

Traveling With Your Pets

By Cherie Weaver

Summer is here and whether you are planning an extended trip or just a day ride to the Arizona high country, it can be a lot of fun taking the four-legged “kids” along. However, be sure you do some homework and plan in advance so your trip will truly be an enjoyable experience. Following are some important tips that will help you prepare.

Traveling By Air

- If you decide to travel by air, make reservations ahead of time and follow the airline instructions. Most airlines discourage summer travel with pets, so you will need to check the airline’s requirements.
- If you are able to travel by air with your pet, obtain a shipping container a week or two in advance. Familiarize your pet with it by placing the pet in it for a few minutes each day. Gradually lengthen the time until the pet seems to at ease with it. Feed your pet no less than five or six hours before flight time.
- Give your pet a drink of water no less than two hours before flight.
- Make sure the container is properly labeled with name, addresses, etc. Make sure you have “Live Animals” on the container.



Traveling By Car

- If your pet is not accustomed to car travel, take it for a few short rides before your trip. Pets should not be allowed to ride with their heads outside car windows. Particles of dirt can enter the eyes, ears, and nose, causing injury or infection.
- Stick to your regular feeding routine and give the main meal at the end of the day or when you reach your destination. Feeding dry food will be more convenient.
- Take along a plastic jug of cold water in case other reliable water sources are not available.
- Give small portions of food and water and plan to stop every two hours for exercise.
- NEVER leave your pet in a parked car in warm weather or if the temperature is below freezing. If you must leave your pet in the car, be sure the windows are open, you are parked in a shady place and you can trust your pet not to attempt escape.
- If stopping overnight, check in advance to find a motel that will permit your pet to spend the night.
- Be sure to always clean up after your pets. Bring along paper towels and plastic bags
- Keep your pet on a leash at all times. Don’t take a chance of your pet getting lost away from home.



Camping With Pets

Traveling to country settings with your pet presents its own challenges. Skunks, raccoons, porcupines, snakes, and other wildlife can bite or otherwise injure your pet. Always keep your pet on a leash. In you are in an area where a leash is not required, be sure to keep your pet in sight at all times. Be considerate of other campers.

Be sure to ask your veterinarian about flea, tick and heartworm prevention before you leave.



Additional Pet Travel Tips

- Pack a simple pet first-aid kit that includes assorted bandages, antiseptic cream, and pet safe anti-diarrheal medication, gauze squares, phone numbers of veterinarians where you will be staying, a national poison control hotline, and a 24-hour emergency veterinary hospital.
- In addition to a standard identification tag (which should be labeled with your name, home address and phone number), your pet’s collar should include a travel tag with information on where you are staying while away from home. Should your pet become lost, this will allow you to be contacted locally.
- If you pet does not have a micro-chip, consider having this done before your trip.
- Perform a daily “health check” on your pet when away from home. In unfamiliar surroundings, your pet’s appetite, energy, and disposition may change.
- Your pet should be up-to-date on all vaccinations and in sound health.
- Bring along a copy of your pet’s rabies vaccination certificate in case you wish to board your pet for a day, or wish to have the pet groomed.