

# QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED

Website Reprint: <http://www.geocaching.com>

## What is Geocaching?

Geocaching is an entertaining adventure game for GPS users. Participating in a cache hunt is a good way to take advantage of the wonderful features and capability of a GPS unit. The basic idea is to have individuals and organizations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these caches on the internet.



GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. All the visitor is asked to do is if they get something they should try to leave something in the cache. The word Geocaching broken out is GEO for geography, and CACHING for the process of hiding a cache. A cache in computer terms is information usually stored in memory to make it faster to retrieve, but the term is also used in hiking / camping as a hiding place for concealing and preserving provisions.

## What is a GPS device?

A GPS unit is an electronic device that can determine your approximate location (within 6-20 feet) on the planet. Coordinates are normally given in Longitude and Latitude. You can use the unit to navigate from your current location to another location. Some units have their own maps, built-in electronic compasses, voice navigation, depending on the complexity of the device. You don't need to know all the technical mumbo jumbo about GPS units to play Geocaching. All you need to do is be able to enter what is called a "waypoint" where the geocache is hidden.

## How do GPS devices work?

If you're interested in finding more information about Global Positioning Systems, check out GPS: The New Navigation by PBS. They have an excellent Shockwave and /or web page that explains how GPS works!

## So if I have a GPS unit, someone can track where I am and where I'm going?

No! GPS devices do not broadcast your location. The satellites using radio frequencies actually broadcast their own position. Your GPS unit takes that information to figure out where you are (triangulation). Unless you have a tracking system implanted by aliens, you should be safe from the satellites above. As an extra precaution, however, you can put aluminum foil on your head to deflect the "gamma" beams.

## How do I use a GPS unit for Geocaching?

If you need to get basic instructions on how to use a GPS unit, try the book GPS Made Easy: Using Global Positioning Systems in the Outdoors. To play, you'll need to know how to enter waypoints into your GPS unit. Your GPS should come with instructions on how to enter a waypoint.



## What are the rules in Geocaching?

Geocaching is a relatively new phenomenon. Rules are very simple:

- Take something from the cache.
- Leave something in the cache.
- Write about it in the logbook.

## What is usually in a cache?

A cache can come in many forms but the first item should always be the logbook. In its simplest form a cache can be just a logbook and nothing else. The logbook contains information about the founder of the cache and notes from the cache's visitors. The logbook can contain much valuable, rewarding, and entertaining information. A logbook might contain information about local or nearby attractions, coordinates to other unpublished caches, and even jokes written by visitors. If you get some information from a logbook you should give some back. At the very least you can leave the date and time you visited the cache. You never know what the founder or other visitors of the cache may have left there for you to enjoy. Remember, if you take something, its only fair that you leave something in return.

## What shouldn't be in a cache?

Use your common sense and importantly, respect the local laws. All ages of people hide and seek caches, so use some thought before placing an item into a cache. Food items are ALWAYS A BAD IDEA. Animals have better noses than humans, and in some cases caches have been chewed through and destroyed because of food items in a cache. Please do not put food in a cache.

## Can I move a cache once I find it?

Unless there's a note in the cache containing instructions on moving it to a new location, don't move the cache! Responsible cache owners check on their caches occasionally and would be alarmed to find theirs missing. An alternative would be to have a hitchhiker, which is an item that you can move from cache to cache. An example of this is a candle that has traveled from Australia to Arizona, and a Mr. Potato head that leaps from cache to cache. All you need to do to create a hitchhiker is to attach a note to it for folks to move it to a new place.

## How long do caches exist?

It all depends on the location of the cache and its impact on the environment and the surrounding areas. Caches could be permanent, or temporary. It's up to the cache owner to periodically inspect the cache and the area to ensure that impact is minimal, if not nonexistent. When you find a cache, it's always a good idea to let the cache owner know the condition as well.

## Does Geocaching.com physically check caches before publishing?

We wish! We'd love to head out to all those countries and states to check on each and every cache to ensure they are placed properly. Based on the growth of the sport, however, this would be impossible. If you're not sure about a cache, wait for someone else to check on it and report back to the site. Before a cache is posted, volunteers check the page for inaccuracies, bad coordinates, and appropriateness before posting the cache to the site.

## What do I do if I find out that a cache has gone missing?

If you visit a cache location and the cache is missing, always make sure to log the cache as "not found" on the web site so the cache owner knows. If you notice that the logs show an usual number of "not found" logs, please inform the web site

<http://www.geocaching.com>

so we can check on the cache page. The cache can be temporarily disabled so the cache owner can check in on it. Sometimes, though rarely, when the cache owner cannot be contacted we can either allow folks to adopt the cache or have the cache removed completely from the site. We rely a lot on the geocaching community to let us know the status of caches in their area.

## ATTENTION GEOCACHERS

Please assure you have permission of the property owner, including the appropriate jurisdiction for public parks, environmental lands, and trails BEFORE you hide a cache.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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