



Pet Safe Travel Trips

Get your pet's vaccinations up to date

This is especially important if you'll be traveling abroad, but you should be on top of this either way. If flea and tick prevention is on the agenda during your visit, just make sure you avoid treatments that include pyrethrins or pyrethroids! Also make sure your pet is properly identified with either a current tag or microchip, or both. Make a list of veterinarians in your destination cities and research them in advance.

Check with the airlines

Before you book your tickets, you should decide whether you think your pooch (or kitty) will be comfortable on a plane. If you're not 100% confident that your friend will be alright with the experience you should consider driving or leaving your dog or cat in the care of someone you trust while you're away. Once you've decided that flying will be something your pet can tolerate, you need to be prepared. Federal regulations require pets be at least 8 weeks old and weaned at least 5 days before flying. Generally, a health certificate must be available before pets will be permitted to fly. A valid rabies vaccination certificate may also be required. The airlines have additional, differing policies dictating pet travel, so check with your carrier. In many instances you can bring them in the cabin if the kennel they're in will fit under the seat in front of you. Bring them in the cabin if at all possible.

Try before you drive

If you'll be going by car you should make certain your pet will tolerate this. Pick a nice weekend afternoon and head out for a 3 hour drive to see how they enjoy the experience. I love car rides but some of my friends, not so much! Don't forget to bring the leash, some clean filtered or bottled water, and your pet's favorite bowl. If it's a longer drive, bring a dog (or cat!) mattress or other pet safe bedding so that they'll be able to sleep comfortably. Try to resist the urge to let your dog put his head out the window as well. As fun as that looks, it's rather dangerous. Particles of dirt can enter your dog's eyes or nose causing injury or infection. If you must leave your pet in the car while it's parked (and you should avoid this if possible), you should lock the doors, park in a shady area and leave the windows down enough to provide adequate ventilation. Leave a bowl of water too. Better, just don't leave them! You brought them for a reason, find somewhere to have lunch where they'll be welcome!

Perform a daily health check

This is especially important if your trip calls for camping or hiking. Keep an eye out for ticks, inspect your dog for them daily. Unfamiliar surroundings can cause changes in your pet you might overlook. Keep an eye on your friend and visit a local veterinarian if you're concerned about any physical or behavioral changes.

That should be enough to get you out the door safely. Don't forget the sunscreen and bottled water, and most of all have a safe trip!