



"The Getaway Girl®"

Tips for Traveling With Your Pet

A Healthy Pet is a Happy Pet

Before any trip, have your veterinarian examine your pet to ensure that he or she is in good health. A veterinary examination is a requisite for obtaining the legal documents required for many forms of travel. Make sure your pet is properly vaccinated and keep a health certificate (a document from your veterinarian certifying that your pet is in good health) and medical records close at hand. If you and your pet will be traveling across state lines or to another country, you must obtain from your veterinarian a recent health certificate and a certificate of rabies vaccination. Also, find a veterinarian at your destination so that you can contact him/her in case of an emergency.

What to Pack

Be sure to pack your pet's food, food and water dishes, drinking water, bedding, litter and litter box, leash, collar and tags, grooming supplies, toys, a first-aid kit (for dogs or cats), and any necessary medications. Be sure your pet wears a sturdy collar with ID tags throughout the trip. The tags should have both your permanent address and telephone number and an address and telephone number where you or a contact can be reached during your travels. Carry a current photograph of your pet with you. If your pet is lost during a trip, a photograph will make it easier for others (airline employees, the police, shelter workers, and others) to help locate your pet.

Rest Stops

Stop frequently to allow your pet exercise and bathroom breaks. Don't allow your pet to leave the car without a collar, ID tag, and leash. Never leave your pet unattended in a parked car. On warm days, the temperature in your car can rise to 120 degrees in a matter of minutes, even with the windows opened slightly. Plus, an animal left alone in a car is an easy target for pet thieves.

Pet Travel by Air

I'd love to take Zoe with me on every trip, but air travel may not always be in her best interest. If you do opt to transport your pet by air, here are some tips to ensure a safe flight for your pet:

- Use direct flights and always travel on the same flight as your pet. Ask the airline if you can watch your pet being loaded and unloaded below the cabin.
- When you board the plane, notify the captain and at least one flight attendant that your pet is traveling with you and whether your pet is with you or below the cabin. If the captain knows that pets are on board, he or she may take special precautions.
- Do not ship pug-nosed dogs or cats such as Pekingese, Chow Chows, and Persians in cargo. These breeds have short nasal passages making them vulnerable to oxygen deprivation and heat stroke in cargo holds.
- If traveling during the summer or winter months, choose flights that will accommodate the temperature extremes, particularly if your pet is traveling below the cabin.

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- Fit your pet with a collar that can't get caught in carrier doors. Affix two pieces of identification on the collar—a permanent ID with your name and home address and telephone number and a temporary travel ID with the address and telephone number where you or a contact person can be reached.
- Affix a travel label to the carrier with your name, permanent address and telephone number, final destination, and where you or a contact person can be reached as soon as the flight arrives.
- Give your pet at least a month before your flight to become familiar with the travel carrier. This will minimize his or her stress during travel.
- Do not give your pet tranquilizers unless they are prescribed by your veterinarian. Make sure your veterinarian understands that the prescription is for air travel.
- Do not feed your pet for four to six hours prior to air travel. Small amounts of water can be given before the trip. If possible, put ice cubes in the water tray attached to the inside of your pet's kennel. A full water bowl will only spill and cause discomfort.
- Try not to fly with your pet during busy travel times such as holidays and the summer. Your pet is more likely to undergo stress during hectic travel periods.
- Carry a leash with you so that you may walk your pet before check-in and after arrival. Do not place the leash inside the kennel or attach it to the outside of the kennel
- When you arrive at your destination, open the carrier as soon as you are in a safe place and examine your pet. If anything seems wrong, take your pet to a veterinarian immediately. Get the results of the examination in writing, including the date and time.