



***“The woods are never solitary—they are full of whispering, beckoning, friendly life.”***

—Lucy Maud Montgomery



# Eco Camper

**W**henever you step outdoors, you are a guest in nature’s home. This is especially true when it comes to camping. Whether or not you’ve been camping before, you will earn this badge by learning how to protect the environment on your trip. It will shape the way you camp forever!

## Steps

1. Learn the Leave No Trace Seven Principles
2. Plan meals with the environment in mind
3. Prepare a minimal impact campsite
4. Have fun with Leave No Trace
5. Take a conservation hike

## Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I’ll have learned skills for minimal impact camping and know how to protect the environment when I go outdoors.



## Packing Essentials

No matter what type of camping you do, you'll want to bring these items along. Talk to your family before you go, to make sure you're not missing anything!

- ☐ **Water in a reusable bottle, water purification gear**
- ☐ **Flashlight with extra batteries**
- ☐ **Long-sleeved jacket**
- ☐ **Poncho or raincoat**
- ☐ **Sun protection: hat with a brim, sunscreen, lip balm, and sunglasses**
- ☐ **First aid kit**
- ☐ **Any medications you may need** (inhaler, EpiPen)
- ☐ **Pocket knife** (if you've been taught how to use one)
- ☐ **Emergency food** (such as trail mix or granola bars)
- ☐ **Trowel, plastic bags that zip, and toilet paper** (to make a portable toilet, if needed)
- ☐ **Whistle**
- ☐ **Appropriate shoes**
- ☐ **Matches in a waterproof container**
- ☐ **Bug spray**
- ☐ **Map of area and compass**



## Ready? Before You Start This Badge ...

### Choose your trip.

Research camping trips and decide which one you'll do. You can come up with your own, or check out trips offered by your Girl Scout council or local Outdoor groups.

### Make a plan.

Once you decide on your trip, take the steps to make it happen.

- ★ **Come up with a budget** and figure out how to pay for your trip. What kind of money earning will you need to do? You and your troop or group may want to use your Girl Scout Cookie earnings.
- ★ **Find out what special gear or equipment** you need for your trip. Look into renting or borrowing gear.
- ★ **Research your destination:** How will you get there? Is the area prone to flash floods? What types of wildlife are in the area, and will you need to keep an eye out for any nesting birds or animals at the time of your trip?
- ★ **See what's available at your campsite**, and find out what's permitted. What campsite bathroom facilities are available? Are campfires allowed? Where is a water source?

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

# STEP 1 Learn the Leave No Trace Seven Principles

The Girl Scout way is to leave a place better than you find it. That's exactly what you'll be doing on your camping trip. Everything you do in the outdoors makes an impact, which is why it's important to know how to leave it for others to enjoy. Before your camping trip, learn the Leave No Trace Seven Principles to help you protect nature.

## CHOICES-DO ONE:

☐ **Make a Leave No Trace presentation for your troop or family.** Prepare visuals or something to show what you've learned about each of the Principles. You can also ask your troop leader if you can do this as a group: Break into seven different groups or pairs. Each team will take one of the Leave No Trace Seven Principles to demonstrate how to use that skill while planning your camping trip.

OR 

☐ **Interview an experienced camper, park ranger or camp director about the Leave No Trace Principles.** Find out how they practice Leave No Trace. Gather some tips and tricks that you can use while on your camping trip.



*Did you know there's a Junior Camper badge?*

You may have already earned it. If so, put those skills to use while you earn this Eco Camper badge. If you have yet to earn your Junior Camper badge, don't worry! You can use the environmental skills from this Eco Camper badge when you do.

OR 

☐ **Share the Leave No Trace Seven Principles with a Daisy or Brownie group.** Talk to them about how they can practice the skills at home or at school.

## Leave No Trace

Learn and be prepared to use the Leave No Trace Seven Principles to help protect the environment on your trip:

**Plan ahead** so you leave nothing behind. Get to know the area you'll visit. Repackage and store food in reusable containers.

**Travel and camp on durable surfaces.** Walk only on existing trails and camp on surfaces that are already impacted or are durable enough to withstand repeated trampling.

**Dispose of waste properly:** Carry out what you carry in—never dump anything on a campsite or into a water source.

**Leave nature as you find it**—don't collect or take anything from the outdoors.

**Minimize campfire impacts:** Instead of using firewood and building campfires, pack a lightweight cooking stove and lantern.

**Respect wildlife** by checking them out at a distance. Never approach, feed, or follow them.

**Be considerate of other visitors.** Remember you're not alone in the wilderness. Keep your voices down and let nature be the loudest sounds you hear.



## Know before you go:

- ★ Make sure to test your meals and cooking methods at home, especially when using a new ingredient or food you haven't tried
- ★ Find out in advance if your campsite has a place to discard trash and recycle or if you will be taking all your trash out of the campsite when you leave.
- ★ When packing food, remove unnecessary packaging to minimize trash at campsite.
- ★ Add a no-cook meal to your menu. See ideas in "No-Cook Recipes."
- ★ Make sure your water bottles are full and know what available water sources are near your campsite.
- ★ Know how you will purify water or bring your own water purification system.

## STEP 2 Plan meals with the environment in mind

**What you eat and how you cook at camp will make a big difference in how you impact the environment. For example, only pack and prepare food that will leave the least amount of waste on a campground.**

### CHOICES-DO ONE:

- ☐ **Prepare and package snacks for your conservation hike (Step 5).** Make your own brand of trail mix by combining the things you love most, like banana chips, dried berries, pretzels, raisins, granola, and more. And don't forget to pack water in a reusable container.

**OR** 

- Make a solar box cooker and cook something simple.** To do this, make sure you have enough sunlight. Do not try this when the sky is cloudy or when the sun is low in the sky. Follow the directions for making a Pizza Box Solar Cooker on the next page. Don't try to cook meat, fish or poultry—those are dangerous to eat when undercooked, so leave that to more experienced solar cookers. You could make a grilled cheese sandwich. Or try nachos—put tortilla chips covered with shredded cheese in a pie tin. See how long it takes for the cheese to melt and chips to become crisp and gooey! Try making a s'more with a graham cracker, marshmallow, and chocolate. Or roast apple slices topped with cinnamon sugar.

**OR** 

- ☐ **Practice making a no-trash camp meal for your troop before you go on your trip.** Make as little waste as possible. Avoid using anything in a can; use only fresh fruits and vegetables.

**For More FUN:** Have a no-trash meal contest with your troop. Break into groups, make a dish and see who leaves the least waste.

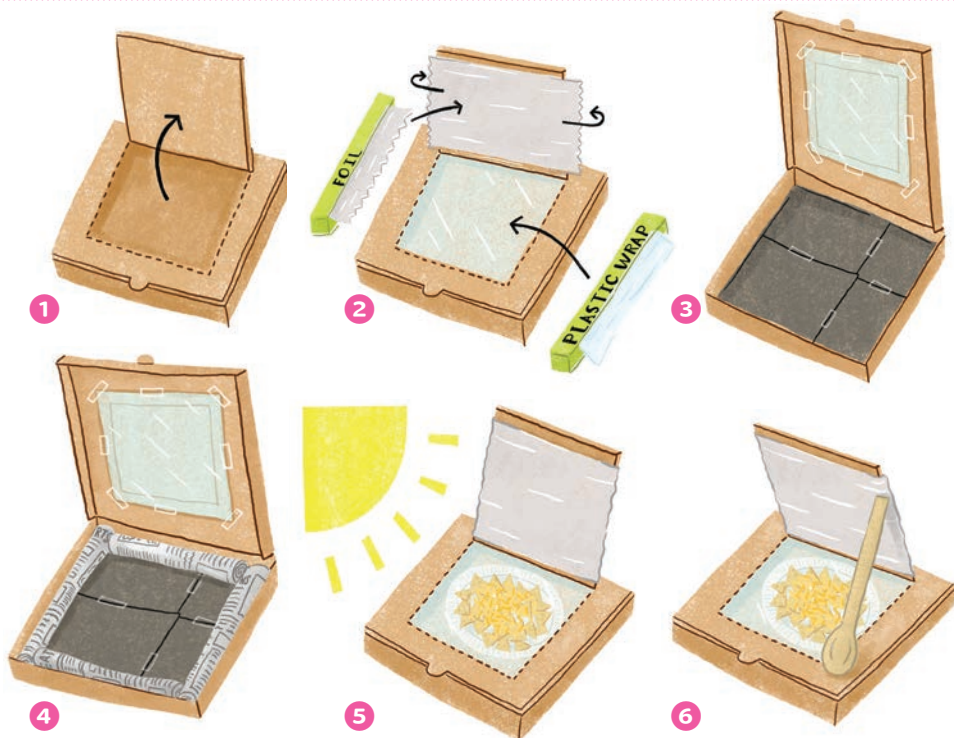


## Pizza Box Solar Cooker

Solar cooking is slow cooking. Be prepared to leave your food in for a while!

You will need:

- Cardboard pizza box
- Plastic wrap
- Scissors
- Aluminum foil
- Clear tape
- Black construction paper
- Newspapers
- Wooden spoon



- 1 Have an adult help you cut along three sides to make a flap in the lid of the pizza box.
- 2 Cover the inside of the flap with aluminum foil.
- 3 In the box opening where you cut the flap out of, wrap plastic sheets around it so it looks like a window.
- 4 Inside the box, tape black construction paper along the bottom. Roll up sheets of newspaper to create a border around the cooking area.

- 5 Take your solar pizza box over to a sunny spot.
- 6 Use the wooden spoon to prop open the flap at an angle so it faces direct sunlight.
- 7 Use mittens or a towel when you lift your dish out of your solar cooker.



## No-Cook Recipes

Try making one of these yummy dishes:

### Roll-m-Ups

Roll cream cheese and raisins or cheese, olives, and vegetables in a flour tortilla, pita bread, or flatbread.

### Fruity Yogurt

Chop your favorite fresh fruits and mix with plain yogurt. If you'd like a little extra sweetness, add honey.



### Super Camp Cake

Spread canned chocolate frosting on pieces of sliced pound cake. Add sprinkles or granola on top.



- ★ Make sure your campsite is 200 feet from any water source and any trails. Reduce the amount of mosquitoes by selecting sites away from water sources.
- ★ Select a campsite that is already established or on a durable surface.
- ★ Choose an area that's flat and likely to stay dry, then clear any sticks or stones before setting up tents. When you clean up, don't dump food, soap, or *anything at all* in lakes or streams.
- ★ If you do make a campfire, use fire rings that are at the campsite. Use small sticks from the ground that you can break by hand. Keep fires small; burn all wood and coals to ash. **Most important: Always extinguish campfires completely.**

## STEP 3 Prepare a minimal impact campsite

**Use Leave No Trace minimal impact campsite tips and get ideas and information from their website, [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org), so you can be in charge of setting up an area that will keep you—and nature—safe.**

**Set up a campsite kitchen and wash area.** Make sure to stash your coolers in an animal-proof container and never leave food unattended. Contact a ranger in the area and ask what the regulations are for food storage. Learn what methods are used to keep food from wildlife. Set up a separate area for hand washing and one for dishwashing.

**Set up a sleeping area.** Find flat, dry land away from the kitchen and wash areas to set up your tents. Look for signs of where water will pool and drain if it rains, and avoid those areas. Are the tents spread out so there isn't too much traffic in one area? Will you arrange your tents in a circle so all the openings will face each other? Watch for drainage so your tent doesn't fill with water in the event of a rainstorm.

**Set up a campfire area if you plan to build a fire.** First find out: Are you allowed to build a fire? Do you need permits? If it's a fire ring, is the area around it clear? Do you bring your own wood or can you collect downed or dead wood in the area? Remember, insects can live in wood and be moved from one area to the next, causing damage to local trees. Find out about local firewood regulations.

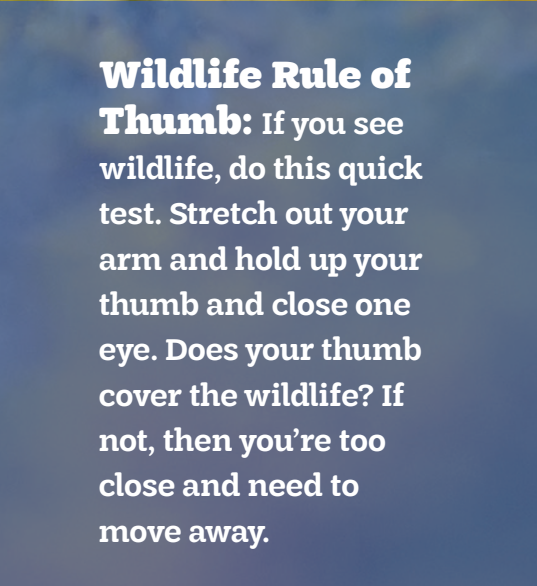




## Weather Watch

As you're planning, find out what the weather is like in the location you're headed to. How will you be prepared for changes in weather? How will you stay updated with the most accurate and current information?









## Surface Hopscotch

- ★ On 25 index cards, write down different surfaces: ones that are durable (snow, grass, sand, mud, gravel, concrete, established trail) and non-durable (cryptobiotic soil, wetlands, steep slope, moss, wildflowers). Come up with more if you can—it's OK to repeat some of them!
- ★ In a large open area, lay out the cards blank side up in a rows of 5 by 5.
- ★ Taking turns with your friends one at a time, hop on a card and turn it over. Read the card aloud and then place it back (with blank side up) where you got it. If the card lists a durable surface, you can hop to the next spot. You can move forwards, sideways, or diagonally. If you step on a card with a non-durable surface, you need to move out of the game until it's your turn again.
- ★ The person who reaches the other side on durable surfaces first wins.







## **STEP** **5** Take a conservation hike

**You can enjoy and protect your surroundings by getting to know the area. Before your trip, find out more about the place you'll visit. What kind of trees and plants grow there? What kinds of animals, birds and water life does it attract?**



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**Spot natural habitat in your campsite area.** Before your hike, make a list of the local plants, trees, insects, wildlife, and water sources (like streams, waterfalls, and lakes) you might find in your area. While hiking, find as many of these as you can. Ask the land managers or camp administrators for a trail map and mark what you see and where you see it.

**Record wildlife.** Record sounds you hear, and photograph, film or sketch what you see in a journal. Explore nearby trails for animal tracks. Do you see a nest where an animal has rested? Be sure to keep your distance. At the end of your hike, share your recordings, images or journal sketches with your camp mates to compare experiences.



**OR** 

## ECO CAMPER 11



## Going on a Journey?

### Do some badge work along the way.

Girls on the *GET MOVING!* Journey are challenged to “go off the grid” for a day, a weekend, or a week. Give it a try—use your camping trip as a chance to unplug as much as possible. That means no cell phones!

### Now that I’ve earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Showing Brownies how to prepare a minimal impact campsite
- Making trail mix for my family to take on a fun outdoor activity
- Hosting a Leave No Trace backyard sleepover for the girls in my class



### I’m inspired to:

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First published in 2017 by Girl Scouts of the USA  
420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2798  
[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)

Printed in the United States

Stock images by: Ghislain & Marie David de Lossy/Getty Images; Monkeybusinessimages/iStock/  
Getty Images Plus; Hero Images/Media Bakery; johani0/iStock/Getty Images Plus

UPC 64025

