

Girl Scouts of the USA, New York
TRAVEL TIPS
MEXICO AND OUR CABAÑA
www.ourCabana.org

There are some basic guidelines about traveling to Mexico. Although Our Cabaña may be the main destination, there are additional options, including a Mexican Girl Guide House in Mexico City, and International Youth Hostelling facilities and programs available through GSUSA's affiliation with Hostelling International.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR MEXICO

A Tourist Card (available from the airlines or the nearest Mexican Consulate) is required for entrance of U.S. citizens into Mexico. The Mexican government requires two copies of notarized permission, signed by both parents, for girls under 18 years of age that are traveling without their parents. This permission should be arranged well in advance of departure. (See the sample permission slip in the Appendix.)

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Girls and adults must bring a medical form, signed by a physician, certifying good health and containing a record of required immunizations. The GSUSA Standard Health Examination forms for international travel should be used. The Cabaña Committee **requires current immunization against tetanus**. If you will be traveling in Mexico beyond Mexico City and Our Cabaña, check with your physician to see if anti-malarial prophylaxis is needed.

INSURANCE

Additional international health and accident insurance is required and forms can be picked up at your Girl Scout council or through Mutual of Omaha's Web site <<http://www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusa/index.htm>> (International Plan 3PI).

LANGUAGE

Any trip to Mexico will be more successful if girls and adults know some basic Spanish. Before leaving home, all girls should be able to speak and understand simple "survival" and "courtesy" phrases in Spanish. Staff at Our Cabaña speak English.

CURRENCY NOTICE

Due to the current economic situation in Mexico, sites cannot give change for checks in U.S. dollars. If change in Mexican pesos is not desired, checks should be made out for the exact amount. While tight controls are being kept on the money supply and dollar flow, travelers should expect this practice throughout Mexico, including at Our Cabaña.

HINTS FOR GIRL SCOUT TRAVELERS

Pants are acceptable, but shorts and other "revealing" outfits, such as hip huggers or cropped and sleeveless tops should not be worn on the streets in Mexico when representing Girl Scouts. Head covering is traditional when touring churches. Carry a water bottle and avoid eating food from street vendors.

Be prepared for cultural differences in Mexico. For example, the Mexican concept of time is less formal than that of North America. Relationships between girls and boys also are different. Girls may get whistles and comments on the streets but should **not** acknowledge them. Avoid talking or flirting with boys on the streets or with tourist guides, however harmless it might seem.

OUR CABAÑA

Mailing Address:
Center Manager
Our Cabaña
Apartado Postal 4-406
62431 Cuernavaca

Telephone: 011 (52) (73) 15-26-50
Fax: 011-(52) (73) 15-28-97

E-mail: cabana@infosel.net.mx
Web site: <http://www.ourcabana.org>

GENERAL INFORMATION

The mission of Our Cabaña is to “challenge young women to live and value international friendship and understanding.”

Our Cabaña is a residential program center that opened in 1957. It is located 47 miles from Mexico City at an altitude of 5,000 feet. It is not a camp. Our Cabaña offers a cultural program of arts, music, dancing, service projects, swimming, sightseeing, and Girl Guide/Girl Scout activities, such as flag ceremonies and campfires.

Most programs last for eight days and are for girls ages 13 to 18, or for adults. Our Cabaña has eight dormitories; each equipped to accommodate ten people. Girls from each group will be placed in different Cabaña patrols and will be expected to do their share as members or patrol leaders. Individuals may stay at the center when accommodations are available. There are few rules Our Cabaña, other than the Girl Scout Law. **However, Girl Scouts from GSUSA must use *Safety-Wise* and council guidelines as their guide.**

Groups should be prepared to take advantage of the various opportunities available during their stay. Information about possible activities and resources to use in preparation for a trip are sent upon registration, so that when groups arrive they will be ready to enjoy a session that is exciting and meaningful to all.

A warm welcome awaits Girl Scout adults who wish to visit Our Cabaña or spend vacations there. Accommodations are usually available during the late fall, mid-winter, and spring, except for October and May, when the Center is closed.

REGISTRATION FEES

Session fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change. Food (three meals per day) and accommodations are included in the session fee. There is an additional fee to cover the program costs that include trips and crafts. All fees are paid in U.S. dollars. Directions for payment will be included in the registration information sent to you by Our Cabaña.

RESERVATIONS

See Our Cabaña's Web site <<http://www.ourCabaña.org>> for upcoming program sessions, current rates, and reservations. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact your council or Program Services at GSUSA, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10018-2798. Complete the “Intent to Travel Form A,” included in this packet, and also available in *Safety Wise*.

Traveling troops should book reservations at **least 16 months in advance**; individuals as far ahead as possible. Bookings for a given year open approximately 16 months before the start of the year.

Upon receipt of confirmation of reservations, send registration fees as directed. 30% of room and board is required six months before arrival.

Six to eight weeks before departure, send “Intent to Travel Form B: Request for World Association Card of Introduction” (included in this packet, or in *Safety-Wise*) to: Program Services, GSUSA, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-2798.

CANCELLATION OF RESERVATIONS

Once confirmed, a reservation should not be cancelled—especially at the last minute—except for extremely urgent reasons. Before making a reservation, troops should consider the preparations involved in making such a trip.

- A total penalty of a specific number of U.S. dollars will be withheld from the troop for cancellations prior to six months of the arrival date.
- Should a troop or any member of a group cancel within six months of the arrival date, the entire registration fee, per person, will be forfeited.
- Registration fees are non-refundable. For girl sessions, 30% is required as a deposit 6 months in advance. Cancellation after this time forfeits the 30% deposit.
- Should one or more members of a troop cancel within six months of the arrival date, full room and board cost will be charged for each individual.

TRAVEL TO OUR CABAÑA

Traveling troops, groups, and individuals should make all of their own transportation arrangements, whether by car, plane, or bus. Troops or groups considering the use of a chartered bus should have the bus company find out for certain if the bus will be allowed to cross the border and operate in Mexico. A special permit, issued in Mexico rather than at the border, is required for most buses. Camping along the way is **not** advisable. If you travel into Mexico by car or bus, plan to stay in hotels or motels.

TAXI SERVICE FROM AIRPORT

If you are going directly to Our Cabaña from the Mexico City airport, the best way to travel is by taxi. Arrangements for this service should be made in advance with Our Cabaña. **The fare is per taxi, not per person, and is subject to the number of people using the service.** Ask Our Cabaña about the current rate. Pullman de Morelos also operates a direct bus service from the airport in Mexico City to the Casina de la Selva bus station in Cuernavaca. Buses depart Mexico City approximately every hour, from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. from outside Salon D in the airport. The fare must be paid in pesos and tickets are available from a booth at Salon D before departure.

There are currency exchange points in the airport and several U.S. ATM cards work in the ATM machines in Mexico.

BUS SERVICE FROM MEXICO CITY TO CUERNAVACA

To get the bus, take a taxi to Terminal Central de Autobuses del Sur "General Vicente Guerrero," located at Avenida Tasquena No. 1320 (in front of the Metro Station Tasquena) in Mexico City. Look for the bus company "Autos Pullman de Morelos" where, at the desk marked Casino de la Selva, they will sell tickets for direct buses to Cuernavaca.

Buses leave Mexico City for Cuernavaca frequently from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tickets are issued for a specific time. Seats are numbered and passengers are required to occupy the seat as indicated by the number on the ticket. Bus fare, in pesos, is the equivalent of several USA dollars. Buses leave every 10 minutes.

Note: If you are arriving in Mexico City after 4:00 p.m., plan to spend the night there. Groups are expected to arrive at Our Cabaña between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. the first day and leave the last day no later than 10:00 a.m.

WHAT TO BRING

“Official uniform is worn on all out-trips from the Cabaña. For flag ceremonies, a walk to the local pyramid, and exploring the neighborhood, camp uniform is worn. This may be the official uniform of your Association [country], a council camp uniform or a uniform voted on by the girls themselves. This later group uniform should be in good taste and not call attention to the wearers when out in public.”

Since an official uniform is not required to be a Girl Scout here in the U.S., we suggest that if a Girl Scout is not using a sash or vest, she wear an official GSUSA uniform T-shirt or Polo shirt with tan pants or skirt, along with her Girl Scout pins.

The following is a detailed list of clothing and other items that **Our Cabaña recommends you bring**:

- Girl Guide/Girl Scout cotton or lightweight dress uniform. (see above)
- Official camp uniform (see above)
- Sports clothes for wear inside the Cabaña
- A summer dress
- Sweater or jacket
- Two pairs of flat or low-heeled shoes (rubber soles are suggested)
(It is advised not to wear open-toed shoes at Our Cabaña.)
- Lightweight bathrobe and slippers
- Bathing suit/cap
- Raincoat and umbrella, (if visiting Cabaña between May and September)
- Underwear
- Toilet articles, sunscreen lotion
- Flashlight, notebook, pen
- Musical Instrument (optional)
- Traditional dress of your country

Note: Hand laundry and ironing facilities are available.

TICALLI HOUSE, MEXICO CITY

Address:

Casa Guía "Ticalli"
Guías de México, A.C.
Río Guadalquivir No. 93
C.P. 06500 México, D.F.

Telephone: 011 52 5533-6412

Fax: 011 52 (52) 07-78-25

E-Mail: guiasmex@prodigy.net.mx

Web site: www.guiasdemexico.org

Ticalli House (defined as "your home") is the Guide House of the Mexican Girl Guides and is open to Girl Guides and Girl Scouts 13 and older from all over the world. It is located one block from Paseo de la Reforma, the main avenue in Mexico City, and is near the Independence Monument and transportation.

RESERVATIONS

Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible by the troop leader or by an individual wishing to stay at Ticalli. After the reservation is confirmed, a 30% deposit is required of the total charge and must be sent in advance. The deposit will be refunded for cancellations prior to six months of the arrival date. Please note this refund information is subject to change, and for the most current information you should write to Casa Guia Ticalli.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Ticalli is a modern and welcoming facility for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world. It has one dormitory with 12 beds, four dormitories with eight beds each, four double rooms, and five bathroom units. If the dormitories and double rooms are fully occupied, up to 20 cots can be put up on the fourth floor to accommodate extra people. It has a common room and serves continental breakfast.

Girl Scouts from GSUSA must use *Safety-Wise* and council guidelines as their guide.

Note: Contact Casa Guia Ticalli for accommodations, not Guias de Mexico. (Any contact between WAGGGS member countries must go through Chief Commissioners.)

~~~~~