



Guide to Geo-Caching

What is it ?

Geocaching is an outdoor activity where participants use a GPS unit or other techniques to hide & seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches".

A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook where the geocacher enters the date they found it and signs it with their code name. Larger containers such as plastic storage containers can also contain trading items of little value.

Geocaching is like "high-tech hide and seek," sharing many aspects with treasure hunting & orienteering

How well known is Geocaching ?

Geocaches can be found in over 100 countries and on all continents including Antarctica.

There are over 1.3 million active geocaches published on various websites, and over 5 million geocachers worldwide.

How Does it Work ?

For the traditional geocache, a geocacher will place a waterproof container containing a log book (with pencil) and trade items, then record the cache's location coordinates & other details on a listing website. Other geocachers obtain the coordinates from that listing site and try to find the cache using their GPS units. Once found, the geocachers record their exploits in the logbook & online. Geocachers are free to take objects (except the logbook/pencil) from the cache in exchange for an item of similar/higher value.

How can I identify Cache containers ?

Geocache container sizes range from "nanos" which can be smaller than the tip of finger and only have enough room to store the log sheet to 20 litre buckets or even larger containers. The most common cache containers in rural areas are lunch-box sized plastic storage containers. Smaller containers are more common in urban areas because they can be more easily hidden. There are also magnetic containers, or containers disguised as everyday objects e.g bolts, golf balls, fir cones etc

What is in a Cache?

Typical cache "treasures" usually are of little monetary value. Apart from the logbook, common cache contents are unusual coins, small toys, ornamental buttons, CDs, or books. Also common are objects that are moved from cache to cache called "hitchhikers", such as

Travel Bugs or Geocoins,



whose travels may be logged and followed online. Cachers who initially place a Travel Bug or Geocoins, often assign goals for their trackable items. Examples of goals are for the items to be placed in a certain cache a long distance from home, or to travel to a certain country, or to travel faster and farther than other hitchhikers in a race. Higher value items are occasionally included in geocaches as a reward for the First to Find (called "FTF"), or in locations which are harder to reach.

If a geocache has been vandalized or stolen it is said to have been "muggled", the term plays off the fact that those not familiar with geocaching are called muggles, and is borrowed from the Harry Potter series of books which was rising in popularity at the same time Geocaching started.

Where are Caches located ?

Geocaches vary in size, difficulty, and location. Simple caches are often called "cache and dash." Geocaches may also be complex, involving lengthy searches or significant travel. Examples include staged multi-caches, underwater caches, caches located up a tree, caches found only after long offroad drives, caches on high mountain peaks, caches located in challenging environments such as Antarctica and magnetic caches attached to metal structures and/or objects.

What are the different types of Geocaches?

- Traditional: The basic cache type, it must include a log book of some sort. It may or may not include trade or traceable items. It is distinguished from other cache variations in that the geocache is found at the coordinates given and involves only one stage.
- Multi-cache: consists of multiple discoveries of one or more points containing the coordinates for the next stage; the final stage contains the log book and trade items.
- Offset: similar to Multi-cache except that the initial coordinates are for a location that encodes the final cache coordinates. e.g directs the finder to a plaque where the digits of a date on the plaque correspond to coordinates of the final cache
- Mystery/puzzle: This requires the geocacher to discover information or solve a puzzle, or to obtain additional information such as a padlock combination to access the cache.

Where can I get additional information on Geocaching ?

Geocaching Association of Great Britain: www.gagb.co.uk

www.geocaching.com : The home of geocaching, this contains the biggest collection of geocaches and is the first place to go if you want information. There are country specific forums to give you local help.

The UK's 4th Geocaching Mega Event will be held in Brangwyn Hall, Swansea on Sunday 31st July 2011.

www.treadsandtrails.co.uk : who run geocache events in the Abergavenny & Brecon Beacons area