



# Have Pet, will Travel

By Bennett Leigh

Making a multi-day journey? There are so many hotels these days that allow pets. It's good to check ahead to see which chains do, and how much they charge per night for your furry friend. Some hotels have weight or other restrictions, so get the facts before you arrive. You can search for pet-friendly hotels on several websites: [www.pets-allowed-hotels.com](http://www.pets-allowed-hotels.com), [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com), and <http://petfriendly.com/travel>.

Even sites including [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com) and [www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com) offer features where you can search for hotels that allow pets by choosing the amenities you want.

Just as you have to prepare your household goods and family for the big move, you have to prepare for traveling with your pet, as well. PCS moves most often involve traveling long distances to get to your new

duty station, and spending days in the car with your pet is not everyone's idea of fun. But there are ways to minimize the headache for you and your pet.

Here are some good travel tips, nine from the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ([www.ASPCA.org](http://www.ASPCA.org)), along with a few suggestions from those of us who have "been there, done that":

1. Keep your pets safe and secure in a well-ventilated crate or carrier. There are many different kinds of carriers available, from wire and hard plastic to soft-sided carriers. Whichever you choose, make sure it's large enough for your pet to stand, sit, lie down and turn around in. And it's a good idea to get your pet used to the carrier in the comfort of your home before your trip. Maybe put a favorite blanket or a few treats inside to make it less foreign.
2. Get your pet geared up for a long trip by taking him on a series of short drives first, gradually lengthening time spent in the car.
3. Your pet's travel-feeding schedule should start with a light meal three to four hours prior to departure. Don't feed your furry friend in a moving vehicle—even if it is a long drive. It could upset their stomach.
4. Never leave your animal alone in a parked vehicle. On a hot day, even with the windows open, a parked automobile can become an oven in no time, and heatstroke can develop. In cold weather, a car can act as a refrigerator, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death. This may affect where you eat along the way, as you wouldn't want to leave Fido or Fluffy in the car while you enjoy a sit-down meal for an hour.
5. What in your pet's traveling kit? In addition to travel papers, food, bowl, leash, a waste scoop, plastic bags, grooming supplies, medication and a pet first-aid kit, pack a favorite toy or pillow to give your pet a sense of familiarity.
6. Make sure your pet wears a collar with an ID tag imprinted with your new home address, as well as a temporary travel tag with your cell phone, destination phone number, and any other relevant contact information. Canines should wear flat (never choke) collars, please.
7. Don't allow your pet to ride with his head outside the window. This can subject him to inner ear damage and lung infections, and your pet could be injured by flying objects.
8. Traveling across state lines (as most service members do on a PCS)? Bring along your pet's rabies vaccination record, as some states require this proof at certain interstate crossings. While this generally isn't a problem, it's always smart to be on the safe side.
9. When it comes to H2O, we say BYO. Opt for bottled water or tap water stored in plastic jugs. You could even freeze some water, to keep the supply cold. Drinking water from an area he's not used to could result in an upset tummy for your pet—and added headaches for you.
10. Know the signs your pet is ready for a pit stop—restlessness, whining, or whatever you've noticed is the sign he has to go. Stretching your legs is good for our animal friends—and good for us, too. For kitties, take along a small litter box with a thin layer of litter. Chances are, your cat will not use the box, but if they do, you'll be glad you had one on hand.
11. If you are not keeping your pet inside a carrier for the entire trip, make sure you know where your pet is and/or restrain by putting on a leash or putting him back into his carrier before you open your car door at a stop—even when getting fuel. There have been many horror stories about an excited pet getting hurt, lost or killed when they jump out of the vehicle and run. Again, make sure you know exactly where your pet is before you get back into the vehicle, as well (the kids may get up to "play" with your pet while you are out of the vehicle). ●

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