

Pets on Vacation: Easy

Family vacations used to involve Parents, the Kids and sometimes Grandma. These days, taking a family vacation might also mean bringing Fido along for the ride.

Taking pets on vacation might seem like a great idea.

After all, who would enjoy the endless expanse of tropical beach more than your Frisbee-catching golden retriever? But to make it a great vacation for everyone, you need to look after every detail and prepare for any situation.

Getting There

If you're traveling in the car, be sure

that your pet will be comfortable for the entire trip. Nothing spoils a family vacation quite like a dog with motion sickness. Plan ahead to help your pet become familiar with long journeys. Start with short trips to get both of you used to traveling together, and then gradually increase the length of your drives. Stick to your regular feeding routine, and wait until you've arrived at your destination to give your pet a big meal. Dry food is more convenient to use while traveling. Finally, never let your pet ride on your lap while you're driving. It's dangerous for you, for the animal and for everyone else on the road.

If, on the other hand,

you'll be traveling by bus, boat, train or airplane, check for rules and restrictions and make arrangements for your pet while you're booking your tickets.

Don't Put Yourself in the Doghouse

Taking your pets on

vacation is only half the battle. You also need to keep them on vacation, so be sure that your hosts or holiday accommodations will welcome your furry friend. If you're staying with friends or family, be considerate.

Ask in advance if your pet is welcome, and expect an honest answer. Some people are allergic or just uncomfortable around animals. If you've booked a hotel room or campsite, make sure that pets are allowed on the premises.

Stay

Boy, Stay

The reality of taking pets on vacation is that you will

likely not be with them every hour of every day. Chances are, your pet will not be welcome in the hotel dining room, in the amusement park, on the ski lift or aboard the fishing charter. There will be times when your pet will have to stay alone. If your pet is prone to barking, make other arrangements as a courtesy to other hotel guests. When you leave the pet in the room, make sure that you place the DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door, and tell the hotel supervisor or housekeeping staff what is going on. A portable kennel is useful at times like these, especially if you're staying in someone's home.

May I See Some I.D.?

Your pet needs to

be properly tagged, whether you're traveling by car or by plane. Make sure that he or she has a current tag containing the proper identification.

We've all seen those tear-jerking tales of animals that find their way home from the other side of the country, but you don't want to risk having it happen to your pet. Bring along a copy of your pet's medical history, including medications and recent immunization. This information is essential is crossing state or international borders. Tell your vet that

you're planning to travel, just to be sure that your pet can handle it.

Pack for Your Pet

Don't forget Fido while your family is getting ready for vacation. Having pets groomed before vacation time helps them look neat and tidy, and makes them more comfortable for the trip. Pack along your pet's favorite food dish, snacks and toys to make him or her feel more at home and relaxed.

Your pet is one of the family, so naturally you want to include him or her in your family vacation plans. If done successfully, bringing pets on vacation can be a fun experience for all of you. Think ahead and you'll all have a tail-wagging good time!