



Top behaviors that indicate your pet isn't ready to travel

Does your pet suffer from allergies?

Hotel rooms often use strong cleaning chemicals, which may trigger weeping, sneezing, or even asthmatic reactions in your pet. Also, the air conditioning units in hotels can exceed many pet's comfort levels for many pets.

Is your pet comfortable in a carrier?

Pet carriers can be very confining for any animal, whether traveling by plane or auto, and can initiate claustrophobic reactions for some animals. The pet may whimper, cry loudly, or become aggressive when approached in the carrier, since it is his/her temporary home.

Is your pet naturally curious?

Stopping in foreign areas may create curiosity for some animals who then try to slip out of the vehicle or carrier despite the pet parent's efforts to use ID tags and leashes.

Is your pet sensitive to weather changes?

Pets that have grown up in the home, or in warm climates, may have very negative results experiencing cold northern climates for the first time. This can not only be a physical inconvenience, but also an emotional experience.

Does your pet have prior experience traveling?

Unfortunately, some animals do not travel well at all, and need to be sedated. This can be dangerous for older pets, and even have fatal results if their systems are not tolerant of these drugs.

Myths about vacationing with pets

Myth: Your pet will be comfortable traveling in the car.

Fact: Animals often become uncomfortable and develop motion sickness just like humans, but in some instances more severely due to their sensitive inner ear balance. Their natural reaction is to stop eating or drinking, thus becoming dehydrated. It may take several days to recover from the trauma of a long-distance trip.

Myth: Your pet will be comfortable relieving itself in the dedicated pet area of a rest stop.

Fact: Most auto rest stops have some dedicated dog areas, but your pet may not feel comfortable going where hundreds of other smells exist. If they cannot find their mark they may not go at all, creating bladder or intestinal problems over a prolonged time. Cats need their own litter box, and this becomes rather tedious (and smelly) in your car. If traveling by plane, older dogs and cats may not be able to retain bladder control for several hours.

Myth: Pets can quickly and easily go through airport security.

Fact: If you travel by plane, nearly all airlines STRICTLY enforce vet health certifications with shots. Arriving at the airport without your pet paperwork in order can cost hundreds of dollars in extra expenses, and possibly result in you missing your flight.

Myth: Most hotels these days are “pet friendly”

Fact: Many hotels do not accept pets, or only have a few rooms for pet owners. This may be a surprise, and even a disaster, if you make last minute travels. Once admitted, these surroundings are often noisy or so unnatural your pet may stay awake at night, making it a sleepless night for the pet parents.

Tips for finding and securing a local, qualified pet sitter

“Hiring a pet sitter is a serious process,” states Monica Leighton, President of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS). “Not only are you placing your pet in the care of another individual, but you are also giving them regular access to your home. Safety should always be a top priority in the selection process.”

To assist pet parents in the process of finding a professional pet sitter, NAPPS offers the following recommendations:

- Develop a set of questions and conduct a thorough interview.
- Ask for multiple references.
- Request proof of bonding and liability insurance coverage.
- Make sure he/she interacts well with your pet.

The NAPPS website offers a nationwide referral network as a valuable online resource for locating professional pet sitters across the country. Accessible directly from the NAPPS Web site, www.petsitters.org, this free service provides contact information for all NAPPS member pet sitters and pet sitting companies in the area. With one simple search, pet parents can learn all about the services provided, and even details regarding the sitter’s experience and expertise.