

California Dreamin' Camporee 2012



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This holiday has been the most exciting thing that I have ever done. I didn't even know that you could do this sort of thing with guides until a year ago. I was lucky enough to get chosen to go to San Francisco in California to attend California Dreamin' Girl Scout Camporee to celebrate 100 years of girl scouting in Northern California.

We flew with british airways and we went on a ten hour flight from Heathrow to San Francisco airport. We all enjoyed the flight as we got to know each other much better. When we arrived in C.A, we were met by three of the camp staff. They were very nice and they absolutely loved our accents. We then had a two hour drive to get to know them. They thought that we all drive mini coopers and drink tea and scones. We all found it very funny.



When we finally arrived at the camp, we got given our tents and told to meet at HQ afterwards for a barbeque. After we had put our tents up we went to HQ thinking of nice chargrilled burgers and sausages. However, we were in for a shock as we found out that our BBQ was a takeaway from Dickies BBQ pit! This surprised all of us as we had never heard of a takeaway BBQ before. We soon found out that it was really nice. We ate with the crew as we were the only patrol there. Everybody else was coming the next day. After a 32 hour day we were all shattered and went to bed early.

The next day all the other guides and girl scouts from all over the world started arriving. We went shopping into Pleasanton and had lunch out at Gay 90's. We got back to the campsite to find the field full of excited girls. The camp had been split up into several sub camps and we were part of Treasure Island.

The opening ceremony took place the next day. Each patrol had a flag, logo or banner which was displayed on the stage along with each countrys flag. Our banner was full of ducks as we were known as "The Bucks Ducks!". The aims of the camp were:

- To meet new friends
- To have new experiences

After lunch we began to set up our home display table. Ours contained a hook-a-duck game with duck whistles for prizes and swaps as well as badges and pins. I really enjoyed the home display and swaps as I made new friends and learnt lots of things. I also got around 60 new badges to sew onto my camp blanket!

My chosen activities whilst at the camp were:

- Making friendship bracelets. I really enjoyed this because it gave me a chance to sit and talk to other girls. I met loads of American guides and some Canadian guides. The American guides had loads of questions about England such as what did we eat and drink, what music did we like, what hobbies did we do and did it really rain all of the time.
- Surfing. I went surfing at Santa Cruz beach. There were only 7 people who did this activity. I managed to stand up on my board which I was pleased with. During this activity I met my now new American friend Katie. It was Katie who told me about the ice cream shop where they sold Ice creams as big as your head!! (We managed to persuade the bus driver to stop there on the way back to camp). One of the coolest things about this day was that I saw a sea lion swimming in the sea just near us while we were surfing.
- Fencing. This was something I had never ever tried before but that I really wanted to have a go at. We had to wear special equipment to keep us safe but it was unbelievably hot. After we had been taught some basic moves we had a go at competing against each other.
- Scuba diving. We were the shown how to use the diving equipment and were then let loose in the tank to go around fishing for rubber crabs!

Two other really fun activities that the whole camp took part in were a base ball game and a trip to the Santa Cruz beach boardwalk. I loved the board walk. The Bucks Ducks mostly spent time there with our host patrol called Le Golden Oreos. We went on loads of rides with them and they showed us all the really nice food such as corn dogs and bananas dipped in chocolate.

During the camp there were all sorts of other things going on like challenges. One of these was a breakfast challenge and we



had to make two dishes with four set ingredients plus one other of our choice. The Bucks Ducks made a rice pudding cheesecake and a Cypriot salad. However the judges thought ours was yuck because they didn't like rice pudding but we didn't mind losing because our host patrol won.

Another challenge was a California Chaos where the sub camps competed against each other with some really funny tasks such as how quick can you melt a t-shirt and knocking over ping pongs with a yo-yo attached to your trousers!!!!

On the last day of the camp there was a California Carnival. Really this was like a big party to celebrate a great week at the camp. There were bungee trampolines, water slides, a bouncy castle, climbing wall and other stalls where you could make ice cream floats, get henna tattoos (which is what I got). We also did candle dipping so we would have candles to use at the closing ceremony. This was the day I woke up feeling a bit poorly but Sian sent me back to bed for half an hour extra sleep but I woke up four hours later.....but I did feel much better and back to my normal self.

The closing ceremony was a bit sad and it made me cry a bit because I was sad it was over and I was sad I was going to have to leave all of my new friends. We all lit our candles from a giant candle which was to symbolise the spirit of the camp to live on even though the week was over. We were all also given some of the ashes from the final campfire in a little wallet so that we could take a little bit of our camp home with us.

Luckily for the Bucks Ducks that wasn't the end of our trip. Our lovely guiders took us to San Francisco for a few extra days holiday. We went to Macey's for lunch and we were then allowed to go shopping. After shopping we sat in the middle of union square chatting. All of a sudden we saw a big bus pull up right in front of us. It was a duck bus - a bus that could go on land and in the water!!! We were so excited and so happy that Sue had arranged this surprise for us. After getting another duck whistle we went on. The bus drove around and then drove down a ramp into the water. Once we were in the middle of the bay we were allowed to drive the duck, it was so much fun.

The next day we made pancakes for breakfast and then took a tram to the bike shop where we picked up our bikes and maps. We then set off for a nine mile bike ride across Golden Gate Bridge. Unfortunately it was uphill all the way but it was definitely worth it just for the view.

The next day we went to U.S.P Alcatraz. It was so interesting. My favourite part was when we got locked in a cell and when I saw the wax heads. I bought lots of souvenirs from U.S.P Alcatraz as that was my favourite part of the holiday. When we got back we went shopping along the pier and made our way over to Chinatown. This was where we ate our last supper.

The next morning we packed up our stuff and had just about enough time to go to the cheesecake factory. We got back to the hostel, checked out and then went on our minibus to the airport.

The flight home took another 10 hours. We were all very tired on the journey home because we had been so busy and had all had such a fantastic time. My trip was amazing I have made lots of friends and have loads of great memories of the camp. I have made a scrap book of all my favourite memories to help me remember this experience.

I am so glad that I experienced this amazing opportunity and am so glad I did this through guides. This trip was absolutely amazing from start to finish.

