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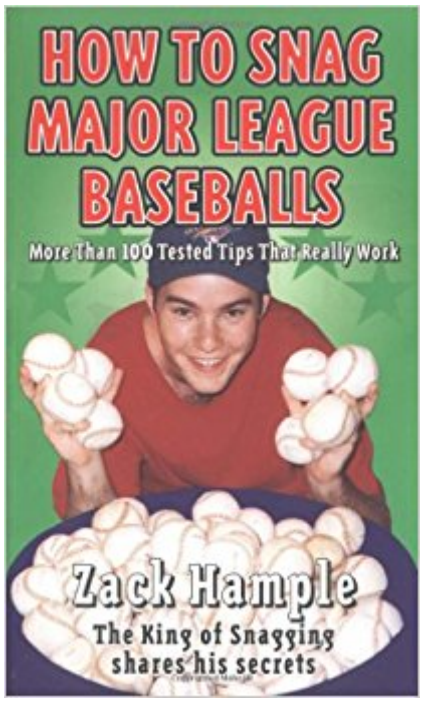
# How To Snag Major League Baseballs: More Than 100 Tested Tips That Really Work

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## Synopsis

THERE'S A BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL OUT THERE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT!  Every baseball fan's dream is going home from a major league game with a snagged baseball, and Zack Hample has realized that dream more than one thousand times. His collection of 1,266 major league baseballs has earned him a place in the record books and the unofficial title "King of Snagging."  But it wasn't just luck that made Zack's amazing success possible. There are tricks to the trade, and in this comprehensive book, Zack shares them with you. You'll find out:  * when to arrive at the ballpark * the best places to sit * the art of sneaking into expensive field level seats * how to snag a ball even after the game is over!  And much, much more.  So grab your glove and head out to the ballpark. The ultimate souvenir of a major league game is waiting for you!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

...Hample's determination to snag is contagious, especially for children who understand that going home with a baseball is tantamount to walking into eternity. -- The New York Times Book Review, Dulcie Leimbach

Chapter 1  BEFORE YOU ENTER THE STADIUM BUYING A TICKET  If you order your tickets through the mail or by phone close to the date of the game you plan to attend, you'll have to pick them up at the reservations window. At some stadiums this window opens at the same time the gates do. Get the picture? You can't be in two places at once, which means you have to pick up

your tickets and then walk (or sprint) to the gates to enter. You will have lost at least a few minutes -- and perhaps the opportunity to snag a ball. If possible, purchase your tickets far in advance or buy them in person at the stadium. Unless the game is sold out, you can buy tickets on the day of the game, before the gates open.  What ticket should you buy? It depends. Successful ball-snagging requires that you have access to field-level seats. Be sure to check out the rules at any stadium you plan to visit, because they vary from one ballpark to the next:  1) Some stadiums won't let you into the field level unless you have the appropriate ticket. 2) Other stadiums always let you into the field level regardless of your ticket. 3) Certain ballparks let you into the field level only if you get there early enough. This could mean getting there at least forty-five minutes prior to game time or before batting practice ends.  WHEN TO ARRIVE AT THE BALLPARK  Just because you bring your baseball glove to the game doesn't guarantee you will catch a ball. There are many other things to consider, such as when to arrive at the ballpark.  Game day for baseball players begins hours before the first pitch, as they stretch, throw, run, and hit in preparation for the game. At a Broadway musical, if you get to the theater early, you'll hear the orchestra rehearsing and tuning their instruments. Baseball players also need to tune their instruments -- their bodies -- before using them.  Major league stadiums open their gates to the fans well in advance of game time. Your ticket entitles you to enter the stadium as early as the gates open. Do it. It's free. Why not get there sooner and be able to spend more time chasing baseballs while watching the players and looking at the velvety outfield grass?  The list that follows gives opening times for all thirty major league stadiums. The times shown indicate how much before game time the gates open for fans to enter. Anaheim Angels (Edison Field, 714/663-9000): 1 1/2 hours Arizona Diamondbacks (Bank One Ballpark, 602/462-6500): 2 hours Atlanta Braves (Turner Field, 404/522-7630): 3 hours Baltimore Orioles (Oriole Park at Camden Yards, 800/551-7328): 2 1/2 hours Boston Red Sox (Fenway Park, 617/267-1700): 1 1/2 hours Chicago Cubs (Wrigley Field, 800/347-CUBS): 2 hours Chicago White Sox (Comiskey Park, 312/674-1000): 2 hours Cincinnati Reds (Cinergy Field, 513/421-4510): 1 1/2 hours on Mon.-Fri.; 2 hours on Sat.-Sun. Cleveland Indians (Jacobs Field, 216/420-4200): 1 1/2 hours Colorado Rockies (Coors Field, 303/ROCKIES): 2 hours Detroit Tigers (Tiger Stadium, 248/25-TIGER): 1 1/2 hours Florida Marlins (Pro Player Stadium, 305/350-5050): 2 hours Houston Astros (The Astrodome, 713/6-ASTROS): 2 hours Kansas City Royals (Kauffman Stadium, 816/921-8000): 1 1/2 hours Los Angeles Dodgers (Dodger Stadium, 213/224-1448): 1 1/2 hours Milwaukee Brewers (Country Stadium 414/933-9000): 1 1/2 hours Minnesota Twins (The Metrodome, 800/33-TWINS): 1 1/2 hours Montreal Expos (Olympic Stadium, 800/GO-EXPOS): 1 1/2 hours New York Mets (Shea Stadium, 718/507-TIXX): 2 1/2 hours New York Yankees (Yankee

Stadium, 718/293-6000): 1 1/2 hours on Mon.-Fri.; 2 hours on Sat.-Sun. Oakland Athletics (The Oakland Coliseum, 510/568-5600): 2 hours Philadelphia Phillies (Veterans Stadium, 215/463-1000): 1 1/2 hours on Mon.-Fri.; 2 hours on Sat.-Sun. Pittsburgh Pirates (Three Rivers Stadium, 800/BUY-BUCS): 1 1/2 hours St. Louis Cardinals (Busch Stadium, 314/421-2400): 1 hour on night games; 2 hours on some weekends. San Diego Padres (Qualcomm Stadium, 619/283-4494): 1 1/2 hours on Mon.-Thurs.; 2 hours on Fri.-Sun. San Francisco Giants (3 Com Park, 415/467-8000): 2 hours Seattle Mariners (The Kingdome, 206/622-HITS): 2 hours Tampa Bay Devil Rays (The Tropicana Field, 813/825-3250): 1 1/2 hours Texas Rangers (The Ballpark at Arlington, 817/273-5100): usually 3 hours; 2 hours on some afternoon games. Toronto Blue Jays (Skydome, 416/341-1234): 1 1/2 hours  As you see, several ballparks have different opening times on weekends than on weekdays. Opening times may vary, unannounced, if there's bad weather, a doubleheader, Opening Day, or a postseason game. Stadiums occasionally change the rules from one year to the next.  To prevent getting to the stadium too early and wasting time, or getting there too late, call the ticket office to make sure what time the gates open. In addition, not all gates at a park open at the same time. Find out which one opens first. At Shea Stadium, for example, Gate C opens two and a half hours prior to game time, whereas all other gates open only an hour and a half early.  DON'T BE TOO SHY TO ASK FOR HELP  If it's your first time at a particular stadium or your first time getting there early, everything becomes trickier for you, including when and where to enter. My advice: Ask everyone in sight for directions and instructions. It's okay to act like a tourist. Ask the parking lot attendants, the ladies at the ticket windows, the security guards, a pretzel or souvenir vendor, and your fellow fans. Ask many different people because you may get six different answers.  Warning: Do not ask a very tall, mean-looking man with a baseball glove on his hand, "Where's the best place to go for catching foul balls?" Also, don't ask me. I'll send you to right field if I'm planning to go to left field. I'll send you to the foul pole to get you out of my way when it's time to head for the dugout.  Instead, ask any of the little old ladies adorned with hats, pants, jerseys, socks, earrings, purses, and championship pins of the home team. Having not missed a home game since approximately 1937, these true fans are extremely knowledgeable about the stadium. Be nice to her. Give her a warm chat. You'll make someone happy, and you may come out with a friend who knows some of the stadium officials or the players. Should you frequent the stadium, you'll get to know the old lady and meet her important friends. This will help you get into the expensive, restricted sections, making it easier for you to get balls, bats, and autographs.  THREE REASONS YOU NEED TO BE THE FIRST FAN TO ENTER THE STADIUM  1) Some stadiums have one seat in one section that is better than any other seat. It's the place to be, and there's only room for one

person. It might be on a corner where you have a better chance of reaching batted balls. It could be in a place that makes you more noticeable to the players, giving you an advantage over other fans for getting balls thrown to you. If you're not the first to get there, the spot will be taken by the fan who is. 2) When a player throws a ball into the crowd, it might be the only ball he throws there for the remainder of batting practice. Sometimes he'll throw a ball to the first fan who asks him. If you are first into the stadium and dash to an empty section of seats, you have the only chance at catching either a thrown or batted ball. 3) The first few minutes after the gates open are the best time to catch balls, because the stadium is at its emptiest. There were days when I caught three or four balls in the first two minutes after being let in. Being first into the stadium and running toward a section in the outfield means you will briefly be the only fan in the ballpark. You are guaranteed that if a ball is hit into the seats anywhere on your side of the stadium, you'll be the one to get there first. As I run in I quickly glance down the rows and aisles to look for balls that might have landed in the seats before I got there. Several times I've found some, and it was possible only because I was there first. When Yankee Stadium suffered structural damage at the beginning of the 1998 season, the ballpark was temporarily closed to the public, and the Yankees played an exhibition game at the empty stadium against Norwich (CT), their Class AA affiliate. About two dozen baseballs were hit into the empty seats, chased by no one, and left untouched for fans to find at the next game. Even if you don't get a baseball in the first thirty seconds, you experience something magical, a rush that overwhelms all of your senses. As you head through the dark runway, your eyes meet the glaring sunlight and the greenest, smoothest grass (or AstroTurf) you've ever seen. Because there are no other fans howling and heckling the players, you hear every crack of the bat as it echoes through the cavernous stadium. There are no ushers asking for your ticket. You feel totally free to explore your "personal" stadium. You can smell baseball in the air. HOW TO BE THE FIRST FAN TO ENTER THE STADIUM When you arrive at the stadium, you will see other fans crowding around or lined up at the not-yet-opened gates. Get to the front of the line! Because I've been to so many Mets and so many Yankees games, I know which gates open early, and I know exactly where to stand outside the stadium so that when the gates open, I'll be right in front of a turnstile. At Shea and Yankee Stadiums, you can't see through the closed gates from the outside, so to remember the perfect spot, I identify a crack in the cement blocks, a gum stain on the ground, or a tiny chip in the paint on one of the gates. At many ballparks, however, like Comiskey Park and Camden Yards, the gates are see-through, so you don't need to play the turnstile guessing game. Many people don't know where to stand, so they wait behind whoever got there first. There can be a line of a hundred people who are in the wrong place. I've seen lines that formed slightly to the side of where I knew

the turnstile was, so I've walked to the front and stood a few feet to the side of the line. People have looked at me and probably thought, What the heck is this kid doin'? I've formed a one-person line because I've known. And when the gates opened, I've been in the place a hundred other people wished they were.  If there's a galaxy of people surrounding the gate, then there is no official line. Say, "Excuse me, pardon me, coming through," as you work your way to the front. If necessary, say something like, "My brother is at the front, and he's waiting to meet me." You shouldn't have a problem, because people who are waiting thirty feet away from the gate are not true enthusiasts and probably won't be heartbroken if you step in front of them and keep moving forward.  To save an additional nanosecond upon entering the stadium, take your ticket and bend it back and forth at the perforated line. The ticket taker will be able to tear the ticket easily and won't waste that fraction of a second struggling with it. You'll be ahead of the pack as you race out to a section of seats in an empty stadium for batting practice. But don't run too fast, or you might get stopped by a security guard.  SNEAKING INTO THE FIELD-LEVEL SEATS  Suppose you are at a stadium where you're not permitted to go to the field level without a field-level ticket. You have a cheap seat in the upper deck and you decide you want to get down to one of the dugouts. You could try to pay one of the ushers or security guards to let you in. You could also beg and sweet-talk him, but it'll work only if you're about ten years old or if you're with a kid who's ten years old. Finally, you could do like me and learn where there are cracks in the system.  At Shea Stadium, there's a restaurant called The Bullpen Lounge, which has two unwatched doors. One door leads to the main concourse inside the field level. The other door goes out the side, which happens to be outside the gates that lead to the field level. Cheap ticket in hand, I walk down the "up" escalator, enter The Bullpen Lounge from the side, and walk out the front.  Major league stadiums are huge. They normally have room for about fifty thousand fans, and there are plenty of nooks and crannies that are good for both sneaking around in and for finding balls.  Copyright Ã  Â© 1999 by Zachary Hample

Bought this book for Christmas but ended up pulling it out for my son on a "boring" afternoon before Christmas. His face lit up and he spent several hours "studying" Hample's how-to's. It was obviously used as evidenced by a worn cover and aging pages but so are treasure maps...in this case being used seems to add to the allure.

Good experience

Not a bad read. A lot of it is common sense. I saw it on sale for a few bucks and figured why not.My

major issue with this book is the author himself. Zack Hample kinda comes off like a pompous ass which deters me from buying any of his other books. He has a very snobby attitute towards other fans and puts on an act with players to lure them into tossing him balls. He seems like a pretty shady character.This book is a decent bathroom read if you can find it for cheap. Otherwise, you're not missing much.

Entertaining insight to the MLB.

Book has lots of historical trivia and facts. Topic could have been written on the backs of baseball cards. .

This book will put a major league baseball in your hands. I stumbled on some of the tips Zack explains in trying to get a ball myself. But Zack outlines many more - most common sense - but easy to overlook unless you have the single-minded devotion to major league baseball acquisition that characterizes Zack. This is a book for all little boys and girls, even those over ten (or forty) years of age, whose passion is to hold their own major league baseball.

We snagged a baseball within 24 hours after the book arrived, at Shea Stadium, from reliever Armando Benitez. Never thought it would be possible!!

My ten year old grandson is a baseball nut. His greatest dream is to snag a ball at a major league baseball game. I gave Zack Hample's HOW TO SNAG MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALLS to him and he can't wait for the season to start so that he can put into practice what this so smart book teaches him to do.

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