



Visits Abroad Guide

Surrey Scouts



Contents

Introduction	3
How we help	4
What are your options?	5
It's easier than you think!	8
Top tips and great ideas	9
Grants	13

Introduction

As Scouts we are part of a family of over 40 million members spread all across the world. Scouting offers our young people the chance to discover and explore that world ('world' is one of our three main programme themes), to link up with Scouts around the world, to travel and much more.

Travelling abroad is an exciting dimension of international Scouting. It's an opportunity to learn about another country and culture, to meet new people and experience new things, and to take part in a whole host of activities.



St Nicholas 9th Guildford in Kandersteg

How we help

The Surrey Scouts International Team are here to offer advice and support as you plan your visits abroad.

This section details the easy, but necessary, approval process that a trip overseas needs to go through.

What are your options?

Between 2016 and 2019, there were 95 separate trips overseas from Surrey Scouts involving over 2,000 Young People and Adults. None of these visits are the same! From joining Jamborees to volunteering, running an expedition to skiing, there really are hundreds of ways to travel. Later in this document, we summarise the main options and list some of the places Surrey Scouts have been to before.

We recommend pausing and thinking about what you want to achieve from your visit abroad and shaping the design of the experience around that goal.

It's easier than you think!

If we achieve one thing from this document, it would be to leave you with an impression that planning a visits abroad should not be a scary prospect!

Have you run a camp in the UK where you have set a budget in advance, communicated with parents, planned travel and selected activities? If the answer is yes, then you are 90% of the way to running a visit abroad!

With help from Surrey leaders who ran a visits abroad for the first time, we will run through the main things to think about in the planning process.

Top tips and great ideas

We have a collection of top tips and great ideas from Surrey leaders experienced in organising visits abroad. We hope you find them useful!

Grants

Sometimes the cost of international experiences can deter parents and young people from taking part. With a strong fundraising plan everyone can access the fantastic opportunities on offer. Where fundraising or reserves fall short, this section contains some grants that you may be able to apply for to support individuals attending a visit abroad.

Get in touch

Whether you're in the early stages of thinking about your first visit abroad or have a technical question about the process, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at international@surrey-scouts.org.uk.

How we help

Surrey Scouts International Team

We believe that a visit abroad with Scouts can be one of the most exciting and enriching opportunities we offer young people. Our job is to help and support leaders in Surrey to create fantastic experiences, whilst ensuring they keep our young people safe and follow our organisation's policies and rules.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch at any stage of your planning process to ask for advice, ideas or clarifications. If we don't know the answers, we can certainly help you find out or point you in the right direction. We may also be able to put you in touch with leaders who have organised a similar visit abroad in the past.

Visits abroad approval process

The approval process for international trips is as follows:

Stage 1: When you start planning your trip

- **You complete:** Visits Abroad Form (Part A): <https://forms.office.com/r/5xhBijsG34>
- **Approval:** We recommend to DC that you continue. DC may have additional questions before approving.



Stage 2: At least 3-6 months before

- **You complete:** Visits Abroad Form (B) and provide relevant documents: <https://forms.office.com/r/xn6tiinE3k>
- **Approval:** We recommend to DC that trip is given final approval. DC may have additional questions before approving. We then notify The Scouts HQ.

This is not a scary process but is just about making sure that we and your DC know about your plans and, having done the detailed planning for your trip you provide us with all the information we need to approve it.

Stage 1: approval to continue planning

As soon as you start planning your trip, you need to gain approval to continue planning. This is a very simple and straightforward process:

- Complete the online Visits Abroad Form (part A): <https://forms.office.com/r/5xhBijsG34>
- We will let you know if we have any questions and once we've finished discussing things, we will recommend to your DC that you are

approved to continue planning

- Your DC may have additional questions before they give their final approval

Stage 2: final approval

For final approval you need to submit information to us at least 3 months before you go, or preferably 6 months if travelling outside Europe. These deadlines are important so that there is time for questions and approval by your DC before we have to register your Visit Abroad with HQ, at the latest 6 weeks before you go. At this stage, you need to:

- Complete the online Visits Abroad Form (part B): <https://forms.office.com/r/xn6tiinE3k>
- Provide copies of:
 1. Itinerary (if travel details etc are on a separate document from your programme)
 2. Contingent list (list of who is going)
 3. Detailed programme
 4. Info about the qualifications/training/safety arrangements for any external companies you are using to run adventurous activities and/or of the permits held by leaders who will be running adventurous activities
 5. Risk assessments and critical incident plan (your critical incident plan will outline what will happen in the event of a serious issue, for example someone being critically injured or a natural disaster)
 6. Insurance confirmation (Please follow the Unity link on the Visits Abroad guidance for info about Scout specialist insurance. To arrange cover you will need to complete the Overseas Travel Insurance Proposal Form.)
- We will let you know if we have any questions and once we've finished discussing things, we will recommend to your DC that your trip is given final approval
- Your DC may have additional questions before they give final approval
- Once your DC has given final approval, we will notify The Scouts (UK) international office and, if applicable, the National Scout Association in the country you are going to.

We'd love to feature your trip on the Surrey Scouts website so if you're able to send over a couple of pictures and a short paragraph of text when you return, that would be great.

What are your options?

The main types of visits abroad

There are many different ways to go abroad as Scouts, here is how we think about the main options:



There is no 'best' type of visit abroad, in guiding your decision you should think back to what you want to achieve and other factors such as your time and experience and the age and number of the young people you are running the visit for.

DIY or travel company?

There are established companies used to taking Scouts on international trips, such as Venture Abroad. Using

one of their packages will give you the benefits of a known cost at early stage and the knowledge that the detailed research on accommodation and activities has been done for you. Whilst they will likely also help with some elements of paperwork, such as risk assessments, it will not absolve you of all responsibility.

It goes without saying that the downside of package tour is the higher cost, as you pay the company both for the planning you would have done yourself and a profit margin on top. Whilst they are likely to be able to tailor the trip to an extent, you may not have the complete flexibility to create the perfect adventure for your group.

Ultimately, the decision rests with you and whether you feel you have the time and organisational skills to pull off a DIY trip. We hope this pack will reassure you that there is nothing scary or exceedingly difficult about a DIY trip, but we also want to be clear that using a travel company is also absolutely fine if that is what is right for you. Each year in Surrey we have groups having fantastic adventures whether they are using a travel company or not.

Scout centres abroad

Normally the first place that springs to mind when thinking about a Scout campsite abroad is Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland, often known as the permanent mini Jamboree! However, whilst Kandersteg is undeniably special, there are several other Scout centres in Europe.

The map below shows a few of the most popular, and there are more details on the following page.



Austrian Estate - www.zellhof.at

Zellhof is a fantastic centre near Salzburg. Situated on a lake it is ideal base for exploring the local countryside as well as visiting the local villages and castles.



Danish Traditions - www.houensodde.dk

Visit Houens Odde Spejdercentre near Billund in Denmark for a traditional camp with the emphasis on nature, the sea and traditional skills and crafts. Visit the original Legoland!



A Medieval Castle - www.burg-rieneck.de

Stay in a 12th century German castle. Burg Rieneck offers a wide range of activities including high ropes, water activities and medieval workshops including a knight's tournament.



Glaciers and geysers - www.ulfljotsvatn.is

Visit Ulfljótsvatn Scout Centre in Iceland for a truly memorable camp. Visit the local glaciers and geysers and why not try the Golden Circle tour?



Adventure Island - www.vassaro.se

Why not try Vässarö Scout Centre in Sweden - sailing, canoeing and camping on a Scouting Island.



Where else have Surrey Scouts visited?

Here is just a small sample of what Scouts from Surrey have done internationally in the past few years:

- A rafting expedition in Sweden
- Service based expeditions to Tanzania, Nepal & Uganda
- Visits to the Somme (F) and Ypres (BE)
- Joined the Haarlem Jamborette (NL) & Icelandic National Jamboree
- Camps in France, Malta, Portugal, Poland & Slovenia
- Ski trips to Austria and Switzerland
- Visited a twin group in the Netherlands

Join an organised trip or expedition

There are often opportunities to join larger trips overseas, for example every 5 years Surrey Scouts organises an expedition to Kandersteg in Switzerland, with around 500 Surrey Scouts walking in the mountains, exploring Oeschinenensee, paddling down the Aare River, attempting the high ropes, joining an international campfire, and undertaking optional expeditions to chocolate and cheese factories!

The Explorer Belt is for 16-25 year olds and is a chance to take part in a ten day expedition that brings you a real understanding of a different country, its culture and way of life. Explorer Belts are often organised by Scout Networks or Counties.

The International Support Team Active Support Unit facilitates opportunities for members who have or wish to participate in an international experience with Scouts. It also provides a link between adult volunteers who wish to be part of, or support a project, or activity in scouting anywhere in the world. Their website is issu.org.uk.



Hampshire Scouts Expedition to Tanzania

International events

Many countries organise national Jamborees. In recent years this has included:

Iceland	Denmark	Norway	Germany
Australia	Hungary	Belgium	Slovenia
Asia Pacific region		United States	

Unlike World Scout Jamborees, typically there is not an UK Contingent, but you are able to travel as your own self-organised group.

International camps can be a great way to really experience Scouting in another country and with

programme activities and usually food included, there's not too much to organise! Please browse the internet for upcoming camps if this is an idea that interests you.

Intercamp takes place every year in Western Europe on the Whitsun bank holiday weekend

Intercamp is an annual international meeting of Scouts aged 11-18 and is held every year on Whitsun bank holiday weekend and lasts from Friday evening to Monday morning. This will likely mean a day or more off school is required, but permission is often granted for special events such as this.

International camps in the UK

There are several established UK international camps offering the chance to experience an exciting programme with Scouts from other countries. These include:

- Blair Atholl Jamborette – Perthshire
- NORJAM – Norfolk
- Campdowne – Kent
- Chamboree – Cheshire
- WINGS – Berkshire
- Essex International Jamboree – Essex
- Kibblestone International Friendship Camp – Staffs.

These camps typically have many groups from overseas join, so is a great opportunity to make international connections as you camp and take part in activities together.

Volunteer programmes or service teams

Over 18? Many international camps overseas or in the UK welcome adults as International Service Team (IST) members.

Other international volunteering opportunities include:

- Kandersteg International Scout Centre, Switzerland: www.kisc.ch/staff/
- Suncheon Asia Pacific Scout Centre, Korea
- International Camp Staff Programme, USA: members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=52,206,398
- European Scout Voluntary Programme
- More details can also be found on factsheet BP260005. To volunteer you generally need to be over 18. members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/BP260005.pdf

It's easier than you think!

How we did it for the first time

It all started one night on our annual summer camp, the leaders and PLs sat talking after the youngsters had gone to bed and the conversation had moved onto where we should go next year – one of us had read an article in Scouting magazine about Kandersteg in Switzerland and thought we should give it a go. It sounded great but more than a little daunting. Two years later we were sitting high in the Swiss Alps on one of our best camps ever. If we can do it so can you.

First Steps: About 18 months before

We decided we wanted a summer camp with lots of adventurous activities and the opportunity to meet Scouts from all over the world. We did some basic budget planning and set a target camp fee (thinking how much we could fundraise) and finally checked who wanted to go abroad - luckily lots of Scouts did! A major part of our planning was thinking about logistics - how to get the Scouts and all our camping kit to Switzerland.

Main budget items

Activities
Campfees
Transport
Insurance
Food
Uniform
Contingency
Extra Kit

Next Steps: Detailed planning

We then started more detailed planning; this was very similar to planning a UK based camp with a few differences. We bought travel insurance from the Scout Insurers and made sure everyone had a passport. We decided to fly with a budget airline and for a van to bring our camping equipment, so we booked these early to get the best prices. Some of our regular weekly meetings started to prepare the Scouts for the camp.



1st Lingfield Skiing in Austria

Surrey Scouts International Team

The team are able to offer lots of helpful advice such as campsite options and making contact with Groups abroad. You should get in touch as soon as planning starts to check the process and get the necessary forms: international@surrey-scouts.org.uk.

Use a conservative exchange rate for your planning.

Communicating with parents

Your parents will need lots of information:

- Plan parents' meetings.
- Think about how to communicate home.
- Make sure you have a good In Touch plan.
- Plan a post trip report back.

Top tips and great ideas

In this section you will find a collection of top tips and great ideas from leaders experienced in organising visits abroad. We hope you find them useful...

Planning

- Consider sending a “Recce Party” to check things out - is everything as good as it looked on the internet? Check the campsite, sort out activities, find out about local medical services, supermarkets, transport etc. When you meet with suppliers in person, they will feel more comfortable about working with you and are much more likely to do a deal.
- Involve Scouts as much as possible in the planning, particularly those 16+. The activities can count towards various awards. Put together a planning wall or flip chart with milestones and tasks to help engage the young people.
- Use Facebook with Explorers, Network & leaders. Most have internet facility on their phones and enjoy how immediate this communication channel is.



Ashted Explorers visit Poland

Budgeting... and saving money

- Plan in a contingency - traditionally 10%, but we'd plan 20% now, due to the volatility in exchange rates over the last few years.
- Expect the exchange rate to change between announcing the camp and travelling. The Swiss Franc plunged from 1.6 to 1.1 to the pound in 2011. Have a plan for if this happens – be ready to ask participants for extra money (make them aware from the start that this might happen) or ask your Group Executive committee to underwrite the trip.



Claygate Explorers in India

- If you see the exchange rate going in the wrong direction, pay for things immediately if you can. If you're not sure, you can always pay for half and then see what happens.
- Negotiate with every supplier. A lot of commercial providers overseas aren't used to negotiating, but you'll often be successful, especially if you're bringing a large group of people to them mid-week. It shouldn't be hard to knock 10% off, but we've managed to get 75% off rafting by making the operator an offer (we literally said, we've got £xx - what can you do?).
- Visiting cities, hikes, visiting sights such as waterfalls/ viewpoints/lakes can be free and excellent days out.
- If you have any young people who can't afford to go, apply to the UKHQ international fund – see factsheet BP260006
- Unity, UK Scouting's insurance provider provides an excellent and helpful service. It is possible to save money by shopping around for insurance but check and check again that you will be covered for everything you might need, including emergencies.

Getting there

- Maximise your time on the ground by going Sat to Sun. Early flights out and late flights back work well (and ease the stress when you are packing up!), although midweek flights can be cheaper.
- You can save some money by going by coach, but when you fly you normally arrive fresher.
- Put everyone into travel groups of 5 – 10 people. The leader of each group can then manage a small number of people through the airport, onto the plane, through passport control

and onto trains etc. It means things are quick and you're never worrying if you've lost someone.

- Some Scouts won't have flown before and might be nervous. Ask to be made aware of first time flyers, so you can support them (sit them next to a leader, and so on).
- On easyJet, get to the gate early and ask if you can get on the plane first (say that it'll mean you can sit everyone together and keep control of the Scouts = better for everyone). 90% of the time they've let us do this, although when they haven't, it hasn't really mattered. If flying on an airline where you get allocated seats – speak to them in advance to see if you can all be sat together.
- For Europe, low cost airlines such as easyJet usually provide the best price, but you'll need to pay the full fare when you book. Don't think you'll get any better service or value by paying more for any one airline over another.
- With BA, Swiss, SAS etc you'll get a group rate, pay a low deposit and then pay the rest shortly before you go. Remember that fuel surcharge and taxes can go up at any point until you pay.
- For long haul, it's often worth engaging a travel agent e.g. Bales Worldwide, Trailfinders or STA Travel to get the best price. You can negotiate a bit on the price as they are making commission.
- It's always worth asking airlines to price match - we got Virgin to match BA, which worked out more conveniently for us.
- Keep copies of important travel (and other!) documents – passports, EHIC cards etc. You will need to check everyone has them anyway and having copies will help if dealing with an issue.

- Budget airlines charge a lot for luggage and Scouts carrying bags on public transport can be difficult. You may want to send a van out instead.



Kent International Jamboree

Getting around

- Compare costs and go with whichever internal transport option works best for you. You might be surprised how some options are cheap in some countries.
- Trains are comfortable and often good value. Some countries offer travel passes which can be cost effective. Contact the national rail company and find out if they do group discounts, or half fare cards.
- For Switzerland, the Swiss Travel Centre in London can provide special rates on train transfers from the airport to KISC.
- We rented a coach for two weeks in Norway, and it was really good value. The same goes for Austria. It can be a good idea to rent minivans too. Look up local rental companies as well as the big ones.
- Most Explorers will not want to travel in uniform and by the return journey it will be screwed up anyway - organise a camp hoody all the same colour with logo. You then have a ready-made uniform to identify everybody, that members will wear and will be a souvenir of the trip when back home.

Where to stay...

- Find out what facilities Scouting has locally - not just campsites, but halls, houses and lodges.
- Find out if there are any hostels locally – both official HI ones and backpacker hostels. These are often high standard and can be quite cheap.
- In some countries booking hotel rooms and



Campfire at KIX 2018

putting four people in each can be remarkably cost effective. In North America, they usually have big rooms with two big double beds - just make sure Scouts have sleeping bags.

- Camping is always a cheap option, and you can usually search online and find what you're looking for. Sometimes you can rent cabins or caravans on campsites, which can make life really easy.

... and what to do

- Search online for any groups who have been where you're going and contact them to see what they did, with whom, and what they paid.
- Mix outdoor/adventurous activities with sight-seeing, treasure hunts around local villages/towns, social activities with local Scouts etc. For some Scouts this will be their first visit to another country - make sure they experience the excitement of discovering another country and culture.
- Ask what qualifications instructors have and then check if these are adequate according to Scout rules – the county activities team or the Scout Information Centre may be able to help if unsure.
- Remember, UK rules supersede any local rules and off limits activities are still off limits abroad, even if local Scouts can do these activities.
- If acceptable activities are organised by local Scouts it is fine to participate under their rules, but you must keep a close eye on things and be prepared to pull your Scouts out if you are unhappy.
- If you are going to KISC, take a look at the helpful 'UK Scouts and activities at Kandersteg' factsheet.



Rafting at KIX 2018



Kent International Jamboree

Where to eat...

- Shopping at supermarkets is usually the cheapest option but check what cooking facilities you will have. In Europe food is usually more expensive than the UK. In the rest of the world it's a similar price / cheaper.
- Look online at what is cheap and what is expensive. It's sometimes worth taking some items to extend your budget; we've asked Scouts to bring cereal in the past. Eat what the locals eat, and your budget will go further.
- Mix catering for yourselves with eating out. Restaurants offering group menus or associated to group accommodation tend to be cheaper and more Scout friendly.
- BBQs can be a popular and a relatively low cost way of providing a good meal.
- We ask Scouts to bring money to buy food on the journeys out and back. Nobody has ever complained about this, and it takes a load of hassle out of trying to cater on the move.

... and how to pay

- Check whether you will be expected to pay for things with cash or by card – it varies around the world.

Meet the locals...

- Search online for local Scout contacts and get in touch early so they can help as best they can (although it's still worth getting in touch at the last minute).
- Ask local contacts to recommend where to go, which activities to do, and where to stay.
- We've been fortunate enough to have local scouts host us in their halls for free. We've also had them provide transport and activities, again for free.

- Local leaders might be able to get you some money can't buy things too – Scouts in Seattle arranged for us to go on the flight simulators at Boeing Field.
- There are Scout camps and facilities in surprisingly convenient places. Did you know that Scouting runs an upmarket hotel in the centre of Hong Kong, where Scouts get a special rate?
- Local leaders will also know where Scouts get great discounts.
- Don't underestimate how respected Scouts are around the world, and many countries also have a lot of respect for the British. They will expect you to be very organised – so make sure you are.
- Best of all, local Scouts will want to meet you. They might even find you exotic. When they found out we were in town in Haines in Alaska, the local Scouts hosted a beach BBQ for us, and we spent the evening with them around a fire – one of the best experiences of the camp.

...but don't forget the folks back home

- Parents need lots of information – give updates during the planning, and make sure you have a plan for communicating with home during the trip.
- For many parents it will be the first time their child will be in a different country than they are. Set realistic expectations though, as it's not always easy to get mobile comms working and it can get very expensive (make sure your phone has roaming enabled). Twitter can be a good choice. Maybe one of the parents speaks the language of the country you are visiting?

Grants

Sometimes the cost of international experiences can deter parents and young people from taking part. With a strong fundraising plan everyone can access the fantastic opportunities on offer. Where fundraising or reserves fall short, this section contains some grants that you may be able to apply for to support individuals attending a visit abroad.

Headquarters International Fund

The Scouts has two funds to help support members in a position of financial hardship to take part in international experiences via The Headquarters International Fund. The grant you apply for depends on the type of international experience and the individuals attending.

Applicants meeting at least one of the criteria for financial hardship, can receive funding covering up to 50% of the costs of trip (subject to a maximum). Note that the level of reserves held by the Scouting body from which an activity is based (e.g. Group/District/County) will be considered as part of the grant award process.

<https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/4723>

Young Explorers Trust

For young people aged 19 or under who are taking part in expeditions or other adventurous activities.

Annual closing date of 1 March in the year of your trip.

<http://www.theyet.org/what-we-do/grant-awards/>

Leslie Sell Charitable Trust

Grants for Scouts and Guides to help finance the cost of going on trips.

Applications must be submitted at least 3 months before you go but you should apply as soon as you have the details of your trip.

<http://www.lesliesellct.org.uk/individuals.html>

Surrey Scouts County Commissioner's Discretionary Fund

This Fund exists to help with individual cases of hardship to enable a member of Surrey Scouts to take part in a Scouting activity that they would not otherwise be able to participate in.

Applications for grants from the Fund may only be made by the appropriate District Commissioner and should be sent to the County Office. Further details about the Fund including how to apply and an application form are available in the download section of the County Web Site

<https://www.surrey-scouts.org.uk/adult-support/surrey-downloads>

Surrey Youth Focus

Finally, you might like to contact Surrey Youth Focus as they tend to keep an eye on local funding opportunities and they may be able to recommend other organisations that you could apply to.

<http://www.surreyyouthfocus.org.uk/>

Get in touch!
international@surrey-scouts.org.uk