



FREE GUIDE

Traveling with your pet

Car, plane, and hotel basics

Introduction

Traveling with a pet takes more planning than traveling without one, but most of the friction comes from a handful of predictable gaps — not having the right paperwork, not acclimating a pet to a carrier beforehand, or assuming a hotel is pet-friendly without confirming. This guide covers the basics across car trips, flights, and hotel stays.

Before any trip

Confirm your pet's microchip information is current (a surprising number aren't), pack a copy of vaccination records (often required for boarding, flights, and some hotels), and if it's a longer trip, locate an emergency vet near your destination before you need one, not after.

Car travel

A secured pet (crate, or a crash-tested harness attached to a seatbelt) is safer for everyone in the car in the event of a sudden stop or accident, not just more comfortable. For dogs prone to car sickness, a light meal (not a full one) a few hours before departure and frequent short breaks on longer drives both help. Never leave a pet alone in a parked car — temperatures inside a car climb dangerously fast even on mild days (more in our seasonal safety guide).

Air travel

Airline pet policies vary significantly — cabin-eligible size limits, carrier requirements, and health certificate timelines (often needed within 10 days of travel) should be confirmed directly with the airline well before booking, not assumed from a general policy online. Acclimate your pet to their carrier for weeks beforehand, not the day before, with treats and calm short sessions, so the actual travel day isn't their first experience in it.

Hotel stays

'Pet-friendly' can mean very different things — always confirm size/breed restrictions, additional fees, and whether pets can be left alone in the room directly with the property, not just from a general booking-site tag. Bring a familiar blanket or bed to make an unfamiliar room feel more settled, and keep your pet on their normal feeding schedule as much as travel allows.

Pet travel checklist

- ☐ Microchip information confirmed current before departure
- ☐ Vaccination records packed (physical or digital copy)
- ☐ Pet secured in the car (crate or crash-tested harness), never left alone in a parked car
- ☐ Carrier acclimation started weeks before flying, not the day before

- ☐ Airline-specific pet policy and health certificate timeline confirmed directly with the airline
- ☐ Hotel pet policy (size limits, fees, alone-in-room rules) confirmed directly with the property

Summary

Most travel stress with a pet comes from avoidable gaps — confirmed paperwork, early carrier acclimation, and directly verified policies solve most of it before it becomes a problem.

This guide is for general education only and is not a substitute for advice from a certified trainer, veterinarian, or veterinary behaviorist. If you're seeing signs of distress, aggression, or a sudden change in behavior, please consult a professional who can assess your pet directly.