

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGING 2008



GGB Frequently Asked Questions

“The work of today is the history of tomorrow,
and we are its makers.”

- Juliette Gordon Low
Founder of Girl Scouts

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General Questions

1. What is Golden Gate Bridging?

- a. Girl Scouts of Northern California (GSNC) celebrates the accomplishments of Junior Girl Scouts at Golden Gate Bridging. In this ceremony, the girls “bridge” from the younger girl program to the Older Girl program by ceremoniously crossing the Golden Gate Bridge and celebrating their accomplishments together in the Presidio. The celebration is a West Coast tradition uniting over 6,500 Girl Scouts.

2. What age levels are included?

- a. This event is exclusive for Juniors bridging into the Older Girl program. This special bridging ceremony honors their accomplishments in the younger girl program while welcoming them to the next phase of Girl Scouts, the Older Girl program.

3. Can GSNC make an exception to that policy for my Daisy, Brownie, Cadette, or Senior Troop?

- a. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow Daisy, Brownie, Cadette, or Senior troops to bridge at this event. Due to restrictions on the number of participants at this event, exceptions cannot be made. We invite Older Girl troops to participate as volunteers.

4. Why is the event on Mother’s Day Weekend?

- a. This was a difficult decision for everyone involved.
- b. Unfortunately, the only available weekend in May for this event is the second weekend. The first weekend in May is California State testing. The third weekend is the Bay to Breakers footrace which involves over 70,000 people participating in this annual race across San Francisco from the Bay to the ocean. The fourth weekend is Memorial Day weekend. This leaves the second weekend, Mothers Day Weekend
- c. This event requires support from over 350 volunteers (we are unable to get that many volunteers in June due to graduations, vacations, Girl Scout camps, etc).
- d. Moms, we know we’re asking a lot for families to move your mother’s day celebration but unfortunately May 10th is the best date. **For your girls, the Golden Gate Bridging ceremony is a once in a lifetime event!**
- e. Leaders, in planning for this trip remember girl/adult partnership...ask the Girls, maybe they can think of a special way to recognize their mothers so they can still celebrate their accomplishments with 6,500 other Girl Scouts in SF on this special weekend!

5. Is this a family event or a Mother/Daughter event?

- a. Unfortunately, this is not a family or a Mother/Daughter event. Technically this is a troop/troop leader event. However, due to the event falling on Mother’s Day weekend we make exceptions to this rule and do not exclude parents from attending.

6. What is the Adult/Girl Ratio for GGB 2008?

- a. We ask that participating troops do not exceed a 1:1 ratio at the event. Meaning there cannot be three adults honoring one girl. At a minimum, we ask that troops follow Safety Wise adult/girl ratios for trips or the ratio set by your home council for out of area trips.
- b. Unfortunately, GSNC is limited on the number of participants at the event. In order to ensure that every bridging girl that wants to attend the event can, we limit the adult ratio.
- c. Leaders – we do not want to see girls excluded from this event as a result of the adult/girl ratio restrictions, please use your judgment on the numbers for your group. We trust you will make the right decision in the spirit of Girl Scouting!

7. Is there a free “viewing area” for the event? We have adults that do not want to cross the bridge.

- a. Unfortunately, there is NO free viewing area for this event. If you do not want to cross the bridge, we invite PAID participants to observe the crossing from Crissy Field while waiting for your troop to return.
- b. Participants must have the event wristband on in order to observe the event from Crissy Field.

8. We have adults that do not want to cross the bridge just join in the celebration afterwards. Do they still need to register?

- a. Yes, anyone that attends the event is considered a participant (adults and girls) and must register regardless if the person crosses the bridge or attends the celebration.
- b. The most expensive part of the event is the celebration. The permits alone for this event cost over \$30,000.

9. If I do not pay what happens?

- a. Due to the public setting of the event our volunteers and the National Park Police are asked to have anyone not wearing the event wristband to leave the premises for the safety of the girls. If an individual is not wearing a wristband and refuses to leave the event then the National Park Police will escort them off the property.
- b. Since this is a public facility, this rule is strictly followed to ensure the safety of the girls. We do not want strangers pretending to be apart of the event. Safety of all participants (especially the girls) is the number one concern at Golden Gate Bridging.

10. Will there be security at the event?

- a. Yes, we hire the National Park Police to oversee the event. In addition, there will be a numerous police officers to assist participants while crossing the street.
- b. Since the Presidio is open to the public, the National Park Police are asked to look for individuals that are at the event and not wearing a wristband. These individuals will be immediately asked to leave the premises; if they refuse then the National Park Police will escort them out of the area.
- c. Safety of all participants (especially the girls) is the number one concern at Golden Gate Bridging!

11. Can we bring tagalongs?

- a. Unfortunately, we do not allow tagalongs.
- b. Since we are restricted on the total number of participants for the event we do not allow tagalongs in order to serve more bridging juniors. Please do not bring younger children or house pets to the event.
- c. Exceptions will be made when needed.
- d. Leaders – we do not want to see girls excluded from this event as a result of the tagalong restrictions, please use your judgment on the numbers for your group. We trust you will make the right decision in the spirit of Girl Scouting!

Travel Arrangement Questions

12. What if we rent a charter bus?

- a. We suggest that large groups rent a charter bus for traveling.
- b. If your group rents a charter bus, there are no adult/girl ratio restrictions, which allow your group to bring whomever you choose to attend the event.
- c. To be considered a charter bus group, you must have at least 47 participants.
- d. Your charter bus must drive your participants to and from the event. Please contact Melanie Johnston at Melanie@girlscotusbayarea.org at least three weeks prior to the event to sign up for a charter bus check-in time and to receive more information on this procedure.

13. Where do we stay in SF?

- a. We suggest asking your girls what they would like to see while visiting San Francisco. It can be easier for groups to stay close to the desired tourist destinations within the city. For example, most troops want to visit Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf. This area has numerous site seeing attractions including, Pier 39, Alcatraz, Fisherman's Wharf, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Ghirardelli Square, etc. and is just a cable car ride away from Downtown, Lombard Street, and Chinatown.
- b. Please reference the *Places to Go Things to See* information sheet for more tourist attractions in this area. This information sheet is available online under *How to Plan Your Trip*.

14. Hotel Suggestions

- a. For assistance finding a hotel in SF, please contact Gretchen Gates at gretchen@adventuresamerica.com. Gretchen is a travel agent that has special rates worked out with hotels throughout SF for this event!
- b. Due to the incredible hotel deals available online, we suggest that troops search online for discount hotels in SF.
 - i. Please be advised that the majority of online services do not treat online reservations as “group reservations” resulting in the possibility that reserved rooms will be on different floors of the hotel. Meaning if a troop books four rooms in the same hotel, you are not guaranteed that the rooms will be together.
 - i. Suggested hotel search engines are:
 1. www.hotels.com
 2. www.expedia.com
 3. www.hoteldiscountsecrets.com
 4. www.dealsonhotels.com

15. GSNC Properties

- a. We have some fantastic camping properties that are available to rent for this weekend. Please visit our web site for more information on the following properties:
 - i. **Camp Ida Smith** – located in SF
 - ii. **Camp Bothin** – located in Fairfax
 - iii. **Camp Arequipa** – located in Fairfax

16. Hostelling International

- a. GSUSA and Hostelling International have a partnership to provide a less expensive way for troops to stay anywhere in the world. Troops can stay at one of the local hostels throughout the Bay Area.
- b. **All Hostelling International locations are SOLD OUT for GGB 2008.**

17. How do we get to the event?

- a. Each group is responsible for getting to and from the event. Once you are at the event, we will provide transportation over the Golden Gate Bridge.
- b. Please use either Public Transportation, or rent a car, taxi, limo, etc.
- c. If public transportation is not possible for your group, there is plenty of parking for paid participants at the Presidio. Directions on where to park in the Presidio will be provided in the confirmation packets.
- d. If you are being dropped off at the event, please use the designated drop off zones only. Participants are not permitted to be dropped off at the Marin Vista Point or the Golden Gate Bridge Toll Booth Plaza. Participants will receive information on the drop off location for GGB 2008 in their confirmation packets.

18. Public Transportation

- a. San Francisco is famous for its public transportation! The event is completely accessible by public transportation; however, it takes a lot of time and good planning to make it work.
- b. The event takes place mostly at Crissy Field, which is located in the Presidio, a National Park on the San Francisco side of the Golden Gate Bridge.
- c. For your own research purposes (i.e. MapQuest directions or MUNI, bus, and train lines), the address to use is **603 Mason Street, San Francisco, CA 94129**. (please make sure to enter the zip code otherwise you will be directed to another part of SF)
- d. **For the fastest way to plan your public transportation route, please visit** <http://transit.511.org/tripplanner/index.asp>
 - ii. Go to www.511.org
 - iii. Under the *Transit* link choose *Take Transit Trip Planner*
 - iv. Enter the address of your hotel (or your starting point)
 - v. **Select the desired end location by using the 511-Map!**

- a. **Please do NOT use Google Map** – This map feature does not allow you to zoom in on the Presidio and can lead to poor directions.
- b. Zoom in on the top portion of SF near the Golden Gate Bridge. Then you will see Crissy Field located in the top of the Presidio. Please reference the Map of the Presidio for a detailed map of this area.
- c. The address of Crissy Field is 603 Mason Street, San Francisco, CA 94129. However, 511.org does not allow you to enter the zip code; therefore, if you use this address, you will be directed to another part of SF. **It is important to locate Crissy Field using the 511-map feature!**
- vi. The web site will automatically map out the public transportation routes needed to get to Crissy Field, the cost of each route, and the time needed to make the journey across the city.
- e. If you are flying into town on the day of the event and want to use public transportation, plan on it taking 1-2 hours for you to get from the San Francisco Airport to the event and 2-3 hours from the Oakland Airport to the event depending upon traffic and other events in the Bay Area.
- f. Please check the *Public Transportation to Crissy Field* PDF file for the exact public transportation routes that travel to Crissy Field.

Logistic Questions:

19. We have heard that there are four-hour bus lines and nothing at the party, is this true.

- a. Please disregard anything anyone has ever told you about this event (unless it is from GGB 2006 or 2007)!
- b. This is a new era and you are only the third round of participants to experience the new format for GGB. We hope you love it!

20. Should we wear our vests?

- a. If you would like to, you can! We suggest wearing matching outfits so you can easily find your troop in a large crowd. Plus, the girls will have a fabulous time designing their matching outfits!

21. Can we carry our troop flag on the bridge?

- a. Unfortunately, the Golden Gate Bridge has asked that troops do not carry troop flags; it is distracting to the drivers.

22. What are SWAPS?

- a. SWAPS stands for: Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere
- a. Click on the link below for GSUSA's official answer on what a swap is and traditional swap etiquette. http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/swaps/
- a. Remember to have fun while making your swaps!
- b. For swap ideas, check online! (You will be amazed at all the ideas.)

23. How many swaps should we bring?

- a. This depends on your group.
- b. Ask the girls how many swaps they want to come home with and that will set your swap number. We suggest making inexpensive swaps in large quantity.
- c. The girls will be able to swap with more troops if they make individual swaps versus the same troop swap.
- d. Get creative and have fun.

24. How long is the walk?

- a. The entire day will involve approximately 2.5 miles of walking.
- b. The Golden Gate Bridge is 1.7 miles including the spans leading to the bridge
- c. It takes an average of 60-90 minutes for a troop to cross the bridge. This varies per group depending upon the amount of stops your group makes for taking pictures and time to make new friends!

25. Is the bridge shut down to cars on the day of the event?

- a. No, the east side of the bridge has a 10-foot sidewalk with a fence to keep the pedestrians safe from the traffic and is open to the public 24 hours a day.
- b. For this event, we are required to get a permit for the number of pedestrians crossing the bridge.

26. Do the girls sign their own waivers?

- a. No, anyone under 18 needs to have their parent or guardian signs the waiver for them. Please include the girls name on the form. Each person has to turn in a signed waiver, adults, and girls. For example, if you are bringing 12 girls and 4 adults you submit 16 signed waivers.

27. If we participate in early check-in what happens to the original assigned time?

- a. Please disregard your original check-in time. The first shuttle across the bridge for early check-in is scheduled for 9am.
- b. The longest bus lines will be from 9am – 11am. We expect to have 45% of participants utilize the early check-in opportunities. Remember, you can walk first and pick up a shuttle bus at the Marin Vista Point if you do not want to wait in the line.

28. My group is assigned for an afternoon check-in and we cannot participate in the early check-in offered on Friday night. Will we miss the party?

- a. No, you will not miss the party! If you have a check-in time after 11am, we suggest that you arrive at the event and begin to participate in the activities offered at Crissy Field. Then check-in at your assigned time and walk after you celebrate. In this situation, you run the route in reverse.
- b. Depending upon the check-in line and the bus lines will depend on how early you can check-in at the event. For example, if you have a 1:30 pm check-in time, keep your eye on the lines, we may be able to check-in your group by 12pm.
- c. Groups are scattered to avoid 5,000 people arriving at 9am for 14 shuttle buses. At a maximum, we can shuttle 1,000 participants per hour. This number will depend on traffic and participants speed at exiting the buses at the Marin Vista Point.
- d. We highly suggest that groups participate in the early check-in if possible.

29. We want to park at the Marin Vista Point. OR Where do we park?

- a. Do not park at the Marin Vista Point, your car may be ticketed and/or towed.
- b. Parking throughout the Presidio is permit and 2-hour parking only. Please do not park in these areas, you **will receive a ticket** and/or be towed. The Presidio makes a lot of money from events such as this.
- c. You will receive parking instructions for the event in your confirmation packet.

30. Can I get a map of the booths at Crissy Field?

- a. The booth map of Crissy field will not be available until the day of the event and during the Friday night check-in. The activities are a surprise!

31. Where are the bathrooms?

- a. Bathrooms are available at the Marin Vista Point, Golden Gate Bridge Toll Booth Plaza, next to the Torpedo Warf, the Main Post, and Crissy Field. Please reference the walking map for exact locations. The Walking Map will be provided in your confirmation packets

32. What is the local hospital information and closest phone number for emergencies?

- a. UCSF is the closest hospital
- b. Presidio EMS unit will be on site for any medical emergencies
- c. US Park Police – Presidio dispatch
 - i. Non-emergency (415) 561-5055
 - ii. Emergency (415) 561-5656 (Do not call 911)

Have a safe trip. We look forward to seeing you at the event!