

How to Survive a Nerd Convention

Going to a nerd convention like Comic-Con can be one of the most exciting and memorable experiences of your life! If you're not careful, however, it can also sometimes be overwhelming. But, you don't need to worry! As long as you create a...

Part 1 of 3:

Creating a Schedule



Download the convention's app and event schedule. Many conventions, particularly the large ones in major cities, will have an app with all the information you could ever want, including maps of the convention, an event schedule, discounts, and information about the location of medical services and restrooms.^[1]

1. If the convention doesn't have an app, it will most likely still have a website or social media page where you can find a schedule.

2.



Make a schedule of what you want to see most. Once you've looked through the schedule, you'll need to decide what you want to see most at the convention and make sure there are no scheduling conflicts. This will help you narrow the list of events you'd like to attend to your top priorities.^[2]

1. You'll need to take travel time into consideration when you're making your schedule, so be sure to check your map to see how far apart the events you want to see are and ensure you'll have enough time to get from one to the next.
2. Once you've made a schedule, you should also create a second schedule with the remaining events so you have a backup in case events are cancelled or the line is too long.

3.



Start a shared calendar online with the rest of the members of your group. If you're going to the convention with a group, you should share your calendar with them online. That way they can add events they want to see and you can decide as a group which events you would all like to attend together.^[3]

1. To do this, you can make a Google Doc or Google Calendar that lists the events you want to see along with their times and locations.

4.



Find a map of the convention so you can locate each event before you go. You should be able to find a map of the convention on the convention's app or on its website. Download the map, print it out, and mark down all the events you'd like to attend on it. That way, you can find the best route between events and gauge your travel time from one event to another beforehand. This should help you feel less stressed going into the convention.^[4]

Part 2 of 3:

Packing the Essentials

1.



Use a sturdy backpack. Check your convention's guidelines regarding backpacks before bringing one. Most allow them, but some have specific requirements regarding size and opacity (you might need to get a clear one). Regardless, make sure it's sturdy and doesn't rip easily. The last thing you want is to have to carry around a backpack with broken straps.^[5]



Bring something to charge your phone. Keeping your phone charged is absolutely essential. If your phone dies, you won't be able to stay in contact with your group if you're separated or take pictures of the convention. Bring along a portable phone charger, an extra battery, or both.^[6]

1. If you bring a phone charger and plan on searching for an outlet at the convention, it may be a good idea to bring a power strip. That way, if someone is using an outlet you need, you can both use it.



Pack snacks and water. You'll need to keep your energy up throughout the day, so be sure to pack some snacks you can munch on between events. You should also bring water to stay hydrated. This is especially important if you decide to attend in costume, because the costume will probably make you overheat and

you'll dehydrate more quickly.

1. If you want to be more environmentally conscious, you should bring a non-disposable water bottle rather than a disposable plastic one. A non-disposable bottle will also most likely be insulated and hold more water.
2. There will most likely be food and drink vendors at the convention, but it's a good idea to pack snacks anyway. You may not have time to stop at a vendor or you could spend all your money.



Include a change of clothes if you'll be wearing a costume. It's a good idea to pack a second set of clothes, even if you think your costume will be comfortable. You never know what you'll feel like after hours of wearing your costume and running from one event to another.^[7]

1. You should at the very least pack a pair of comfortable shoes.



Bring a day's worth of cash rather than cards. Conventions are a great place to spend all the money you have in your bank account and max out your credit cards to boot. Rather than leave the convention loaded

down with enough swag to comfort you when you can't make rent, just don't bring your cards. Pack a set amount of cash instead, so that you only spend a reasonable amount of money.^[8]

Part 3 of 3:

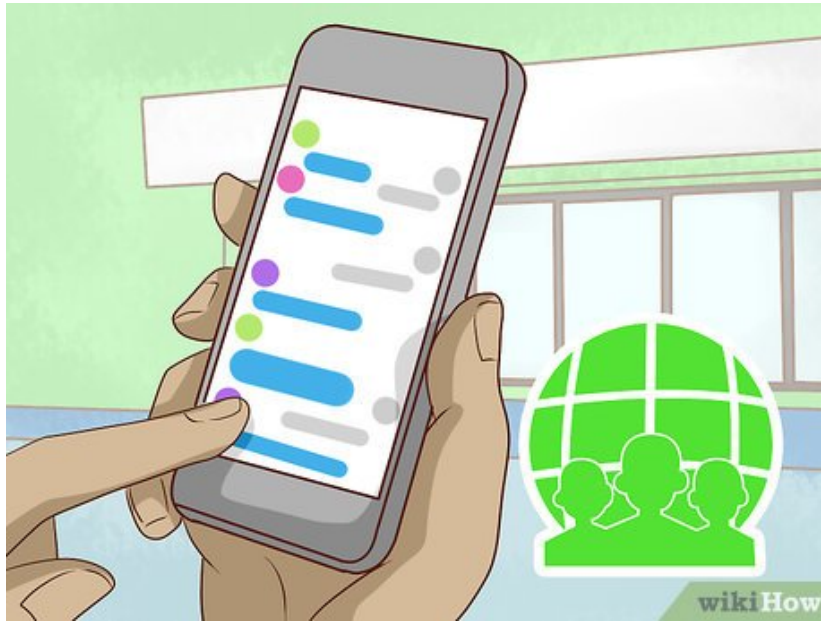
Enjoying the Convention



Wear comfortable clothes. Don't wear anything too tight. This is especially important in regards to your shoes. You'll be standing for most of the day, and shoes that pinch your toes or don't have enough arch support can be the difference between seeing everything you want to see and going back to your hotel room early to wallow in your pain.^[9]

1. Try to wear a loose-fitting pair of pants, a shirt that fits comfortably, and fluffy socks. Sweatpants or gym shorts work particularly well.
2. Avoid belts. They'll just dig into your skin and make you more and more uncomfortable as the day wears on.

2.



Keep track of your group using a group chat or location sharing app. Start a group chat with everyone in your party on the messaging app of your choice. This will help everyone keep in touch if you get unintentionally separated. You should also consider using a location sharing app like Find My Friends, because your group members might not be able to message the group chat depending on what they're doing at the time.^[10]

1. You should also decide on a location you can meet at if you get separated and your phones are dead.

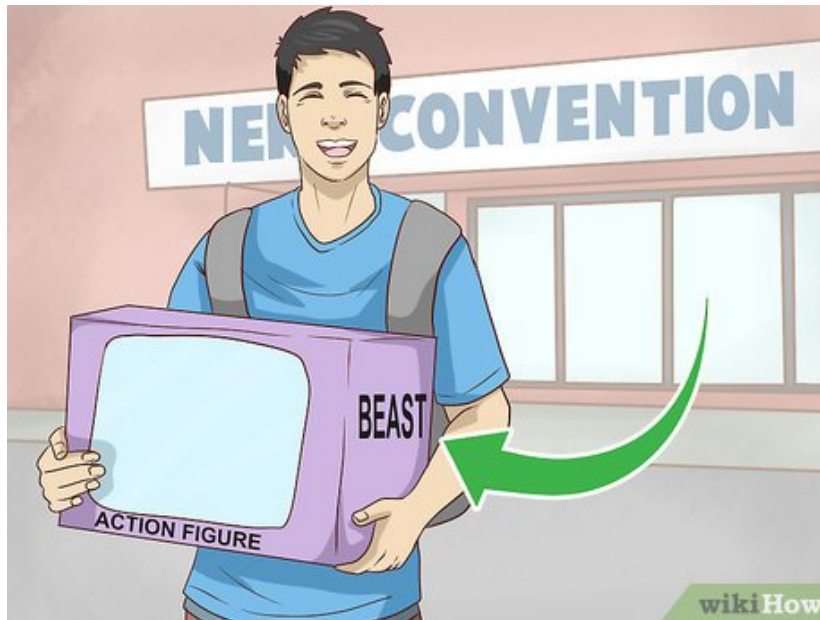
3.



Be prepared to wait in line. However long you may think a line might take, add two hours, even if you think it's an obscure event that no one will be interested in.^[11] Be prepared to have to amuse yourself in between events. You should also use your line-waiting time as an opportunity to charge your phone.

1. Try playing Where's Waldo or I-Spy with your group and look for specific character costumes.^[12]
2. If you're not with someone, play a game on your phone or strike up a conversation with your line neighbors.^[13]

4.



Buy larger items at the end of the day. If you see something that you want to buy that looks heavy or cumbersome, wait until the end of the day and then come back. That way you don't have to lug it around with you while you're going to different events.^[14]

1. This will also give you some time to ruminate on whether or not it would have just been an impulse buy and decide if you really want it.

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