

Questions about Palm Oil

Navigating Questions About Palm Oil in Girl Scout Cookies

For Girl Scout volunteers to use with families, older girls, and customers

Thank you for all you do for girls. We know you're often at the forefront of your communities when it comes to questions about Girl Scouts, so we're making sure you have the most accurate and updated information about the palm oil industry and Girl Scout Cookies. We're aware of the potential concerns you, your Girl Scouts, their families, and your cookie customers have about palm oil in our cookies, and we take the matter seriously.

Here are some talking points you can use with families, older girls, and customers if questions arise:

- We're aware of the concerns about how palm oil is gathered. To be clear, GSUSA does not support the use of child labor in the production of Girl Scout Cookies. We have worked with, and continue to work with, our bakers to increase the transparency and sustainability of our production lines and ingredient sourcing. If certain suppliers are not following safety and ethical standards, we rely on our bakers and the [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#), of which Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) is an affiliate member, to take action.
- The world's food supply is intricately tied to the use of palm oil, which is an ingredient found in the majority of baked snacks sold in the United States. Although we continue to explore alternatives, currently, there are no viable or readily available alternatives for use in the production of Girl Scout Cookies.
- Palm oil is used in many of the products on supermarket shelves, from margarine and chocolate to ice cream, soaps, cosmetics, and fuel for cars and power plants. It's smooth and odorless, making it an ideal ingredient for foods such as baked goods. It also has a natural preservative effect that extends the shelf life of foods.
- Because few alternatives exist and palm oil is used widely in the food industry, we believe promoting proper manufacturing principles is our responsibility. We have worked to ensure that our ingredients are part of an ethical supply chain, and we rely on our bakers and the RSPO to ensure that our suppliers are following safety and ethical standards.
- The RSPO is a nonprofit organization of growers, buyers, manufacturers, conservationists, and other interested parties striving to develop and follow best practices to ensure an ethical supply chain.
- The RSPO's mission includes advancing the production of sustainable palm oil products, establishing global standards for the palm oil supply chain, and engaging and ensuring that all stakeholders are aligning to these standards. The RSPO has banned the use of child labor since its founding, and it established clear standards and protocols, including age verification, to protect children's rights.
- Palm oil is an agricultural commodity, similar to flour, soy, and sugar. Although it's easier to trace commodities in global supply chains today thanks to technology and data collection, tracing bulk commodities, such as palm oil, remains complex and a large investment of time and resources for companies.
- GSUSA's licensed baker partners, ABC Bakers and Little Brownie Bakers (LBB) use Mass Balance RSPO certified palm oil (i.e. RSPO "Mixed" certification label), which supports sustainable palm oil production practices. Both bakers' future goal is to achieve 100% RSPO-segregated certified palm oil products for all Girl Scout Cookies they produce. They continue to work with their suppliers to explore strategies and timeline to achieve this goal.
- Little Brownie Bakers (LBB) is managed by Ferrara, a related company of the global manufacturer Ferrero Group. Ferrero Group received the highest certification level afforded by the World Wildlife Fund for sustainable practices.
- For more information from our licensed bakers, visit their websites: [Little Brownie Bakers](#) and [ABC Bakers](#).
- Read more from the [RSPO](#).
- To talk with Girl Scouts about Palm Oil, look for the [Palm Oil Toolkit](#) – Volunteer guide and resource for girls on the GSCO website.