

For generations, kids of all ages have enjoyed searching for hidden treasure.

Using the Internet, a smart phone or a handheld GPS receiver, and the global positioning satellite system, you can get started on a popular twenty-first century hobby called geocaching (gee'-oh-cash-ing).

Hidden treasures, called geocaches, are all over the world. People just like you and me have hidden more than two million of them. Chances are that there are some close by no matter where you are! There are about 3,000 geocaches within 25 miles of the Gateway Arch.



Your GPS-enabled smart phone or handheld GPS receiver pinpoints your location to within 20 to 25 feet. The device "points the way" to the nearest geocache by telling you both direction and distance. It's up to you to navigate to the location and to find the geocache once you get there!

Both free and low-cost geocaching applications are available for smart phones. Handheld GPS receivers start at around \$100.



St. Louis Area Geocachers Association

www.sлага.org

SLAGA is a regional geocaching club which covers east central Missouri and the western part of southern Illinois. SLAGA sponsors picnics, group hunts, classes and other activities. To meet other geocachers in the area or to find out about coming activities, visit the web site.

www.sлага.org



GeoWoodstock is an annual event which attracts thousands of geocachers from all over the United States and abroad. It is held in a different place each year. Find out more at the web site.

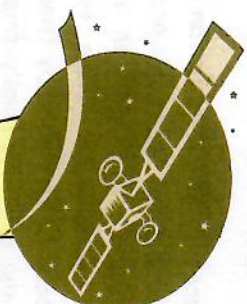
www.geowoodstock.com



The central web site lists over two million caches worldwide and serves over six million geocachers. To get started, visit the web site and sign up for your free account.

www.geocaching.com

Family



Treasure Hunt



Geocaching

The Hide

A geocacher carefully searches for an interesting location to hide a new cache. He provides a waterproof container, which is often transparent so that the contents are visible. He always includes a log book to be signed by those who find the cache. He also provides family-friendly trade items.

Using his handheld GPS receiver or smart phone, he carefully records the coordinates (latitude and longitude) of the hiding place.



On the geocaching.com web site, the cache owner enters the coordinates of the new geocache. He adds a description of the cache, useful information such as a good parking place, and a hint to help others find the cache. He will often include interesting details about the area.

A volunteer reviews the new cache to make sure it follows established guidelines and is safe for others to find.

After approval, the cache is ready to be found by anyone with the necessary equipment and a sense of adventure!

The Hunt

The search begins!

If you are using a smart phone, the geocaching app displays all caches close to your location.

If you are using a handheld GPS unit, go to www.geocaching.com to search for caches in your area. Connect your unit to the computer to copy caches to it.



Pick a cache you'd like to find. Whether you're using a phone or a handheld, signals from orbiting satellites tell it where you are. It computes the distance and direction to the cache you selected. Just follow the arrow until you are close to the cache. You may need to navigate around obstacles. No matter — the arrow always points the way.

Once you are within 25 or 30 feet of the cache, look around carefully for anything which seems out of place. Caches are cleverly hidden to blend into their surroundings. Out in the woods, the cache might be in a hollow log, under a rock ledge, or almost anywhere else you can imagine! Caches in cities can be even more fun. They're often found in busy areas where they must stay hidden from muggles (those who aren't geocachers).



The Find

You've found it! Now what?

If you like, take a trinket and replace it with something you brought with you. Remember, always trade family-friendly items. And always leave something of equal or greater value.

The cache always has a logbook. Be sure to sign your geocaching name!



Carefully close the cache container. Put it back where you found it, hidden in the same way. Try to leave the area as undisturbed as when you got there. That way, the next geocacher will have as much fun hunting the cache as you did.

Back home, go to www.geocaching.com to record your find and to say a few words about your adventure. You can even post photos (but none that would spoil the hunt!) and share your experiences through social media.

And, of course, begin planning your next geocaching trip!