

Geocaching – A Modern Day Treasure Hunt

Geocaching (pronounced Geo-Cashing) is a relatively new pastime that is sweeping the world. It is part mind game, and part sport. Geocaching is a modern day treasure hunt. People create 'caches' all over the world, and post information as to their locations on websites, and in magazines. The people tracking the caches or treasures use GPS equipment to find the location, and the loot.

Unlike traditional treasure hunting when a cache is found you do not take it, unless you leave something else behind. Most caches have a log book in them, which finders are supposed to write in, detailing who they are, where they are from, when they found the cache, and any other details they may wish to leave. Some even leave tips and co-ordinates for tracking down other caches.

It may seem easy to find these caches given that you are provided with their co-ordinates, and you use GPS technology to pinpoint exactly where it is. However, geocaching is rarely easy, and half the fun of this sport is finding the perfect spot to place the cache. Hiding things in plain sight and camouflaging them so that someone not looking for it would not notice it are common techniques in geocaching. Also placing caches in difficult to reach areas is another fun part of the hunt, up trees, down cliffs, and under water are just a few of the ways in which items are hidden. You may need extra equipment and/or skills with which to find the cache.

Once found you may take an item if there are any, but remember to put one in its place! Items can range from small toys and trinkets, to money, and books. It is important to protect the treasures in the cache, so make sure that whatever you leave is in a sealed waterproof container. Do not move the cache unless it is specified in the log book that you should do so. Most caches are meant to be found again and again, and people tend to check on caches they have hidden from time to time. Finding theirs missing would be an upsetting experience.

Items found within the cache are sometimes meant to be moved, and there are many cases in which certain items have been

tracked across a continent, and even around the world! You can even use tracking codes placed on the item to check up on them from time to time. All you have to do is leave the instructions as to which site to leave the items location on, and then anyone who had previously found and moved the item can then track its progress over time.

While prizes are not exactly gold doubloons, and rubies like in pirate stories, they are fun to track and collect. If you are planning on leaving an item think carefully as to what you might like to find in a cache, and leave something along the same lines.

GPS technology can be a little pricey, try renting such equipment first, to try out geocaching and see if it is something you would be interested in. Some equipment is only around \$100, but if you are going to be going on more difficult geocaching trips then you will probably need equipment with more features, and capabilities.

Finally when looking for caches to track there are many websites to go to, one we recommend is www.geocaching.com. Not only can you search by country, state, province, and even postal code, it has great information on starting out, and links to groups who participate in such activities in your area. Who knows it may just be the fun and excitement you are looking for on the weekends!

Sources:

<http://www.geocaching.com/>

