

A Guide to Organising a Trip Away for the IOG

ORGANISER'S ROLE

Remember: You're volunteering for this and not getting paid. You're making the event happen, but don't end up running around trying to make everyone happy. Make sure you have fun too!

This document primarily covers planning for a YHA hostel trip, but most of it would apply to any trip.

MONTHS BEFORE

Discuss with the programme organiser or the Chairperson what you would like to do. Make sure it gets on the programme well in advance so there is plenty of time for it to be advertised (typically 3 months). Be aware that hostels may need to be booked well in advance in busy holiday periods.

Consider having a limit on the number of people (about 20). Some trips are exceptions (e.g. Easter).

Send out an email describing the event in more detail. Be clear about the activities available (type and difficulty). Say what the deposit is and that it is non-refundable, unless the space can be allocated to another person.

Also, put out a request for people to volunteer to plan and lead walks. Consider who's going on the trip and the level of activities that are appropriate for the group.

MONEY PART 1

This is the big concern for organisers. For some events (e.g. Latitude), each person buys their own ticket. For a hostel trip, the organiser usually collects the money and pays it all together.

When you book places at a hostel, they will want a deposit by a certain date. Make it clear that anyone who wants to come must get their deposit to you at least a week before the due date. Again, make sure that they know their deposit is non-refundable (i.e. if they change their mind, they won't get the deposit back unless their place can be reallocated). Keep a record of all money paid.

Avoid paying the YHA a deposit for a person who hasn't paid you because they may not come after all. You may find that you get fewer deposits than your original booking. Most hostels are fine with this. They just reduce the booking to the new number.

Please note: The IOG will not underwrite any trip or money paid out. It's the organiser's responsibility to obtain deposits/full balances from participants before the money is due to be paid.

Some people may book individually by arranging things directly with the hostel. Ask these people to let you know, so you can keep them informed about changed plans.

Send out an email saying who has paid the deposit (just so everything is clear).

MONEY PART 2

Nearer the time, you need to collect the full amount. Again, make sure this is in well in advance of when you have to pay the YHA the final amount. (See note above.)

If anyone pulls out now, encourage them to find a replacement or they won't get their deposit back.

Send out an email saying who has paid the full amount (just so everything is clear).

FOOD

The organiser will usually ask if anyone would like to partake in a breakfast box. This is a box of basic essentials: milk, bread, butter, tea and coffee. Often some cereals, spreads and other bits and pieces are included. If you're not sure how much of everything you need, ask someone who's done it before. The last person who ran a trip away may still have items from the previous breakfast box (but check that the contents are still within the use-by date and are ok to consume). You'll need to make a charge per person from whoever has requested the breakfast box.

Sometimes the hostel booking will include breakfast or dinner provided by them. A limited breakfast box for tea/coffee is still useful even if breakfast is included.

Tell people what the food plans are for all meals and remind them to bring packed lunch food.

A FEW WEEKS BEFORE

You should now have some people prepared to lead walks. If not, then email out a reminder, especially asking for leaders for easy walks if necessary. Consider asking people to plan walks in advance.

Send out a final email with any last minute details and a list of those going. Include your mobile number and the hostel telephone number.

It's NOT your responsibility to sort out transport for people to get there; this is for the attendees to do, although that doesn't stop you if you want to help.

ARRIVAL

People should let you know if they are going to be late. Hostel reception usually closes at around 11pm. Ask them what mobile reception is like there and check if they mind handing on messages.

WALKING

Ideally, there should be one walk each day that is relatively easy. If all of the walks are hard, then some of the newcomers may be left at the hostel with no one to walk with. Ideally, everyone's needs should be considered, but it's really up to the attendees to sort themselves out.

Walks should be managed as per the *IOG Walking Best-Practice Guidelines*. It's the walk leader's responsibility to complete the *IOG Risk Assessment Template* if required, but it's up to everyone to check that it's been done.

GENERAL

If someone does not seem to know anyone, then say hello and introduce them to others. We aim to be a friendly group and get everyone involved.

In a nutshell:

- Make sure you don't end up paying out for others.
- You don't have to sort everything out. Encourage people to think for themselves.
- Make sure there is an easy walk for the new or less-confident people.
- Leave a good impression at the YHA – we may want to visit again.