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How to Create and Hide a Geocache

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Geocaching is a relatively new, family-friendly hobby where participants use GPS technology to seek geocaches hidden by fellow geocachers. At its heart is creating and hiding geocaches.

Things You'll Need

- ☐ GPS device
- ☐ Durable, waterproof Geocontainer
- ☐ Small notebook and pen
- ☐ A good hiding place
- ☐ Permission from parent or guardian

Steps

1 **Search for existing geocaches before trying to create your own and hide it.** Try to find a variety of cache types and sizes in various terrains and locations and covering the spectrum of difficulty levels. This will allow you to determine which things work well and help you form wise choices in this endeavor.

- Some people will advise you to find X number of caches, but if they are mostly of one type, it won't be helpful. You'll learn more finding ten caches of ten different types than one hundred caches of a similar type. It is helpful to gain a little experience first.

2 **Find a good spot for your geocache.** A quality geocache will be hidden near something of natural, human, historic, or scenic interest or at least at the end of a pleasant walk. Try to make it a place that people would enjoy visiting even if the cache wasn't there.

3 **Make sure certain geocaches are allowed there.** If it is private property, obtain permission from the land owner. Some park systems require permits and some do not allow geocaching, so check with park management to make sure geocaching is allowed, then obtain a permit if required.

4 **Select an appropriate container.** Geocache containers should be waterproof and durable. Military surplus ammo boxes are a favorite of many geocachers. Also make sure the container is appropriate for the area (see Tips, below). A good seal is important, because, if water leaks in, the cache will be ruined.

5 **Camouflage the container.** This is optional but will help keep non-geocachers from finding it. Painting it in colors which match the area or wrapping it in camouflage duct tape are two ways that will help conceal it. Other methods include gluing bark to the container or hiding it under fake rocks or tree stumps.

OFFICIAL
GEOCACHE
PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB
This is an official game piece
Please refer to Geocaching.com for details
Cache Name _____
Contact Name _____
Contact Info _____

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6 Label the outside. In today's world, suspicious packages can create alarm. Clearly labeling your container as a geocache and with the proper contact information may reduce the chances of your cache being reported as suspicious package.

GEOCACHE
LOG BOOK

Name _____

Contact _____

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7 Stock the cache. Include a letter explaining what it is, just in case a non-geocacher finds it. Also include a logbook, pencil, and, if the geocache is large enough, trinkets for finders to trade out.

8 **Hide your cache.** Your cache is more likely to last if you choose a low traffic area where it is not likely to accidentally be discovered and where searchers won't be spotted by passersby, business owners, security guards, or residents.

9 **Use your GPS to obtain the coordinates.** Make sure you have a good satellite signal, then let your GPS settle at the cache site for a minute or two before marking. Check your owners' manual for the section on how to mark a waypoint if you don't yet know.

10 **List your cache.** You need to post it on a website so other geocachers can obtain the coordinates. The most popular site, by far, is www.geocaching.com. Other sites include www.navicache.com, www.terracaching.com, opecaching.com and www.opencaching.us.

11 **Maintain your cache.** Be ready to respond promptly to reported problems such as missing containers and wet or full logbooks. If you lose interest, remove your cache and archive the listing.

⑦ Community Q&A

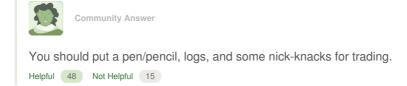**Do I need any kind of premium site account to hide geocaches?**

Community Answer

No, you don't. Anyone can hide geocaches and register them with geocaching websites.

Helpful 33   Not Helpful 5
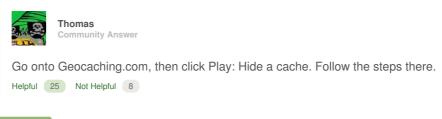
What kinds of things should I put in the geocache?

Community Answer

You should put a pen/pencil, logs, and some nick-knacks for trading.

Helpful 48   Not Helpful 15

What are some examples of geocaching containers?

Community Answer

Here are some examples: Tupperware containers, pill bottles, jars, and ammo boxes.

Helpful 39   Not Helpful 12

How do you actually tell Geocaching.com that you've hidden a cache?

Thomas
Community Answer

Go onto Geocaching.com, then click Play: Hide a cache. Follow the steps there.

Helpful 25   Not Helpful 8

How do I hide a geocache?

Community Answer

You want to hide the geocache where a person will not see it. Many geocaches are usually in trees or behind rocks and are hard to find unless you know the hint.

Helpful 16   Not Helpful 10

Is there a way to set up a private geocache that uses a password?
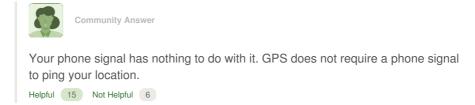
Community Answer

Geocaches are expected to be available for the geocaching community in general to access. However, you can create an unknown or puzzle cache with a website such as Certitude.org, and use a password to receive the final coordinates of the cache container.
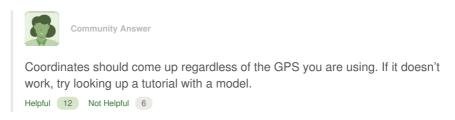
Helpful 13   Not Helpful 8

What if I cannot get a GPS coordinate due to no phone signal?

Community Answer

Your phone signal has nothing to do with it. GPS does not require a phone signal to ping your location.

Helpful 15   Not Helpful 6

How do I get my geocache on the GPS?

Community Answer

Coordinates should come up regardless of the GPS you are using. If it doesn't work, try looking up a tutorial with a model.

Helpful 12   Not Helpful 6

Do I need a trackable geocache?

Community Answer

No, you do not.

Helpful 8   Not Helpful 14

Can I just use the geocache app on my phone if I don't have a GPS to find my coordinates?

E. Paul Whetten
Community Answer

Yes - we use an app on my iPhone and it works great. L4C and Cachly are two good apps.

Helpful 7   Not Helpful 1

See more answers

☀ Tips

- If you use an ammo box be sure to cover the military markings.

- When hiding your cache make it look as natural as possible. Simply covering it with

a pile of sticks, rocks or bark might encourage a non-geocacher to investigate.

- Try to hide your geocache where searchers won't be observed by homeowners or passersby. This lessens the likelihood of someone reporting suspicious activity or removing the cache.

- Use an appropriately sized container. Deep in the woods, large containers are great. In urban and suburban or high traffic areas, use a smaller, more easily concealed container which will be likely to be accidentally discovered.

- Stock your cache with the kinds of things you might like to find. You don't need to break the bank.—A few inexpensive, but useful items would be perfect, perhaps purchased at a local dollar store.

- Know the guidelines of the website where you plan to list your cache. Really read the instructions carefully and make sure your cache is in compliance.

- Also consider the impact on the environment. Hide your cache on durable surfaces when possible (e.g., rock outcrops). Avoid steep hillsides where searchers will contribute to erosion.

- Before hiding your cache, step back and consider what a non-geocacher might think if he or she were to see a stranger wandering that area with a GPS.

- If you know more than one language, write the description of the geocache in both languages! For example, if you know both English and Spanish, write the description in English and then translate it to Spanish. You never know who it might help!

⚠️ Warnings

- Lands managed by the National Park Service (e.g., national parks, national recreation areas and national historic sites) and by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (e.g., national wildlife refuges) are generally off limits for geocaches. Some National Park Service lands have started allowing geocaching on an experimental basis, but permission is required from the superintendent. Many nationally designated wilderness areas are also off limits, as are some state and local parks. If in doubt contact the managing authority and ask.

- Do not hide caches near bridges, tunnels, military installations, airports, bus terminals, train stations and railroad tracks, schools or other places that might be deemed terrorist targets.

- Many park systems have rules governing geocaches. Thoroughly check for existing regulations before hiding your cache. If in doubt, seek guidance from your local geocaching society or club.

- If your cache is accidentally discovered and creates public alarm, you might be subject to prosecution and fines.

- Don't hide your cache on a the property of a business without first consulting with the owner.

References

1. www.geocaching.com
2. www.terracaching.com
3. www.navicache.com
4. www.opencaching.us

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