



DOGS ON THE GO

How to travel well with your pet

Visit the Veterinarian

Before your trip, make sure all vaccinations are up to date. Depending on where you are going, you might want to get him vaccinated against Lyme Disease.

Puppy on Board

Puppy-proof your car like your home—you don't want him gnawing on a poisonous antifreeze bottle-cap under the back seat. As cute as he may be, resist the urge to travel with him on your lap. Place him where he will travel as an adult dog. To prevent a queasy belly, introduce him to car rides gradually, slowly increasing time spent in the car.

Paws on Wheels

Acclimatize your dog slowly with small journeys before embarking on an epic road trip. Dogs get motion sickness too, so feed him a small meal a few hours before the trip, but always make sure he has plenty of water en route (nylon foldable bowls are great in the car, as they are less likely to spill and take up less space.) Use a pet carrier secured to the back seat, or a pet harness to protect your dog against bumps and jolts in motion, but never a leash, as it can strangle your dog. While every dog loves to hang out of a moving car window, it is never a safe option, and riding in the back of a pickup is extremely dangerous. Take frequent stops to exercise and relieve your pet—he needs twice the stretch time that you do.

Pet Pack

Include your dog's bedding, bowls, food (bring a few days' extra, just in case), water from home (dogs can be sensitive to changes in their water, so bring a few litres and top it up along the way so the change is gradual), medicines, veterinary records, toys, brushes, treats, towels and a first aid kit. Include the phone numbers of emergency veterinarians where you are travelling.

Play Tag

Make sure your dog's collar includes a clearly labeled tag with your phone numbers and address. Micro-chipping your pet is also a good idea. Travel with colour pictures of your dog, so that you can show them to people in case he gets lost.

Weather Wise

Dogs can overheat quickly. Make sure there is plenty of air circulation in the back of the car, especially if the dog is travelling in his crate. You may need to hike the AC or open the windows. Remember, the darker the fur, the hotter the dog. Sun beating in the window can irritate dogs, so consider sunshades if you don't have tinted windows. And never leave your dog alone in the car. Are you cold? Chances are, so is your dog, so pack a blanket for him along with his bedding, and include a towel to dry him off.

Ahoy, Dog

Introduce your dog to the boat like the car—a little at a time. Start at the dock, slowly, then start the engine to get him used to the noise and vibration. Do this a few times before taking your dog out on the water. Not all dogs can swim, and even the best dog paddler can drown when unexpectedly thrown into the water, so get a life jacket for your pooch. Make sure it is brightly coloured with a handle on top for easy retrieval from the lake. Seasickness meds also exist for dogs—ask your veterinarian about them. Train your dog not to leave the boat until given the command to do so, or make sure he is safely leashed when docking. Always ensure there is a shady spot for him on board. Here's a nautical feeding tip: a large, heavy water dish kept half-full and secured to the deck will spill less.

Camp K9

Call ahead to ensure the campsite is pet-friendly. New situations are stressful to dogs, so begin with short day trips. Set up the tent at home and spend some time with your dog there before camping. Obedience comes first, so use a leash at all times and make sure your dog is well-trained before camping. Apply canine flea/tick repellent or a collar. Give your dog time to adjust to the campsite before setting out on an activity. Make sure there is plenty of shade. Remove any left over food after your dog eats, so it doesn't attract insects or animals, and store food in a water-proof, critter-proof container. Dogs need groundsheets too—you aren't the only one who will wake up stiff and sore without one, so put padding under your dog's bedding.

Hiking Tips

Dog booties can protect pads from ice or rocky terrain. Non-stick cooking vegetable spray coating can be used on the pads and the belly to prevent fur from collecting snowballs on winter treks. To remove tree sap from paws, use vegetable oil, towel it off, then use pet shampoo.

Dog in Crisis

Travel with the emergency phone numbers for local veterinarians. Always pack a muzzle—even the gentlest dog can bite if injured. A shivering dog is either very cold or in pain, and drooling can be a sign of high anxiety or pain. Unusually rapid panting, and a bright red tongue or gums can be signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Be aware of your dog's comfort level at all times and consult a veterinarian regarding treatment.