal fresh air to your meetings this Spring, here are 20+ badge activities that will help your Girl Scout troop earn their outdoor badges:

Badge activities for troops with access to nature

Daisy 'Use Resources Wisely' Petal

In this petal, Daisy Scouts hear the story of "Clover" and her friends who discuss ways to practice being resourceful while finding new ways to use old things. To help earn this petal, take your Daisy troop to visit a local garden, orchard, or farm and ask farmers about how they use resources wisely to grow their crops.



Brownie 'Hiker' Badge

If someone tells you “take a hike!”, respond to them with a hearty “Great idea!” With this badge, Brownies learn all about local hiking areas and how to follow trail signs. To help complete this badge, take a quick alphabet hike. During an alphabet hike, girls try to find things in nature that start with each letter of the alphabet. “Acorn” might be your first find for the letter “A.” A “bird” might be the perfect fit for letter “B”, and so on.



Brownie ‘Bugs’ Badge

Springtime is a great time for Brownies to explore insects and bugs as they learn first-hand about their habitats, food sources, and predators. Take a “Bug Hike” by either visiting a farm, zoo, or botanical garden that has a bug collection to observe insects in their native environments.



Did you know? The 2017 [Girl’s Choice Brownie Outdoor Adventurer](#) badge encourages girls to explore nature, play outdoors in a new way, and teaches families how to get active outdoors together!

Junior ‘Camper’ Badge

Turn your troop into a bunch of *happy campers* and have them plan their own overnight camping adventure at a campsite or cabin. Keep it girl-led by allowing your troop to plan where to go, what supplies to bring, what meals to eat, and what activities to do at the campsite.

Activities might include telling campfire stories, gazing at the stars, or singing your favorite Girl Scout songs. Juniors might also want to play a game of flashlight tag or go on a night hike.



Junior 'Geocacher' Badge

Junior Girl Scouts learn how to read longitude and latitude coordinates by using a device called a GPS receiver to search for prizes hidden outdoors, known as "[caches](#)". Caches are hidden on hikes throughout forests and outdoor recreational reserves. Find additional information on [geocache trails](#) in your area and start your troop's next treasure hunt!



Cadette 'Night Owl' Badge

Who says you have to keep your outdoor event restricted to day time hours? The Night Owl badge encourages Cadettes to take a field trip to explore nature at night and tour their world after dark. Invite your Cadettes to visit a park, trail, lake, stream, or natural environment and use all five senses to notice what's different after dark.



Cadette 'Trees' Badge

Bring out your Cadette's inner arborist with this fun outdoor badge that exposes scouts to the *tree*-mendous world of trees. Girls explore the science of trees, the connection between people and the towering giants, and make creative art projects with fallen branches, leaves, and bark pieces.

For even more fun, visit a sugar house to learn how Maple trees are tapped for maple syrup, or pick apples, almonds, or other fruits at a local orchard. If you don't have an orchard in your area, take your troop to your favorite grove to sketch and label the parts of a tree, showing layers and levels, from top leaves to bottom roots.



Senior 'Adventurer' Badge

Calling all avid adventurers: grab your Senior troop members and plan an epic high adventure experience. Choose your adventure with activities and locations that will allow for a two-night trip. Whether your girls choose rock climbing, canoeing, biking, or rafting, the goal is to G.I.R.L. up and put your outdoor skills to the test.



Senior 'Sky' Badge

Get your head in the clouds with this badge, which encourages girls to investigate the science of the atmosphere. Explore the connection between people and flight and discuss what your girls can do to help clear sky pollution!

Bring your Girl Scouts outside on a starry night to identify constellations and other noticeable stars, like the North Star or the Big Dipper. Encourage the girls to plan and host a stargazing party for their younger Girl Scout friends or family where they'll show their guest a star chart and share Greek mythology or Native American stories that go with each constellation.



Did you know? The 2017 [Girl's Choice Senior Paddling](#) badge encourages girls to explore boat paddling sports, learn paddling safety and techniques and go on short paddling adventures.

Ambassador 'Water' Badge

The Water badge is a great way to explore water issues, find out about solutions to our water woes, and inspire others on effective ways to protect this precious resource.

Encourage your Ambassadors to walk along a beach or search for waterfalls in the wilderness. Ambassadors might even like planning their own troop adventure to try out a new water sport,

such as kayaking, snorkeling, or synchronized swimming.



No Access to Nature? No Problem!

It would be nice if we all had easy access to a forest, meadow, or coast line when it comes time to complete our outdoor badges, but don't let a lack of natural environment discourage you! Use your imagination and you can find plenty of ways to accomplish these badge activities in an urban or suburban setting.

Daisy 'Use Resources Wisely' Peta

Take your Daisies to your local Farmer's Market and ask them to interview the merchants to find out what they do if they have too many vegetables to sell.

Brownie 'Hiker' Badge

Teach your troop how to follow trail signs by setting up a mini trail in your backyard, park, or school playground, complete with homemade signs. This practice will make them informed hikers on their eventual trail of choice, in a learning environment that is familiar to them.

Junior 'Geocacher' Badge

There are plenty of geocache trails in urban and suburban neighborhoods! Have your troop choose a nearby cache and follow their coordinates for hidden treasures found under park benches, stair railings, or even buried at the foot of street signs.

Cadette 'Night Owl' Badge

Invite your Cadettes to tour their neighborhoods at night (with parent and troop leader participation, of course) to use all five senses and notice what's different after dark. Observations might include differences in traffic noise, amounts of parked cars visible, street lights vs. natural lights, and pedestrian use on sidewalks.

Cadette 'Trees' Badge

Take the troop on a walk through your neighborhood and identify at least five different types of trees. Then, make a “tree map” with each kind of tree found and where it’s located.

Ambassador ‘Water’ Badge

Take a simple water tour of your hometown, noting where water splashes or spouts. Observe and discuss all fountains, run-offs, or storm drains that you find.

Want to get outdoors without the pressure of earning a badge?

- Take a walk — Already have a special off-site event planned for your meeting? Consider walking to the event or taking public transit rather than the traditional parent carpool.
- Host an outdoor meeting — Contact your local Parks and Recreation office on protocols for reserving a park picnic table for your troop meeting or contact your school principal to see if Girl Scout-sponsored activities can be held on or near the school’s playground equipment. When the business of the meeting is over, race the girls to the swings while you all wait for parent pick-up!
- Go crazy with a homemade obstacle course — If you’re looking to shake things up, try the game called [Trust Walk](#), in which blindfolded Girl Scouts are guided through a maze of obstacles, such as boxes or traffic pylons in a large grassy area, using only verbal directions from their troopmates. Trust Walk is an effective team building activity that builds trust between your troop members (and it’s fun, too).

So plan a hike, watch some bugs or paddle a boat; whatever you decide, the great outdoors is waiting for you! For more information about planning an outdoor excursion, visit [GSNorCal’s online Volunteer Essentials](#).



Marlene Smith—Marlene is the troop leader with Girl Scout Troop 30760 in Walnut Creek and has been a Girl Scout Volunteer for ten years. She is proud to say that Troop 30760 boasts many Journey awards and some girl members who have been with the troop for 10 years (yahoo!).

Marlene was a Girl Scout herself whose greatest claim to fame was earning her “My Camera” badge. Most importantly, Marlene’s favorite Girl Scout Cookie flavor is Thin Mint.

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