

Traveling With Rover

Road Trips With Your Pet

Spring is here, and the summer traveling season is just around the corner. Families will be hitting the road to explore the country, visit family and friends, and enjoy summer days away from home. If leaving Rover at home or at a kennel is not your idea of a family vacation, bringing your canine companion along can be a fun and enjoyable experience as long as you plan ahead, and make special arrangements to ensure that Rover's comfort and best interest are at heart.

Is Your Pet a Good Traveler in the Car?

This is the first question you need to ask yourself. A healthy, well-behaved pet can be a fun traveling companion. But pets that are very young, very old, pregnant, sick, prone to biting, excessive barking, or motion sickness may not be happy on a long trip.

Accommodations

Inquire about pet policies before making your reservations. Properties may have restrictions on the type or size of pet allowed. There may also be a limited number of pet-friendly rooms available at any given time, so it's important to call several weeks before your trip. *Traveling With Your Pet: The AAA Pet Book*, 3rd edition is an excellent resource for planning your trip. It has listings for more than 10,000 pet-friendly, AAA-rated lodgings throughout the United States and Canada. It also includes fees and other pet-specific information, advice on traveling by car or plane, international travel tips, animal clinic addresses and phone numbers, national public lands that allow pets, and contact information for pet-friendly organizations. Other wonderful pet-friendly travel guides are *Travel With or Without Pets : 25,000 Pets-R-Permitted Accommodations, Pet sitters, Kennels & More!* (Pets R Permitted, 8th Ed) by M. E. Nelson (Editor), *Take Your Pet Along : 1001 Places to Stay With Your Pet* by Heather MacLean Walters, and *Pets Welcome : A Guide to Hotels, Inns and Resorts That Welcome You and Your Pet* by Kathleen Fish.

In the car

For most pets, a hard-sided crate with plenty of ventilation is the safest way to travel. Consider covering the carrier with a light sheet or blanket as cats get pretty concerned when they see the world moving by. Also, many pet supply stores carry safety harnesses for your dog that simply connect to the seat belt, and allow Rover to sit up and watch out the window. A restless, unrestrained dog can be very dangerous for both you and him. Also, safety restraints reduce the risk of your pet jumping out at a stop and getting away.

On your departure day, place your cat and other small animals in their carriers, and confine your dog to one room or your backyard while you pack up the car. Only after everything is packed should you load the animals in your car. Don't forget to pack a bag for your companion containing food, water, first aid kit, and his favorite toys and treats. If you control the intake, you can usually control the output, and cats can usually go eight to ten hours without using a litter box, but it may be handy to pack a disposable litter box for overnight trips or extra long road trips. Also in this bag should be a current health certificate and vaccination records, especially when traveling from state to state. Make sure that your animals' vaccinations are up to date as well.

Do dogs get carsick? Absolutely. If you already know your pet gets carsick give diphenhydramine (generic Benadryl) at 1 mg per pound of body weight up to twice a day. Start half an hour before you leave for your trip. This dose will lightly tranquilize your dog and settle the tummy. Just like people, some dogs are queasier than

others, and puppies are especially sensitive to motion. Wait a couple hours after your dog has eaten to begin the trip. If your pooch gets sick, sugar can help. Give a tablespoon of honey before beginning the trip. NEVER give chocolate, which is toxic to your canine companion.

Never leave your pet inside the car unattended. On a warm day, the air inside can quickly top 110-120 degrees, which are life-threatening temperatures for any pet. On cold days, the temperature can drop just as quickly, creating the danger of hypothermia.

Make sure that you stop every two to three hours to give your pet an opportunity to stretch and answer the call of nature. It's also a great time for the driver and any passengers to get a breath of fresh air.

When you arrive in your hotel room, check for hazards such as dangerous hiding spaces or exposed electric cords. Also, ensure that all doors and windows are secured before letting your animal out of her crate or off her leash. Many dogs drink toilet water, and many lodgings have chemically treated toilet water, so it's very important to always keep the lid closed on the toilet. Make sure that there is plenty of fresh water accessible to your pet, as she may be thirsty after the car trip.

Traveling with your pet is a lot of fun, especially when exploring the great outdoors. As long as simple, but important, precautions are taken, there should be no reason why the family vacation can't be enjoyed by all.