girl scouts of northern illinois

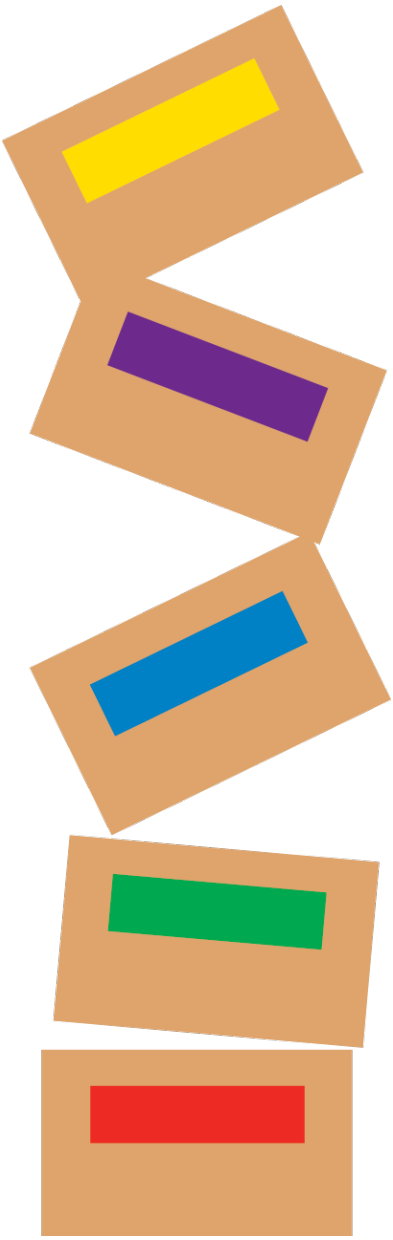
Cookie Booth Guide

Maximize the Cookie Booth Experience for Troops and Girl Scouts

Cookie Booths are a fast and easy way for Girl Scouts to sell cookies to customers, while leveraging and growing their entrepreneurial skills.

Volunteer, parents, and Girl Scouts are reminded that participation in a Cookie Booth is a privilege provided by merchants and business owners. Everyone who participates in a Cookie Booth is representing Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois and Girl Scouts nationwide. Participation in Cookie Booths is strongly encouraged, but optional for troops and Girl Scouts.

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Preparing for a Cookie Booth

- Are the Girl Scouts in the troop ready to hold a booth? Consider the following things.
  - Comfort of Girl Scouts talking to customers.
  - Length of time of the booth and/or shifts.
  - Standing in one area for duration of booth and/or shift regardless of weather.
- Discuss as a troop potential locations for a booth. Find out from parents if they have a connection to a business suitable for a booth.
- Encourage Girl Scouts to unleash their creativity and “Bling the Booth” with signs, decorations, theme, etc. to attract attention of customers to the booth.
- Practice how to approach customers and sales pitch and replies with Girl Scouts.
  - How to get attention of customers appropriately.
  - Response if the customer says no.
  - Importance of thanking the customer regardless of whether a purchase is made.
  - Girl Scouts should be able to answer questions about the different kinds of cookies.
  - Girl Scouts should be able to describe what the troop will do with troop proceeds.
- Remind Girl Scouts of appropriate behavior and representing all Girl Scouts.

Types of Cookie Booths



Traditional Cookie Booth
A booth set-up in front of a retail location. These may be arranged by the troop (Troop Booth) or council (Council Booth).

- **Troop Booth sites** are defined as retail locations that are NOT listed as a Council Booth site. Some examples of Troop Booth sites are restaurants, banks, churches, community events or other local retail locations. Businesses with a no solicitation policy include, but are not limited to, CVS, Aldi, Costco, The Fresh Market, Home Depot, Meijer, Butera, Woodman's, and Target.
- **Council Booth sites** are defined as a retail location with multiple opportunities which are secured and entered into eBudde™ by council. These sites will include, but not limited to, Walmart, Sam's Club, Blain's Farm & Fleet, and other area high-traffic locations such as local food chains. Volunteers MAY NOT contact these locations on their own to avoid conflicting communication with the store managers.

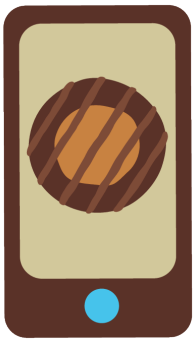
Cookie Stand
Similar to a lemonade stand, Girl Scouts set-up a booth in front of their residence or another residential property. Adult supervision and permission of property owner required.

Drive-thru Cookie Booth
Unlike a traditional Cookie Booth, a drive-thru booth is not held at the door of a retail location but instead in a parking lot. Troops use a tent, signage, and traffic cones to safely direct cars to drive-up to their booth so customers can purchase cookies from the convenience of their vehicle. Parking lots at churches, schools, retail strip malls, etc. are potential locations for Drive-thru Booths.

Digital Cookie Troop Link
All troops will have the ability to set-up a Digital Cookie Troop Link.

- For all troops that activate their Digital Cookie Troop Link, the link will be available, during designated dates, for customers to search on Cookie Finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org by zip code to place shipped and donation orders ONLY.
- The Troop Link will also be available to use for other purposes, such as at a traditional booth to take credit card payment through the Digital Cookie Mobile App and be applied to the troop.

See Digital Cookie tip sheets and videos for additional instructions on managing the troop link.



Virtual Cookie Booths
Virtual Cookie Booths are organized by a troop for selling cookies online utilizing social media and are a great inventory risk-free option.

- Use social media to promote online shipped and donation orders using the Digital Cookie Troop Link.
- Use Digital Cookie links (troop and/or Girl Scout links) on social media promoting pre-booth online orders with a date and time of a public location for customers to pick-up their girl delivery orders.
- Pre-ordering or virtual booths may also be connected to an existing traditional cookie booth for order pick-up.

Securing a Cookie Booth

Troop Booth Reservations and Approval

- Decide on location of Cookie Booth that is not already a Council Booth Site. *Review Cookie Booth Options below.* Ask parents of troop members if they have any connections to a business for a cookie booth. Businesses with a no solicitation policy include, but are not limited to, CVS, Aldi, Costco, The Fresh Market, Home Depot, Meijer, Woodman's, and Target.
  - All Cookie Booths must be within the boundaries of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois.
  - Inappropriate* locations include, but are not limited to, liquor stores, gambling facilities, dispensaries, tattoo parlor, bars, etc. *Inappropriate is defined as an establishment that Girl Scouts cannot themselves cannot legally patronize.
- Obtain permission from the retailer, property owner, or business manager.

- GSNI recommends waiting until after January 1, to contact retailers. GSNI has found prior to the new year during the busy holiday season, retailers tend to make mistakes in scheduling.
- While there are no restrictions to Troop Booth reservations, be considerate of other troops that may want to also utilize a location.
- When receiving approval provide the retailer with the troop number, contact person's name and phone number or email, even if not requested.

- Enter request into eBudde for approval from council.
  - Requests are approved by council on a first come, first served basis. Therefore, if two troops request the same time and location, approval will go to the troop that entered their request first. Council will assist when possible, to help resolve any scheduling conflicts prior to the scheduled booth date.
  - Requests will be approved or denied. Reasons a site may be denied include, but are not limited to, deemed inappropriate*, reserved by another troop, complete address not provided, a Council Booth site, monopolizing a site, or a safety concern.
- If a troop is not able to hold their booth, notify the retail location and cancel request in eBudde. This may allow for another troop to schedule a booth and avoid scheduling confusion. This also removes from Cookie Finder so a potential customer does not go to an empty location.

Council Booth Sign-up

- Review Council Booth options listed in eBudde prior to sign-up start date.
- Two rounds of sign-up will be available in eBudde. See Troop Cookie Manual for dates.
  - During the first round, troops may sign-up for three sites and two sites may be at the same retailer.
  - During the second round, troops may sign-up for a maximum of 15 sites at the same retailer. No limits on total number of sites. Towards the end of the program, the 15-site maximum at the same retailer may be lifted or increased.
- eBudde provides a Booth Site Waitlist option. Troops will have the opportunity to be notified if a scheduled specific booth site date/time becomes available due to a troop cancellation.
- If a troop is not able to hold their booth, cancel in eBudde to allow another troop to utilize the location and time slot. This also removes from Cookie Finder so a potential customer does not go to an empty location.

Troop Booth Opportunities

Analyzing categories of Troop Booth sites from previous cookie seasons consider these types of locations for your Troop Booths. Keep in mind these are averages, there are no guarantees of sales, and many factors contribute to the success of a cookie booth.

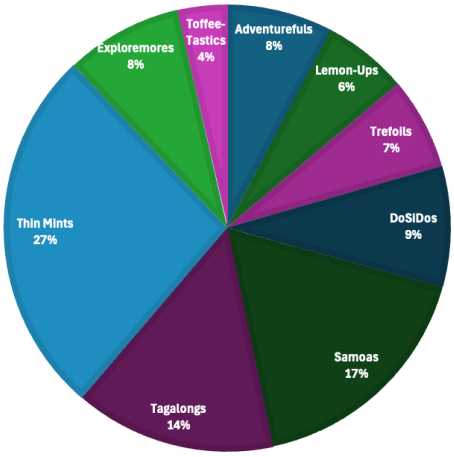
Category	Average # of hours	Average # of Cookies
Bank	3.36 hours	5.10 cases
Bowling Alley	2.88 hours	5.95 cases
Breakfast Restaurant	3.59 hours	11.62 cases
Church	3.50 hours	11.32 cases
Coffee Shop	2.82 hours	6.23 cases
Convenience Store	3.63 hours	6.73 cases
Fast Food Restaurant	3.29 hours	8.09 cases
Grocery Store	4.56 hours	17.57 cases
Home Improvement Store	3.73 hours	9.72 cases
Other*	3.00 hours	8.56 cases
Pizza Restaurant	2.78 hours	5.08 cases
Restaurant	3.22 hours	7.85 cases
Retail Store	3.59 hours	7.31 cases
School/Community Event	3.31 hours	8.10 cases
Sports/Dance Complex	3.00 hours	5.82 cases

When requesting permission and scheduling a booth consider the best time of day, where to set-up the booth, etc. for each location. For example, the 8 a.m.-12 p.m. was the best time for a booth at a Breakfast Restaurant and 5-8 p.m. was the best time for a Pizza Restaurant. Also, setting up by the drive-thru of a Fast Food Restaurant (if allowed and safe) may have more customer traffic than the main door.

*Other category included locations such as service organization events, post office, events at fire stations, and car dealerships. Sometimes a specific location may not have high foot traffic alone, but they are in a strip mall type situation with lots of potential customers.

How Many Cookies to Order for a Cookie Booth?

One of the most difficult parts for troops holding a cookie booth is to estimate the number and variety of cookie packages to bring to a booth. There is no perfect formula for ordering cookies as location, weather, week of booth, saturation, etc. all factor into how many cookies may be sold at a booth. In addition to the information below and to the right, GSNI suggests troops ask for suggestions from other troops in their service unit that may have sold at the same location.



On average, troops sell 30-40 packages of cookies per hour. So, for the typical three-hour cookie booth, approximately 90-120 packages may be sold. In addition, the breakdown of cookies varieties by percentage are listed to the right, Troop Cookie Chairs should also consider the breakdown from their own troop's initial order listed on the troop's dashboard in eBudde™.

Cookie Booth Planning and Guidelines

- Utilize the Cookie Booth Inventory Sheet (included at the end of this guide) to plan the booth and then track sales and inventory throughout the booth.
- "Bling the Booth" with posters, signs, decorations and even a theme to draw attention of customers to the booth.
- Schedule Girl Scouts and adults for booth.
    - Registered Girl Scouts must always be present at a booth. No more than three Girl Scouts are recommended at a booth at one time. Girl Scouts should be identifiable by wearing their vest/sash/tunic or other Girl Scout apparel.



- Order additional cookies, as needed, from a Cookie Cupboard.
- Digital Cookie online exclusive cookies are not to be sold at a cookie booth. However, we encourage troops to post a sign with a QR code to their troop link for customers looking for these cookie varieties.
- Call to confirm a Troop Booth reservation approximately 3-5 days prior to the scheduled booth.
- Prepare for the weather.
    - Remind everyone to dress appropriately. Bring hand warmers.
    - Flatten empty case boxes and stand on the cardboard to keep feet of cold ground.
    - Use a clear shower curtain if raining or snowing to cover cookies on table, while still allowing customer so see the varieties.
    - Bring tarps or other covering to keep cookie cases and package dry if raining or snowing. If bringing a pop-up tent, receive permission from location.
    - Shelter cookies from direct sunlight even in cooler temperatures. Do not leave cookies in a warm vehicle. The inside of a vehicle can still get warm on a cool but sunny day.
- Practice with Girl Scouts in advance, how to approach customers, sales pitch and replies. Girl Scouts should be knowledgeable to answer basic, common questions about the cookies, their troop, troop and individual goals, and the Girl Scout Cookie Program.



- Coordinate with other adults attending transporting of supplies.
    - Bring your own table, chair(s), and sign(s), etc.
    - Bring plenty of bills to make change. Don't ask the business location for additional change.
    - Use a cart or wagon to help transport cookies and supplies.
- Be on time when arriving and departing. Respect the time of other troop scheduled before or after your booth.
- Respect all rules of the business location, including not blocking the entrance, setting-up in the designated location, being courteous to all customers, etc.

- Girl Scouts and parents should not go in and out of the business location. Girl Scouts should be instructed to dress for the weather and to use the bathroom before arriving at the booth. Please remember that the business is not required to let the Girl Scouts set-up inside for any reason.
- Girl Scouts should remain standing (as much as possible) and behind the table at all times. Never run after someone for a sale.
- Utilize Digital Cookie Troop Link and mobile app to take credit card payments for purchases.



- Provide a jar or box with signs for purchasing cookie packages for donation. Girl Scouts should be able to explain where cookies will be donated.
  - Money collected from a customer not interested in purchasing a package of cookies for themselves MUST go towards donation packages and may not be "pocketed" by the troop.



- Girl Scouts should always be gracious and remember their manners when talking to potential customers. Always say please and thank you—even to those who decide not to purchase cookies.
- Remind Girl Scouts of appropriate behavior and attention to the booth. They are representing Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois and Girl Scouts nationwide.
- Clean your cookie booth area of all litter, papers, water bottles, case boxes, etc. before you leave. A Girl Scout always leaves a place cleaner than how it was found!
- Represent Girl Scouts in a positive manner!

Represent Girl Scouts appropriately and respect your sister Girl Scouts

If you arrive at a booth site and there is another troop there, act appropriately.

- Have a professional, adult conversation with an adult from the other troop. Mistakes happen.
- Take the conversation away from the Girl Scouts and away from the retail location door and retail/prospective cookie customers.
- Constructively identify if there is confusion of date, time, or location on the part of one of the troops or if there is actually a double-booking. In the case of a double-booking, work together towards a fair solution such as sharing the site (especially if there are multiple entrance doors at the location), split the time that has been double-booked, etc.
- Avoid bothering the business to resolve the conflict.

Safety and Security

- Never leave a Girl Scout alone or unsupervised at a booth. An adult must always be present.
- Girl Scouts are encouraged to accept payment/make changes with an adult supervising the financial transaction.
- Keep all money secure in a well monitored cash box or apron.
- If asked additional questions about the Cookie Program or Girl Scouts in general, refer the individual to contact council at customercare@girlscoutsni.org.
- If a situation occurs where adults and/or Girl Scouts feel uncomfortable or threatened, pack up and close the booth and call 911 if warranted.

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For assistance with any processes and procedures mentioned in this guide, review the troop manual, eBudde quick sheets, and other resources at www.girlscoutsni.org/cookieresources and Rallyhood.

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Cookie Booth Inventory Sheet

Booth Location_____ Date & Time_____ Troop #_____

Girl Scouts Attending

Name	Parent phone number	Start time	Ending Time

Adults Attending

At least two adults must be present if multiple Girl Scouts and one must be a registered volunteer. Avoid having too many adults.

Name	Position (volunteer, parent, etc.)	Start time	Ending time

Cookie Inventory

Cookies	Package Price	Starting Inventory	Packages Sold (tally during booth)	Donation Packages Sold	Ending Inventory	Total Packages Sold
Adventurefuls	$6.00					
Lemon-Ups	$6.00					
Trefoils	$6.00					
Do-Si-Dos	$6.00					
Samoas	$6.00					
Tagalongs	$6.00					
Thin Mints	$6.00					
Exploremores	$6.00					
Toffee-tastics	$6.00					

Money Management

Ending Cash	
Starting Cash	-
Total Cash Collected	=
Total $ Credit Card sales	+
Total $ Checks	+
Total Money Collected	=
Expected Total Amount (packages sold x $6.00)	-
Over/Short Amount Collected for total packages sold.	=

Supply Checklist:

- Cookies
- Table & chairs
- Tablecloth, display, signs
- Money pouch or cash box
- $ change, especially $1 and $5 bills
- Bags for customers
- Inventory worksheet & pens/pencils
- Technology needs for processing credit card payments (cell phone, card reader, etc.)
- Weather needs

Record any notes such as weather, changes/ideas for next booth or next year, issues experienced, etc. on back of sheet.