

The Girl Scout World Centers

There are four Girl Scout World Centers located around the World. Many Girl Scouts, including those in the US, go on "Wider Ops" (wider opportunities) and visit one of the World Centers.

*More information is available on the WAGGGS Website:
www.wagggs.org*

Our Chalet

Based in the beautiful mountain resort of Adelboden, Our Chalet is just 2 1/2 hours away from Zurich and Geneva airports and less than an hour from Switzerland's capital, Bern.

As the first WAGGGS World Center, built in 1932, for seventy years it has given Girl Guides and Girl Scouts the chance to meet and share experiences and to continue the tradition of international friendship within the context of the season's programs which include skiing in winter and hiking in summer. On July 31, 1932, Our Chalet was formally opened by the World Chief Guide, Olave Baden-Powell and Mrs. Helen Storrow, an American Girl Scout Leader, who donated the money for the construction and the first four years of operation of Our Chalet.

The Swiss Confederation of Switzerland is in Europe, and neighbors Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein. There are 4 official languages spoken; German, French, Italian and Romansh. The country has a strong tradition of political and military neutrality, but also of international cooperation, and is home to many international organizations.

Switzerland has many lakes and mountains, about 20% of the Alps are in Switzerland. Winter sports, especially skiing, are very popular and people travel from all over the world to visit. The Swiss are also famous for making chocolate and cheese. The first cheese factory was in Switzerland.

Pax Lodge

Pax Lodge is our World Center near London, England. Girl Guides started in England in 1910, which is why Girl Scouts and Girl Guides wanted to have a World Center there.

The first World Center in England was called "Our Ark" and officially opened on May 2, 1939. Over the years, we needed a larger building, so the World Center moved.

On August 1, 1990, the new World Center, renamed Pax Lodge (for Peace)

opened.

The United Kingdom consists of four political divisions—England, Scotland, and Wales, which make up the island of Great Britain, and Northern Ireland, which occupies the northeastern part of the island of Ireland. London is the capital and largest city.

Girl Guiding UK is the UK's largest voluntary organization for girls and young women and is part of an international organization that we all belong to with over 10 million members worldwide.

- Girl Guiding UK has more than 600,000 members in the UK.
- Half of the women born in the UK have belonged to Girl Guiding UK at some point in their lives.
- The Association's adult members & helpers give 10 million voluntary hours a year – that's equivalent to 5,500 full-time jobs.
- More than a quarter of 8-year-old girls in the UK are Brownies.

An old custom in England is having afternoon “tea”, it’s a small meal or snack to tide you over until dinner. People drink tea and eat tea sandwiches, cookies (which are called biscuits), and tea cakes. Another popular drink is “Squash”, an orange drink.

England is also known for its beautiful gardens, many people there enjoy growing flowers, especially roses. Many large estates have formal gardens with very intricate designs.

Our Cabana

The word “Cabaña” is used as a term for a hideaway cabin in the woods, surrounded by nature. Our Cabaña was opened in July 1957 and adopted the “Tree” symbol of Cuernavaca, the nearby town as their logo. The Cabaña Tree’s red roots signify the warm friendships which start at Our Cabaña and grow deep; the brown trunk indicates the strength of WAGGGS and its continual growth; the three branches with green leaves are for the three parts of the promise; and, the blue drop of water has two meanings – one is that water is the symbol of life, and the drop is the Aztec symbol for communication and Our Cabaña strives to communicate with all Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in the world.

Mexico is our neighbor to the south, its capital, Mexico city, is one of the largest cities in the world. Mexico has mountains and plateaus over most of the country, it also has tropical forests, dry deserts, and fertile valleys. Like the U.S., Mexico was originally inhabited by Indians. The last Indian empire in Mexico was the Aztecs, who were invaded by Spain in 1521. Most Mexicans have Indian ancestors.

Mexico is the leading producer of silver in the world. It is also one of the world's leading producers of cacao beans, coffee, corn, oranges, and sugar cane.

A familiar Girl Scout craft, the God's Eye, has its roots in Mexico. An ancient symbol made by the Huichole (WE-cho-lay) Indians of Mexico, they were thought to protect children and were hung from their hair or a wall in the home. A father started it when a child was born and added to it each year until the child was five. The four points of the God's Eye represent Air, Water, Fire and Earth. Today, Mexicans continue to muse God's Eyes for good luck and are often hung in a child's room or living room in the home.

Sangam

Sangam is the newest of the four World Centers. Sangam was officially opened on October 16, 1966, by the World Chief Guide, Olave Baden-Powell, who compared Sangam to a powerhouse generating light and the power of love. Set in over seven acres of grounds on the banks of the Mula River, the Center is approximately three miles from the center of Pune.

Sanskrit is the mother of all the European languages. The name "Sangam", which comes from the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit means "coming together", showing that the Center is a place for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to meet and share their cultures.

The Girl Guide movement got a start in India at Jabalpur in 1911. It expanded enormously. There were about 50 girl guide companies with a membership of over 1200 by 1915. An All India Girl Guides Association was formed in 1916. There were scattered Girl Guide and Boy Scout groups during the pre-independence era. However, serious efforts were made by Indian leaders to merge the groups and the final merger took place on November 1950 under the name of the Bharat Scouts & Guides. The Girl Guides Association joined the Bharat Scouts & Guides a year later in August 1951. There is a Guide Wing for girls and a Scout Wing for boys. The groups cooperate, but girls and boys are in separate groups.

India is the world's largest democracy with over 1 billion people who live in an area that is slightly more than 1/3 the size of the United States. The capital of India is New Delhi. India is the world's largest, oldest, continuous civilization. Varanasi, was called "the ancient city" when Buddha visited it in 500 B.C. and is the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world today.

The game of Parcheesi was invented in India during the 1570s. And Chutes and Ladders began in ancient India, where it was used to teach Hindu children about right and wrong.