

Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere

What is a Swap?

Swaps, the tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes, started long ago when Girl Scouts and Girl Guides first gathered for fun, song, and making new friends. Swaps were widely exchanged at national Girl Scout Senior Roundups in the 1950's and 1960's.

When you meet sister Girl Scouts at an event, you build new friendships and broaden your horizons. SWAPS—otherwise known as Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere or Shared with a Pal—are the items you bring to those events, and carry away to remember all the fun you had, and the new bonds you've made. Every time you trade SWAPS, you're sharing yourself in a unique way as you make new friends—two of the best things a Girl Scout can do!

What should our SWAP be? What should it say?

Making SWAPS allows you to be creative, express yourself, and make a truly special souvenir of sisterhood that will last forever. Almost anything can be incorporated into making SWAPS—the only limit is your imagination. The important thing to remember is that you want to make portable items that can be worn, displayed, or used.

When you make SWAPS, think about the kinds of things *you'd* like to receive from another Girl Scout to remember her by. You don't ever have to spend a lot of money, because the best SWAPS are handcrafted. Think of SWAPS as personalized mementos that tell the recipient about you, or commemorate an event that you attended, and you've got the right idea!

You might even work together with your troop to make SWAPS that you mail to Girl Scouts who live far away.

Remember to:

- Tell something about you or your group. (If it's okay with an adult, you might include your contact information so you can hear back from your Girl Scout sisters.)
- Represent your country, community, or local Girl Scout council.

Tips for Making SWAPS:

- Think about the kind of swap they would like to receive from someone else.
- Try not to spend a lot of money. Consider making something from donated or recycled material.
- Be creative, and take time to make handcrafted swaps. (You can even include directions for making the swap if it is a craft project that can be replicated.)
- Try to have one swap for each event participant and staff member. Leaders love to trade SWAPS, too!
- Plan ahead so there's time to make your SWAPS before a meet-up, event, or camping trip.
- Make swaps that can be worn, used, or displayed.
- Ask their group or service unit for help, if needed, in putting swaps together.
- Make swaps portable. Remember: Swaps must be carried (or shipped ahead to the event) where other girls will be carrying them away
- SWAPS do not have to have a pin. They can be bracelets, necklaces, council patches, event patches, or other small items.
- SWAPS should be rain proof.

What to do with your collected SWAPS?

Once you have your own collection of SWAPS, you'll want to think of a creative way to display them. This way, you can admire your collection of memories, and share it with others. Some ideas are:

- Make a display or scrapbook for travel night or troop visits.
- Keep swaps in a memory box or shadow box.
- Make a quilt, using swaps.
- You can have a special sash, necklace, lanyard, or hat to pin them on for display.
- Put pins and patches on a hat, jacket, or lanyard.
- Start a council best-of-swaps collection.

SWAP Safety and Etiquette:

- SWAPS to be traded should be carried in a baggie. SWAPS that are pinned to someone's hat, vest, lanyard...etc. are generally considered off-limits unless they are offered to you as a trade.
- Never refuse to swap with another person. If you already have the same swap from a different troop member, you can graciously decline stating the reason, but please still offer a SWAP to that person.
- Always say thank you! A Girl Scout is courteous.
- Swap face-to-face whenever possible.
- Avoid using glass and sharp objects in swaps.
- Follow all *Safety Activity Checkpoints* guidelines.
- Avoid using food products, unless they are individually wrapped.
- Have a few extra SWAPS on hand for those who don't have any to trade.

Making memories through sisterhood is such an important part of being a Girl Scout, and what better way to express this—and yourself—than with SWAPS?

SWAP resources:

GSUSA: <http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/traditions/swaps/>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com> (type Girl Scout Swaps in the search box.)

Making Friends.com: http://www.makingfriends.com/scouts/swap_scouts.htm

Deb's Tops In Swaps: <http://topsinswaps.com/>

My Swaps Collection: <http://myswapscollection.com/>

Scout Swaps.com: <http://www.scoutswaps.com>

SWAPS Online Groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gswoit/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/300337196804235/>

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Girl-Scout-Swaps/info>

