

Geocaching Tips

The rules are very simple:

1. Take something from the cache
2. Leave something in the cache
3. Write about it in the logbook

What shouldn't be in a cache?

Explosives, ammo, knives, drugs, and alcohol shouldn't be placed in a cache. Respect the laws of the country where the geocache is located.

Geocachers come in all ages, keep that in mind before placing an item into a cache.

Food items are **always a bad idea!** Animals have better noses than humans and will destroy or carry off a cache containing anything that smells like food.

Coins or unprotected metals may corrode or react with other cache items.

Trouble finding a cache?

Be creative! Clues and GPS can only do so much. Tools (like a shovel or prybar) should not be required, otherwise *anywhere* is fair game. Under or behind something? Hanging up? Some small rocks on top? Any hollow logs or metal poles around?

If you get stuck, start over. Cache hunting in teams of 2 or more is handy for getting alternative interpretations of clues and points of view.

Go back to the Cache's webpage on Geocaching.com and look for additional hints, especially in other's log comments and pictures.

Beware of Muggles

Don't reveal the geocache location to strangers!

Geocaching Tips

After you find a cache:

Write your name, date, and any comments into the cache's log book. Also go online to the cache's web page and log your find. Geocaching.com keeps track of all the caches you find, and can do nifty tricks like plot them in Google Earth.

Especially make a log note if the cache was too hard or too easy to find. Or if it is damaged, missing items, or lost entirely.

How to Geocache Summary:

Go to Geocaching.com to find a cache near you. For your first few, stick to ones that are labeled easier to find and access. Plenty of time for challenges later!

Print out the cache page.

If you have a GPS enter the Cache's location as a waypoint.

Study the Google Map for the cache's area.

Plan where to park and how to access the area.

Dress appropriately for the weather.

Head out with plenty of daylight left.

Find the cache

Take something, leave something, write in the log.

Make a full report of your trip on Geocaching.com

Optionally note on Geocaching.com if the cache needs repair.

Trail Tips

Respect property! Do not trample plants or damage trees. Protect Nature, stay on marked paths and trails.

Bring along a small bag and pick up any trash you find along the trail.

Drink plenty of fluids. Its not a race, take frequent breaks and admire the scenery.

R4 Saturday, July 5, 2008



Geocaching Demonstration

Presented By

Durham Lives!

Hosted By Richard Cooke



Geocaching 101

There is a secret society amongst us - and they call us "Muggles".

Well, they call "you" a *Muggle* - because I'm a member; I'm a *Geocacher*.

Geocaching is a modern version of a 150-year old hobby called *Letterboxing*. *Letterboxing* began in 1854, in Dartmoor England when a trail guide named James Perrott provided a bottle for hikers to store (or cache) letters and postcards to themselves and others as they hiked the Northern Moor. Later travelers would collect these from the bottle and post them when they got back to civilization.

It did not take very long for this to grow. The bottle was replaced by a box, more boxes (and clay pots) were added. The locations of these "boxes" were hidden in magazines, guide brochures, and in other "boxes". Some clues were carried around by hikers and only revealed when key phrases were spoken!

Standard Cache Container

Soon the standard became a weather-proof box containing a visitor log book and a unique stamp identifying the cache by name and/or number.

Intrepid hikers braving the elements and conquering the geography, who were clever enough to solve the riddle of the box's location and sharp enough to spot or divine the hidden cache would prove their success by using this stamp to mark their personal logs. They would sign or stamp the cache's visitor log with their own stamp before returning the cache to its hiding spot.

Another tradition is to exchange personal or special artifacts with items already in the cache.

Then, in early May 2000, the US government removed the accuracy restriction on the (fledgling) Global Positioning System (GPS). This resulted in an over-night improvement in positioning accuracy from ~45 m down to ~6.3 m.

The Great American GPS Stash Hunt

This created a lot of excitement. New or expanded ideas for the technology were enthusiastically discussed. A computer consultant in Beaver Creek Oregon named Dave Ulmer decided to play a game he called "Great American GPS Stash hunt" to test the accuracy of the system. Using a large black bucket, he put inside a number of prizes (videos, books, and software) along with a log book and pencil, and hid it in the woods - noting the GPS coordinates. He posted the coordinates to the online Geo-Satellite discussion group with one rule: *Take some stuff, leave some stuff*. Within 3 days, 2 readers of that post managed to find the bucket. Within a week, people were starting to create other hidden stashes across North America.

Within a month, a daily mailing list was created to handle the growing number of stashes, people looking for them and people reporting on their adventures. As you might guess, calling these things "stashes" created some problems. Try telling your friends or family your heading out "into the woods" to "find a stash" and see what happens.

New Name, New Website

By the end of May, it was decided to change the name of these hidden buckets to "geocaches". By the end of September the website Geocaching.com was launched with 75 world-wide geocaches. At this point these new hobbyists were not aware of the much older Letterboxing hobbyists, who had many Letterboxes world-wide by that time.

Letterboxers still maintain their own world-wide system of caches. In addition, many non-GPS-based geocaches have been created. Today there are over 608,000 geocaches in 222 countries listed on Geocaching.com. The different types of geocaches are too numerous to list here, but are fully described on the website. As well, the types of people hiding and hunting caches has increased as fast as the geocaches themselves.

Urban and City Caches

Geocaches are not restricted to "nature trails" either. Every GO train parking lot, for example, has *at least* one geocache hidden in it. I must warn you about these

ones. If you decide to seek them, be advised that geocachers love a good puzzle or riddle. Make sure your thinking cap is on tight!

No Muggles Please

Please remember that there is no security for any of these caches - although most are checked regularly by their creators or a volunteer caretaker. Letterbox caches and geocaches both rely on the integrity and honesty of those that seek them for their survival. All others are *muggles*. And its very important the *muggles* not be made aware of our *magic*.

Congratulations! By reading this article you are only one-step away from converting from a *muggle* to a *geocacher*.

All you need to do now is find one!

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Letterboxing info and history:

<http://www.dartmoorletterboxing.org/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letterboxing>

Geocaching info and history:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocaching>

<http://www.geocaching.com/about/>

For things to put in caches:

<http://www.geocaching.com/track/>

<http://shop.groundspeak.com/>

The Original Geocache

Dave's original geocache is cache ID GCGV0P.

For more information:

FAQ: <http://www.geocaching.com/faq/>

Hunting tips: <http://www.geocaching.com/about/finding.aspx>

Glossary: <http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx>

GPS Buying Tips: <http://www.geocaching.com/about/buying.aspx>