



Fur-st Class

Ensure that traveling with your canine is easy, safe and affordable

BY MATT ALDERTON

Jet-setters are becoming pet-setters. In its 2017-2018 National Pet Owners Survey, the American Pet Products Association found that 37 percent of dog owners take their pooches on road trips, compared with just 19 percent 10 years ago. And it's not just highway rest stops going to the dogs; planes and hotels also are feeling the puppy love.

The trend is especially

helpful for dog parents like Christy Nielson of Tempe, Ariz., mom to rescued border collie mixes Kodi and Kai.

"My husband and I ... consider our pups our fur children," Nielson says. "We like to hike and play in the snow with them, so we take them whenever we can. Additionally, hiring a dog sitter to come stay with them while we're away can be really expensive,

so sometimes it's more affordable to take them along."

Whether you're traveling for vacation, retirement or relocation, the following tips will keep your four-legged travel companions comfortable and cared for en route.

BEFORE YOUR TRIP

Just because dogs can travel doesn't mean they

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@HARLOWANDSAGE; CHRISTY NIELSON; GETTY IMAGES

should. "Staying home is a must for sick, injured or pregnant animals," says PETA spokesperson Ben Williamson. "If dogs suffer from motion sickness, get overstimulated easily or get physically or emotionally upset when their routines are disrupted, the best option for them may be to stay home."

According to Madeline Bernstein, president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles, once your dog's cleared for takeoff, you should do the following prior to travel:

- **ATTACH A CURRENT ID TAG.**

Include your name, phone number, your pet's name and a current rabies tag; a temporary tag with your hotel information also is a good idea, as is having your dog microchipped.

- **SEE YOUR VET.** A thorough checkup and current vaccinations are necessary, as some airlines and states require a vet-issued health certificate.

- **CALL AHEAD.** Confirm the pet policies of airlines, hotels and campgrounds well in advance. Note that Amtrak permits small pets for train rides up to seven hours, while cruise ships and Greyhound buses generally prohibit pets.

- **RESEARCH YOUR ROUTE.**

Research pet shelters and animal control agencies at your destination and along your route. Knowing where to call will save time and reduce stress if your dog gets lost.

- **PACK SMART.** Bring portable food and water dishes, familiar toys and blankets, medications, a soft muzzle and vaccination records.

DRIVING WITH DOGGO

When Salt Lake City couple Brittini and Jeff Vega road-trip with their three dogs — Harlow, Indiana

and Reese — they start with route planning.

"If we are driving, we ... find dog-friendly parks along the way, and make sure that we set aside enough time for restroom breaks and playtime," says Vega, who broadcasts her dogs' adventures to 1.6 million Instagram (@harlowandsage) followers.

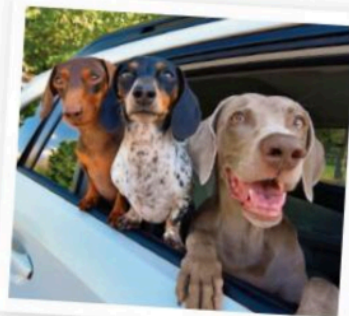
Nielson also plans pet-friendly pit stops. "Many restaurants have snacks for your dogs," she says. "At Starbucks, it's Puppuccinos. DQ (Dairy Queen) will do plain hamburger patties for less than a buck."

Because accidents happen — even on the road — pack paper towels and pet-stain remover. And don't forget to bring water and ice for rehydrating at rest stops.

Safety is paramount. Because loose dogs in cars can distract drivers, jump out of windows and take flight during collisions, pets should be restrained with canine seat belts or kept inside kennels, according to Williamson, who says owners should never leave dogs alone in the car or allow them to hang their heads out the window; the former leaves them susceptible to heatstroke and the latter to eye injuries.

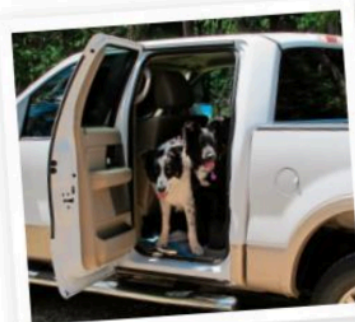
FLYING WITH FIDO

If they're small enough, dogs can typically fly in the main cabin, provided they remain in a kennel beneath the seat in front of you. Larger animals must be checked as baggage, which some animal >



All Aboard!

Brittini Vega's three dogs, Indiana, Reese and Harlow get ready for a 2016 excursion.



Road Trip!

Kodi and Kai load up for a 2017 trip to Colorado with owner Christy Nielson.



Kristen Bor and boyfriend Ryan Travis took dog Charlie along on their 2017 vacation to Mammoth, Calif.



“
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— KRISTEN BOR,
dog owner

welfare advocates advise against because of potential health and safety risks.

Although many airlines boast pro-pet policies — United’s PetSafe program, for example, promises a climate-controlled and pressurized cargo environment, specially trained

staff, a dedicated 24-hour call-in desk and pet-friendly loading procedures.

Pet parents can make flying safer and more comfortable for dogs by following the advice of Dr. Sarah Nold, veterinarian at pet insurance company Trupanion:

- **CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY.** Most airlines have maximum weight and minimum age requirements, as well as breed restrictions.

- **MAKE YOUR CANINE COMFORTABLE.** Carriers must be small enough to fit under an airplane seat, but large enough for dogs to comfortably stand up, turn around and lie down. Dogs who aren’t used to being in carriers should be acclimated over a period of weeks to months before travel. “Your veterinarian can give suggestions to make the transition easier, such as positive reinforcement when in the carrier,” Nold says.

- **MIND THE SEASON.** Because they’ll likely spend some time on the

tarmac, and cargo holds may not be climate-controlled, don’t allow pets in cargo when outside temperatures are extreme.

• USE MEDICATION

SPARINGLY. Used judiciously, vet-approved medications or herbal supplements can help treat anxious pets.

Flights with her dog, Charlie, have taught Kristen Bor of Salt Lake City, to think ahead. “Tire your dog out as much as possible before the flight. If you play fetch or take them on a long run right before heading to the airport, they’ll be more likely to relax and sleep on the plane,” says Bor, founder of the outdoor travel blog BearfootTheory.

“You’ll also want to restrict their food and water for at least six hours before the flight and make sure they go to the bathroom before boarding — many airports have dog relief areas now,” Bor says.

HOTELS FOR HOUNDS

AAA reports that there are more than 12,000 pet-friendly hotels across the country. To choose the right one, Kim Salerno, founder and president of Trips With Pets says you should consider:

- **FEES:** Although many hotels charge \$50 or more per night per pet, free options

KRISTEN BOR/BEARFOOT THEORY

CHRISTY NIELSON; GETTY IMAGES; PROVIDED BY THE COMPANIES



Christy Nielson, second from right, and husband Justin, far right, traveled to the Grand Canyon in 2016 with dogs Kodi and Kai, and some dog-owner friends.

include budget brands such as Motel 6 and Red Roof Inn, midscale brands like La Quinta Inn & Suites, and higher-end boutique brands such as Aloft Hotels and Kimpton Hotels.

- **RESTRICTIONS:** Many hotels have limits on the number and size of pets allowed.
- **AMENITIES:** Pet amenities such as welcome baskets, pet beds, bowls and dog treats indicate a hotel is truly pet-friendly. Also, look for hotels that have a “clean, well-lit and safe area” for potty breaks; pet-friendly Airbnbs with yards are great options for dogs that need space.

Finally, give as much thought to what your pets will do as where they’ll sleep. “If you plan to go on vacation with your pet, make sure you include them in your vacation planning. Don’t just bring them along and make them stay in the hotel,” says Salerno, who suggests looking for hotels near hiking trails, beaches, breweries and other dog-friendly attractions.

And if Fido at any point can’t tag along, look for a reputable pet sitter or daycare facility. “When we were on a ski vacation in Sun Valley, Idaho, the local doggy daycare cost less than \$25,” Bor says. “We dropped our dog off in the morning, and while we were skiing he was playing with other dogs the entire day. When we picked him up, he was exhausted and ready for bed, which made our hotel stay much easier.” ■



Pet-Setter Apps



BringFido

(free): Find information on more than 25,000 pet-friendly accommodations worldwide.



Paw Parks (free):

Lists crowd-sourced dog-friendly parks and trails.



Pet First Aid

by the American Red Cross (free): Find nearby animal hospitals and learn how to respond to medical emergencies like allergic reactions, bite wounds and burns.