

## Summer vacations and pets

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Summer is approaching. The months ahead will bring opportunities for outdoor activities and perhaps travel plans. If you are an animal lover and they are part of your life, vacation planning consists of careful planning and arrangements for their care.

It is probably best to leave your animal companion at home, with a trusted caregiver. Another option is a kennel, one you have visited and has good references. If your animal companion must travel with you, and is in good health, there are steps to take to make the trip as pleasant and uneventful as possible.

When traveling with dogs, they should be in a carrier that is secured by a seatbelt or other means. Never place your dog in the front seat. An airbag deploying could seriously injure or kill your dog, even if it is in a carrier. Never let your dog ride with its head out the window. Serious injuries could occur, or illness could result from cold air forced into the lungs. And, never travel with a dog in the bed of a pickup.

If your dog does not ride in the car often, do several trial runs before traveling. Before departure, check with your vet to go over medical needs, and get needed documents. If your dog does not have a microchip, consider having one inserted at the vet's office. Microchips are just part of the identification protocol. Have appropriate leashes, collars, and harnesses, maybe two collars on each dog, one with home info, one with destination info.

Think of favorite toys and blankets to take along. A Thundershirt may help with travel anxiety. There are other all-natural stress relievers such as Rescue Remedy and Lavender Oils. Start this therapy before traveling.

When traveling by car, it's best to have a trusted human companion with you. One of the biggest hazards of traveling alone is leaving your dog alone in the car. Extreme temperatures can be deadly to a dog; having someone in the car will allow the car to be kept running. Another threat to you and your animals is thieves who prey on lone travelers.

Plan rest stops every two to three hours. Bring plenty of water from home, or purchase filtered water. Maintain the same food; traveling is not a good time to be changing food formulas or types.

We traveled with our beloved dogs for years, probably logging 25,000 miles. We never had any trouble. We were always diligent, and our dogs knew the routines well. It was fun traveling with them, and they made the long stretches of highways much more bearable.

Two great websites for travelers with animals are [www.petswelcome.com](http://www.petswelcome.com) and [www.tripswithpets.com](http://www.tripswithpets.com). Both sites have pet-friendly lodging locations and great travel tips.

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