

## **Girl Scout Cookies and Palm Oil**

**Updated October 2021**

### **Product FAQ:**

#### **Q: Why does Girl Scouts use palm oil in their cookies?**

Palm oil is an ingredient found in the majority of baked snacks sold in the United States. Per GSUSA's licensed bakers, it continues to be necessary to use palm oil in our cookies to ensure their shelf life, to bring you the highest quality products, and to serve as an alternative to trans fats. While we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time, there are no viable or readily available alternatives on the market.

#### **Q: Why can't you replace the palm oil?**

The world's food supply is intricately tied to the use of palm oil, so we believe promoting proper manufacturing principles is the most responsible approach to how Girl Scouts and Girl Scout Cookie development is advanced. While we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time, there are no viable or readily available alternatives on the market that would enable us to simply swap the palm oil for an alternative oil.

#### **Q: What actions is GSUSA taking to prevent child labor?**

To be very clear, child labor has no place in the production of Girl Scout Cookies. If certain suppliers are not following best practices, we expect our bakers and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), of which GSUSA is an affiliate member, to take action quickly to rectify those exceptions.

#### **Q. Are GSUSA's licensed bakers removing Palm Oil from Girl Scout Cookies?**

We are pleased to share that Girl Scout Cookies baked by both Little Brownie Bakers and ABC Bakers use Mass Balance RSPO certified palm oil and include the RSPO Mass Balance logo on their packaging (i.e. RSPO "Mixed" certification label). 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.

#### **Q: Does GSUSA belong to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)?**

Yes, GSUSA is an affiliate member of RSPO.

#### **Q. What does being an affiliate member of RSPO mean?**

GSUSA has been a member of the RSPO for almost ten years, As an affiliate member, GSUSA supports the RSPO's vision and efforts to promote the growth and use of sustainable palm oil products.

**Q: Why should I buy Girl Scout Cookies?**

When you buy Girl Scout Cookies, you support Girl Scouts and you power amazing experiences and life-changing opportunities for girls year-round—from awesome trips to community projects to outdoor adventures. Through your support, you help Girl Scouts build essential skills as they begin to think like entrepreneurs and learn to take the lead, both now and in the future. Girls gain these skills from working with others, setting goals, and connecting with customers. It's about the experience a girl has running her very own cookie business, gaining [five essential skills](#) (goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics) as she learns to think like an entrepreneur. Because proceeds from your purchase stay local, you also help create positive change in your community.

**Program FAQ****Q. What is GSUSA doing about Girl Scout troops boycotting cookie sales?**

Girl Scouting teaches girls to stand up for what they believe is right and just, and to take a position on improving the world around them; not only for themselves but for those who can't speak for themselves.

We applaud girls for standing up for an issue they are passionate about. Girl Scouts of the USA and **[Girl Scout Council]** shares this passion and do not support or endorse the use of child labor. However, a very effective way to advocate for change is by belonging to organizations, such as RSPO, who advocate for and enforce these ethical standards in the parts of the world where we are not present. We hope that our commitment to doing what is right is seen by our girls as our joint commitment for improvement.

Each year, it is up to each individual troop and girl to decide if they will participate in the cookie program – a program that helps power life-changing programs, experiences, and learning all year long. We hope that through gaining a deeper understanding around palm oil use, Girl Scouts join us to use our voices to find productive ways to take action against this global issue, and continue to be Girl Scout Strong.

**Are there any program materials to help Girl Scouts understand the challenges around Palm Oil?**

Yes! Girl Scouts of the USA and RSPO have released a palm oil toolkit to help interested Girl Scouts dive deeper into the topic of palm oil and fully understand the issue. Please contact your Girl Scout Council to learn more.