

the whole family

INCLUDING PETS
IN YOUR HOLIDAY
TRAVEL PLANS

by **teri brown**

HAVE YOU EVER LEFT A BELOVED pet at home with a sitter while you went on vacation? Or perhaps walked away after leaving Fido or Felix in the sterile atmosphere of a kennel? Leaving a pet at home when your family takes off for the holidays can be a heart-wrenching experience. But taking your pet with you can be a wonderful alternative.

Anna McLain of Bellevue, Neb., is the proud owner of two Dachshunds. McLain has traveled very successfully with her animals, but not without a mishap or two.

"The first time we were crammed into the front of a pickup truck," she says. "My epileptic Doxie, Max, didn't tell us he needed to stop. We didn't stop soon enough and he wet all over my lap. Poor little guy acted

so ashamed!"

Another incident involved one of the dogs being accidentally kicked, which necessitated emergency veterinary care. All in all, though, McLain enjoys traveling with her pets and has learned to take their needs into consideration when on the road.

Chris Sofge from Cincinnati, Ohio, loves to travel with her animals despite any inconvenience they

might cause. "I've had dogs that loved to hike and camp and be with me but got carsick," says Sofge. "But, we never let it stop us. We just carried extra paper towels and cleaner."

Sofge says dogs are a great excuse to actually get out and stretch your legs at rest areas, too. "I've taken many a walk 'for the dog' at rest areas, when the pooch would have probably been just as happy to sleep

in the back seat," he says.

So how does one travel successfully with animals? Planning has a lot to do with whether taking a pet along with the family will be a success or failure. But loving owners must first take into account the type of pet they have and the temperament and health of that animal.

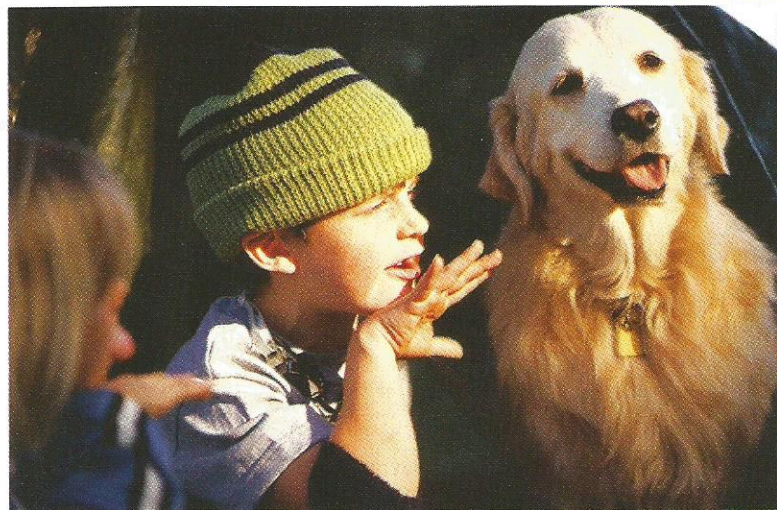
ON THE ROAD WITH ROVER

The first thing you should consider is how much travel experience your pet has. Paul Owens, an experienced dog trainer and author of *The Dog Whisperer* (AdamsMediaCorporation, 1999), believes if you are considering taking a dog with you, it depends on the individual dog.

"Dogs who have been acclimated to traveling in the family car normally don't have a problem with longer trips," says Owens. "This is not a breed specific issue; it's a temperament issue. Obviously a distressed dog who throws up ... while riding in the backseat is not a dog who is going to be a happy camper on a long car trip."

Christine Rosenblat, a public relations specialist for the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), believes temperament and the experience of the animal should definitely be taken into account before planning a trip with your family pet.

"It's a rare cat that enjoys any kind of travel," says Rosenblat. "Cats are very territorial and are not happy when they're removed from familiar surroundings. It's best to leave them at home with a pet sitter who either moves in temporarily or who comes in each day to feed and care for them. Dogs, on the whole, are better



travelers. However, depending on age, temperament and health, a dog might also be happier at home with a pet sitter or at a well-run boarding kennel."

Once you decide whether or not your animal is a good candidate for travel, it's time to start planning. Rosenblat says that should start with a trip to the veterinarian to ensure he's in good health and all his vaccinations are current.

"A veterinary examination is also required to obtain certain legal documents necessary for some forms of travel," says Rosenblat. "If you are crossing an international border your pet will need a health certificate and proof of rabies vaccination."

When traveling with a pet, you should pack food (the kind your pet is used to), water, toys, bedding, a litter box and litter for your cat, cleaning supplies, a leash, a first-aid kit, medication your pet may be using, medical records and the phone number of your veterinarian.

"Familiar objects and a normal diet will help your pet feel more secure," says Rosenblat. "Your pets should wear ID tags or be microchipped, and you should take along a current photo

of your pet in case he becomes lost."

FLYING THE FURRY SKIES

Air travel can be problematic with an animal. The safest place for your pet is in the cabin. However, if your pet has to fly in cargo, avoid weekends or peak hours. Rosenblat suggests flying in the early morning or late evening to avoid the worst heat of the day and not flying when the temperature is above 85 degrees F or when it's very cold. Take direct flights – layovers and connections increase the chances that your pet will be lost or injured. Buy a sturdy, airline-approved crate that is large enough for your pet to stand, turn and lie down in comfortably.

"Don't be backward in asking flight personnel about the status of your pet," says Rosenblat. "Be a 'squeaky wheel' – your pet's life could be at stake. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends against tranquilizing pets traveling by air because the medication disrupts their balance, lessens their reflexes and can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems at high altitudes." *

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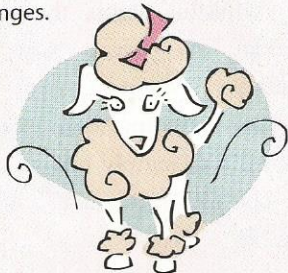
3 tips for safe pet travel

THE FOLLOWING TIPS FROM the American Veterinary Medical Association will help make traveling fun and safe – for both you and your pet!

✱ When traveling by car, pack a simple pet first-aid kit that includes assorted bandages, antiseptic cream, an anti-diarrhea medication that is safe for pets (ask your veterinarian to suggest a product), gauze squares and the phone numbers of your veterinarian, 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.

✱ Perform a daily "health check" on your pet when away from home. In unfamiliar surroundings, your pet's appetite, energy and disposition may change. Watch for unusual discharges from the nose and eyes, excessive scratching or biting of any body part, unusual lumps, limping, loss of appetite, abnormal elimination or excessive water consumption. Visit a local veterinarian if you are concerned about any physical or behavioral changes.



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