Geocaching Fact Sheet

What is geocaching?

Geocaching is the world's largest treasure hunting game. Through a unique combination of outdoor recreation and location-based technology, geocaching inspires and enables discovery, exploration, and adventure for millions of players worldwide. Geocaching's passionate community of players use the Geocaching® app and GPS-enabled devices to find cleverly hidden containers called geocaches and share their experiences online. Today, there are more than 3 million geocaches in over 190 countries.

History

Geocaching started in 2000 by GPS enthusiast, Dave Ulmer, who was interested in testing the accuracy of the recently improved GPS signal. He hid a container, recorded the location, and shared the coordinates online for others to find. Three days later, someone did, and that's the start of geocaching.

The online chats spread, and soon, 75 other geocaches were hidden around the world. One was found in July 2000 by Jeremy Irish, who shortly thereafter, founded Geocaching.com as the first portal of the game along with his partners, Elias Alvord, and Bryan Roth.

Geocaching basics

1. A geocacher hides a geocache and lists the coordinates on Geocaching.com for others to find.

2. Players will navigate to a geocache using the Geocaching® app or a GPS-enabled device.

3. At minimum, geocaches contain a logbook for players to sign. After signing, they'll log their experience on the Geocaching® app or on Geocaching.com to earn a reward in the form of a point and digital smiley.

4. Some geocaches contain small trinkets for trade. If a geocacher takes something from the geocache, they replace it with something of equal or greater value.

5. Traveling game pieces called trackables can also be found in geocaches. These trackables have a unique tracking number engraved on them and move from geocache to geocache towards a goal.

6. Geocaches are often well hidden but never buried.

7. Geocaches are always put back at the location where they were found for the next geocacher to discover.

Geocache Types

Traditional Geocache

This is the original type of geocache and the most straightforward. These geocaches will be a container at the given coordinates. The size may vary, but at minimum, all of these geocaches will have a logbook. Larger containers may contain items for trade and trackables.

Mystery or Puzzle Caches

The "catch-all" of geocache types, this type may involve complicated puzzles that you will first need to solve to determine the correct coordinates. Mystery/Puzzle Caches often become the staging ground for new and unique geocaches that do not fit in another category.

Multi-Cache

These geocaches involve two or more locations, with the final location being a physical container with a logbook inside. There are many variations, but typically once you're at the first stage, you will receive a clue to the whereabouts of the second stage. The second stage will have a clue for the third, and so on.

EarthCache

An EarthCache is a special geological location people can visit to learn about a unique feature of the Earth. EarthCache pages include a set of educational notes along with coordinates. Visitors to EarthCaches can see how our planet has been shaped by geological processes, how we manage its resources and how scientists gather evidence. Typically, to log an EarthCache, you will have to provide answers to questions by observing the geological location. For more information about EarthCaches visit http://www.earthcache.org/.

Letterbox Hybrid

Letterboxing is another form of treasure hunting that uses clues instead of coordinates. In some cases, the letterbox owner has made their container both a letterbox and a geocache and posted its coordinates on Geocaching.com. These types of geocaches will contain a stamp that is meant to remain in the box and is used by letterboxers to record their visit. To read more about letterboxing, visit Letterboxing North America.

Event Cache

An Event Cache is a gathering of local geocachers or geocaching organizations. The Event Cache page specifies a time for the event and provides coordinates to its location. After the event has ended, it is archived.

Cache In Trash Out Event (CITO)

Cache In Trash Out is the environmental initiative supported by the geocaching community. The main aim of this program is to clean up and preserve the natural areas that we enjoy while geocaching. These events are larger gatherings of geocachers that focus on litter clean-up, removal of invasive species, planting trees and vegetation and trail building.

Mega-Event Cache

A Mega-Event Cache is an Event Cache that is attended by 500+ people. Many Mega-Events offer geocachers a day of planned activities. There are often several days of additional activities surrounding a Mega-Event. These large events attract geocachers from all over the world and are often held annually.

Giga-Event Cache

This is one of the rarest geocache types available. A Giga-Event Cache is an event that is attended by 5000+ people. These events are similar to Mega-Events and may include activities, could last several days and are usually held annually. Since Giga-Events are so rare, they attract geocachers from all over the world.