

Girl Scout Cookies

Sensitive Issues & Frequently Asked Questions

Booth-ready guidance and expanded answers for volunteers, families, and staff

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER

Girls and volunteers are never expected to debate sensitive social or political issues at a cookie booth. Be kind, give one factual response, and refer detailed questions to Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona.

Before You Respond: Protect the Girl Scout Experience

- Remain calm, courteous, and respectful.
- Keep adult conversations out of girls' hearing whenever possible.
- Do not allow customers to question, challenge, or debate girls about sensitive issues.
- Give one clear, factual response. Do not argue, speculate, or speak beyond what you know.
- It is always acceptable to say, 'I don't have all of that information, but our council would be happy to respond.'
- If someone becomes disruptive, end the conversation and notify the booth-site manager.
- If anyone feels threatened or unsafe, move the girls to safety and contact site security or law enforcement.
- Refer media inquiries to Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona. Girls and volunteers should not speak on behalf of the council.

A Graceful Way to End the Conversation

"Thank you for asking. We want to make sure you receive accurate information, and a cookie booth isn't the best place for a detailed conversation. You're welcome to contact Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona directly."

Quick Answers to Common Questions

Use these short responses at booths. If someone wants to continue the discussion, offer the council contact information and return the focus to the girls and their Cookie Program experience.

QUESTION	QUICK RESPONSE
Are Girl Scout Cookies safe?	Yes. Girl Scout Cookies are safe to consume and are produced in accordance with applicable food-safety standards and regulations.
What about reports of heavy metals and glyphosate?	Trace environmental contaminants may occur naturally throughout the food supply. These substances are not intentionally added to Girl Scout Cookies, and the licensed bakers have confirmed that the reported levels do not present a food-safety concern.
Does Girl Scouts partner with Planned Parenthood?	No. Neither Girl Scouts of the USA nor Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona has a relationship or partnership with Planned Parenthood. Cookie proceeds do not support Planned Parenthood.
Does Girl Scouts promote a particular religion?	No. Girl Scouts is a secular organization that welcomes girls and families from all faith traditions and belief systems. Members may connect the Promise and Law to their own beliefs.
Why does Girl Scouts use palm oil?	Palm oil provides needed texture and shelf life. Both licensed bakers use Mass Balance RSPO-certified palm oil and continue working toward more traceable and sustainable sourcing.
Do cookie proceeds leave Southern Arizona?	No. After the cost of the cookies is paid, all net proceeds remain within Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona to support troops, local programs, camps, volunteer services, and girl-led experiences.
Is Girl Scouts politically affiliated?	No. Girl Scouts is nonpartisan and does not endorse or oppose candidates or political parties. Girls may learn about government, civic engagement, and advocacy.
What does belonging mean in Girl Scouts?	It means creating a safe, welcoming environment where every member is treated with dignity and has an opportunity to participate, contribute, and thrive.
Why do cookies cost more here than somewhere else?	Each council sets its local price based on baker costs and the funding needed to deliver Girl Scout experiences in its community.

Expanded Answers

Are Girl Scout Cookies safe? What about reports of heavy metals and glyphosate?

Yes. Girl Scout Cookies are safe to consume and are produced in accordance with applicable food-safety standards and regulations.

Recent online reports have raised questions about trace levels of heavy metals and glyphosate. Heavy metals can occur naturally in soil, water, and air and may therefore be present in trace amounts in many plant-based foods. Glyphosate is widely used in agriculture and may be found in trace amounts throughout the food supply. These substances are not intentionally added to Girl Scout Cookies.

- GSUSA's licensed bakers have confirmed that the reported levels do not present a food-safety concern.
- There is currently no Girl Scout Cookie recall.
- If a confirmed safety issue ever arises, Girl Scouts and its licensed bakers will communicate promptly and provide clear instructions.

For additional information, refer customers to the current official GSUSA statement or Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona.

Does Girl Scouting support families of faith?

Yes. Girl Scouts welcomes girls and families from all faith traditions and belief systems.

Girl Scouts is a secular organization and does not teach or promote one religion. At the same time, Girl Scouts recognizes that faith and spirituality are meaningful to many families. Girls may deepen connections to their own beliefs through faith-community recognitions and the My Promise, My Faith pin.

- Members may substitute another word for 'God' in the Girl Scout Promise in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.
- Girl Scouts values longstanding relationships with religious organizations whose work is consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Does Girl Scouts have a relationship with Planned Parenthood?

No. Neither Girl Scouts of the USA nor Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona has a relationship or partnership with Planned Parenthood.

Girl Scout Cookie proceeds do not support Planned Parenthood. Girl Scouts remains focused on delivering leadership experiences for girls.

Did GSUSA distribute a Planned Parenthood brochure at a United Nations event?

No. This claim is false.

In 2010, GSUSA participated in the 54th Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. GSUSA had no knowledge of the brochure in question and played no role in distributing it.

What is Girl Scouts' position on abortion, birth control, and human sexuality?

Girl Scouts does not take a position on abortion or birth control and does not develop programming intended to promote a particular position on these issues.

Girl Scouts helps girls build self-confidence, decision-making skills, and healthy relationships. We believe sensitive family matters are best discussed between girls and their parents or caregivers. Locally developed programming involving sensitive subjects must follow council guidance and appropriate caregiver communication and permission requirements.

Why is palm oil used in Girl Scout Cookies?

Palm oil provides the texture, volume, stability, and shelf life needed in baked products, often without adding trans fats.

Girl Scouts recognizes the serious concerns surrounding deforestation, labor practices, and traceability in global palm-oil supply chains. Girl Scouts does not support child labor or environmental exploitation.

- Both licensed bakers use Mass Balance RSPO-certified palm oil and display the RSPO 'Mixed' certification label.
- Mass Balance certification supports certified sustainable production, but it does not mean every unit of palm oil in a particular package is physically segregated and traceable to one certified source.
- The bakers continue working toward fully segregated certified palm oil and improved supply-chain transparency.

Girls may ask thoughtful questions or advocate for change. Participation in the Cookie Program is an individual family and troop decision.

Why not offer whole-wheat, sugar-free, organic, low-carb, or other specialty cookies?

Girl Scout Cookies are produced during a limited annual baking period, which makes small specialty runs difficult and costly.

Demand has not been sufficient to make every specialty option feasible. GSUSA and its licensed bakers continue to review customer needs and food trends. Customers should always check the current package label for ingredients, nutrition information, and dietary suitability.

What should we say about allergies, gluten-free cookies, vegan ingredients, kosher, or halal certification?

Always direct customers to the current package label and official baker information. Never promise that a cookie is 'allergy-safe.'

Recipes, ingredients, facilities, and certifications can change. Some cookies may be made with vegan ingredients or certified gluten-free, kosher, or halal, but availability and certification vary by baker and variety.

- The ingredient statement identifies ingredients contained in the cookie.
- A shared-facility statement warns that other allergens may also be present in the manufacturing environment.
- Customers with serious allergies should make their own decision using the package label and guidance from their healthcare provider.

Do Girl Scout Cookies contain GMOs?

Some Girl Scout Cookie ingredients may be produced from genetically modified crops.

Customers seeking detailed ingredient information should review the current package label and the licensed baker's website. Volunteers should not make health or safety claims beyond the published information.

Where does the money from Girl Scout Cookie purchases go?

After the cost of the cookies is paid, all net proceeds remain within Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona.

The money supports troop activities, girl rewards, camps, council programs, volunteer services, community projects, and other local Girl Scout experiences. Cookie proceeds are not donated to outside organizations and are not sent to GSUSA as cookie-sale proceeds.

Can Girl Scouts raise money for another organization, political candidate, or cause?

Girl Scouts and volunteers may not use the Cookie Program or the Girl Scout name to raise money for political candidates, political parties, or outside organizations.

Girl Scouts may participate in approved service projects, learn about community needs, and advocate for issues. Fundraising and donations must follow council and GSUSA policies.

What is Girl Scouts' position on politics?

Girl Scouts is nonpartisan. As an organization, Girl Scouts does not endorse or oppose political candidates or parties.

Girl Scouts may learn about government, participate in civic engagement, and advocate on issues affecting girls and their communities. Individual members may hold and express their own political views, but they may not present those views as the official position of Girl Scouts or use Girl Scout participation to support a candidate or party.

What does diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging mean in Girl Scouts?

It means creating an environment where every member is treated with dignity and has an opportunity to participate, contribute, and thrive.

Girl Scouts welcomes girls and families across differences in race, ethnicity, religion, culture, economic background, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and family structure, consistent with Girl Scout membership and council policies. Inclusion is not a partisan position; it reflects the Girl Scout Law's commitments to being considerate and caring, respecting ourselves and others, and being a sister to every Girl Scout.

Why do cookie prices vary among councils?

Each local Girl Scout council sets its cookie price.

Prices reflect local baker costs and the funding needed to provide troop proceeds, girl rewards, camps, programming, volunteer support, financial assistance, and other Girl Scout opportunities. Troops and individual sellers may not change, discount, or add to the council-established price.

Why are some cookies different or called different names in other areas?

GSUSA licenses two commercial bakers to produce Girl Scout Cookies, and councils select which licensed baker serves their area.

Some cookies have similar recipes but different names, while other varieties are available from only one baker. Customers should use the package and local cookie materials for the current Southern Arizona lineup.

Why are Girl Scout Cookies sold for only a limited time?

The Cookie Program is a seasonal, girl-led entrepreneurship program rather than a year-round retail business.

A limited season helps girls set goals, build a plan, practice customer service, manage money, and evaluate their results within a defined program experience.

Are Girl Scout Cookie purchases tax-deductible?

Usually, a customer who receives cookies is making a retail purchase, not a charitable contribution.

If a customer pays for cookies and leaves them with Girl Scouts for an approved donation program, the customer may be able to treat the payment as a charitable contribution. Volunteers should not provide personal tax advice; customers should consult their tax professional.

What happens to cookies left at the end of the season?

Council and troops work carefully to manage inventory and minimize unsold cookies.

Any remaining cookies are added to our robust Care 2 Share programs that provides cookies, via generous community support, to veterans, active duty military, hometown heroes and those in need. Volunteers should not promise a particular disposition unless it is part of a council-approved program.

When to Stop and Refer the Question

- The customer wants to debate or repeatedly challenges the response.
- The question concerns an individual girl, family, volunteer, or troop.
- The person asks about membership eligibility, gender identity, accommodations, or confidential circumstances.
- The person identifies themselves as a reporter or asks for an official council statement.
- The person alleges harm, threatens legal action, or asks about an active complaint or lawsuit.
- You are unsure whether the information you have is current.
- The conversation is affecting girls, customers, booth operations, or anyone's sense of safety.

Primary Reference Links

- **GSUSA Cookie Frequently Asked Questions:** <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/cookies/how-to-buy-cookies/cookies-frequently-asked-questions.html>
- **GSUSA: Girl Scout Promise and Law:** <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/discover/about-us/what-girl-scouts-do/promise-and-law.html>
- **GSUSA: Important Update on Cookie Ingredients (February 2025):** <https://blog.girlscouts.org/2025/02/an-important-update-for-our-members-and.html>