



This Guide is part of Outside the Box's 'Connecting with Nature' toolkit funded by the Recovery Development fund.



Our guide to Geocaching



What does it involve?

Spending time in the outdoors whilst on a 'mini mission' looking for treasure using an app on your smart phone.

Areas of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing

Active – It gets you out and about outside whether that is a short walk from your house or car, or on a longer walk

Connect - Connecting with other people who have signed up to the app

Notice – Being fully involved and aware of your surroundings as you search for the cache

Other information



Some caches might be located near enough a road or a flat track to be accessible for any level of mobility. Level of ability can vary depending on the cache's location and description.



Fun for all the family, you can choose level of difficulty caches to suit you.



From ½ hour + depending on your chosen cache and how far you are.



It's free!

So what is Geocaching?

Geocache quite simply means a combination of Earth, hiding, and technology combining the words Geo (Earth) and Cache (meaning a temporary storage location). Geocaching is a real-world outdoor treasure-hunting game using GPS enabled devices such as your phone. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates (like what you find on Google Maps when searching for a point of interest), and then attempt to find the Geocache hidden at this location. The Geo cache makes it easy in telling you how close you are.

Why?

Have you ever day dreamed about going on a hunt for treasure? Have you ever wanted to explore nearby locations or your area but not sure how or where, or the confidence to go wondering without purpose? Geocaching provides the opportunity to do just that, giving you the sense of purpose in setting out your front door.

It is a rewarding and a nice escape. You can easily forget that you may only just be down the road, in your local woods or in the park.



Taken from www.geocaching.com

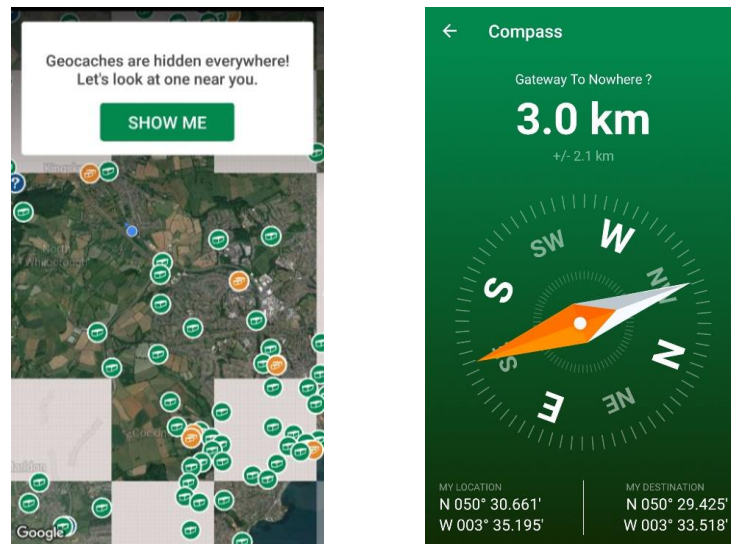
How do I start?

You can take these simple steps:

- Register online – you can do that here: <https://www.geocaching.com/play>
- Download the app on your smart phone
- Register
- Use your phone to find your nearest cache (using the search near me or location function)
- Go hunt!
- Log what you find on the app (And don't forget to take a pen/paper to record your findings for yourself!)

Now what?

When you have opened the App you can start searching for Geocaches in your local area. We'd recommend first looking for a cache that is pretty close to where you live. The Geo cache site/app provides a difficulty rating based on terrain and how hard it might be to find the cache once you're in the location. Some geocachers give hints about the location and appearance of the cache.



Taken from within the Geocaching app

When you click on the geocache you want to find you can start navigating. Here you can toggle between seeing the geocache in the form of a map/line and distance to where the cache is located, and switching to a compass.

Another benefit from using the Geocache app is that you can easily see comments from other players about their experiences on finding the cache and if there is anything you need to look out for (for example if it has been maintained or not). It is also useful to go through the comments to find pictures people have uploaded if you are finding it really tricky and you need another hint. Be warned, though, this does often give spoilers!

What should I expect?

Geocaches come in all sorts of ways from small camera film boxes to larger clip lock Tupperware very often camouflaged in varying ways to fit in the surroundings and help make them less easy to spot. One cache we found on our travels was in a container shaped like a rock. Without having a beady eye and using the hints it would have been impossible to find!



Not all Geocaches hide in Tupperware!

When you have found your cache, always take a sneak peek inside to see what little prizes have been left inside by other geocachers, and you can also sign your name on the 'logbook' which you will usually find stashed inside too. This is where you start to feel a sense of community, and feeling a part of a greater network. As well as logging your name physically, the App allows you to notify that you have found it and leave your own comment to help the next people and also alert the creator if it needs maintaining.

Do also persevere and have it in the back of your mind you may not find it the first time. It has certainly happened to us on a few occasions.

To make sure you get the best of the fun and avoid nasty surprises it is a good idea to know what you're heading in to and prepare for it by planning ahead.

Recommended essentials:

- A friend - or someone who knows where you're going
- Water
- Suncream (depending on the weather and how long you plan to go out for)
- Sturdy comfortable shoes, or wellies if it's wet!
- Gloves – you may want to protect your hands
- First aid kit
- Plenty of battery on your phone
- A torch depending on when you set out
- A map of the area if you have one