

Geocaching!

Another way to enjoy Four Wheel Driving

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices with Datum set to WGS84 (the standard for geocaching). The GPS needs to be a portable unit so you can take it from the vehicle and walk with it.

From a 4WDing point of view geocaching can you give you added incentive to get out there and explore a particular tourist site, location or feature as many caches are placed at these locations. For example the 1945 Beaufort Bomber plane crash site on the north side of Mt Tawonga on the Eskdale Spur in the Kiewa Valley has a cache located there.

Never heard of geocaching?

Geocaching (pronounced geo-cashing by Americans, Ozzies might pronounce it a bit differently) is a worldwide game of hiding and seeking treasure.

The basic idea is to hide containers (caches – typically small, lunchbox size, plastic waterproof containers) and post the locations of these caches on the Internet. Anyone with a GPS receiver can enter the locations' coordinates to find the caches and then log the caches at <www.geocaching.com> to show that they've found them.

Geocaching participants include people from all age groups, including families with children, students, adults and retirees. It is a worldwide activity with a strong sense of community and support for the environment. Since September of 2000, geocaching has grown from 75 caches in several countries to hundreds of thousands of caches all over the world. There are currently 820,273 active geocaches around the world.

How does GPS Work?

Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers tap into a satellite network from anywhere in the world to accurately pinpoint specific geographic locations. A location is identified by measuring its distance from at least three satellites by a process called trilateration. A geocacher can place a cache anywhere in the world, pinpoint its location using GPS technology and then alert others to the cache's existence and location via the Internet <www.geocaching.com>. Anyone with a handheld GPS receiver (with Datum set to WGS84) can then hunt for the cache.

How to Get Started

When you're ready to go, just follow these steps:

1. Download the Geocaching App or visit <www.geocaching.com>.
2. Create a *free* account. Use a nickname as your User Name. **Note:** Once registered you can then put in your home co-ordinates and any caches searched for will indicate how far (*straight line distance*) and what direction they are from your home location.
3. Select the geocache you want to find, then navigate to its location
4. Once you find it, sign the logbook and put it back exactly how you found it
5. Tap the "Found It" button in the App or log your find online at <www.geocaching.com>.
6. Invite a friend and find another one!

Geocaching in Four Easy Steps

1. On the Home Page of <www.geocaching.com> click Play > Hide & Seek a Cache on the menu bar. A rather complicated search window appears. Just select 'Australia' in the drop down menu next to Country and hit 'Go'. On the next screen that appears (Advance Search) it will show Country 'Australia' and two other selections above that. Leave 'All Geocaches' selected. The one that says 'By State/Country' click on the up and down arrows and select 'By Postcode' — wait, the screen will change, then enter Wangaratta's postcode 3677 then click the Search for Geocaches button and a list of all caches within a 40km radius of Wangaratta appears on 36 pages, 20 to a page i.e. 720 caches within 40km of Wangaratta. If you then click on a cache link a page appears with all information relating to that cache. Scroll to the bottom and click on the Google Map and you will be able to view the actual location.
2. Choose any cache from the list and click on its name.
3. Enter the coordinates (waypoint) of a cache into your GPS receiver using latitude and longitude. **Note#1:** Geocaching uses Degrees and decimal Minutes not D,M&S. **Note#2:** If your GPS interfaces with a computer then Caches can be downloaded directly to them (check your manual). To manually do it mark any waypoint then edit the co-ordinates of that waypoint. Again check your manual on how to edit waypoints.
4. Follow the direction arrow on the receiver until you find the hidden cache. **Note:** Print out the information about the cache from the website page so you know what to look for and where to look. They often have very helpful hints.

Simple Rules of Geocaching

- If you take something from the cache, leave something of equal or greater value.
- Write about your find in the cache logbook.
- Log your find at <www.geocaching.com>

Keep In Mind

- Caches should never be buried.
- Don't put yourself or others in harm's way.
- Don't place items such as food, explosives, knives, drugs or alcohol in a cache.
- Caches are intended to be enjoyed by people of all ages.
- Respect local laws and seek permission where needed.
- Review our <www.geocaching.com> cache listing requirements and guidelines before hiding a cache.

Before You Go

- Find a cache that will meet your immediate goals. Are you looking for a difficult hike or an easy adventure?
- Print cache information (don't forget the hints) and make sure to bring both a map and compass.
- Remember that distances can be deceiving. A cache can take longer to find depending on trails, rivers and other obstacles.
- Pack any needed supplies such as water, food and extra clothing. Check cache terrain and difficulty ratings.
- Let someone know where you are going.
- Don't forget your GPS receiver and extra batteries.

Finding a Cache

- Mark your car as a waypoint to ensure your safe return.
- Be mindful of the environment, practice cache in trash out.
- Bring friends and family with you; sharing the experience can be very rewarding.
- Pets are usually welcome, too – except in National Parks!

After the Find

- Sign the cache logbook.
- Leave the cache as you found it (hidden, of course).
- Log your find at <www.geocaching.com> Found it! Didn't find it

Cache In – Trash Out

Cache In Trash Out is a worldwide environmental clean-up effort supported by the geocaching community

Types of Caches

- **Traditional:** The original cache type consisting, at minimum, of a container and a logbook. The coordinates listed on a traditional cache page describe the exact location for the cache.
- **Multi-cache:** A multi-cache involves two or more locations. Hints are found in the initial cache(s) and then the final location is typically a physical cache container.
- **Puzzle cache:** A cache that involves a puzzle or puzzles, sometimes complicated, that you must solve to determine the coordinates of the cache.
- **Event cache:** Geocaching events organized by local geocachers and geocaching organisations. Listings contain coordinates, a date and time to meet.

Want More Information?

Visit <www.geocaching.com> to learn how to:

- Locate caches in your area
- Create your own caches
- Locate resources and recommendations
- Play variations of the game
- Find geocachers and events

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Article sourced with thanks from Geocaching.com and submitted by Paul L'Huillier (member from Mount Beauty)