The BEST WAY to Travel with YOUR PET

Seven steps to success

STEP 1
Make a list of your airline's rules and recommendations. Once you get the go-ahead from your airline, and you've had the chance to discuss with your pet in detail what you are about to do, there are several other things you should consider before deciding that air travel is right for you and your pet.

STEP 2
Your pet's health. Take your pet to a veterinarian to make certain that it is healthy enough for air travel. State and federal laws require a health certificate for your pet that must be presented to your airline prior to your flight. Your vet will have these forms.

STEP 3
Selecting your flight. When traveling with a pet, it is best to book a nonstop flight. Also, avoid holiday or weekend travel if you can, and try to book flights that minimize temperature extremes. For instance, fly in the morning or evening during the summer months.

STEP 4
The breed of your dog. Depending on the airline, the breed of your dog may be a concern. Some airlines restrict short-nosed pooches from flying in the cargo compartment at all, specifically during summer months. Make certain your airline knows the breed of dog you will be traveling with.

STEP 5
Sedating your pet. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, in most cases cats and dogs should not be given tranquilizers or sedatives before flying. Your pet's natural ability to maintain equilibrium is altered under sedation, which can be dangerous when the kennel is moved.

STEP 6
Traveling outside the Continental United States. Most places outside the U.S., including Hawaii, require special vaccinations and quarantine periods when you arrive at your destination. Be sure to contact your host country, or ask your airline for assistance in finding out the rules that pertain to traveling with your pet outside of the United States.

STEP 7
Answer: "Am I completely comfortable traveling with my pet?" If you think that ultimately the trip may be too stressful for you and your best friend, or if you don't have time to ensure that all of the preparations discussed here have been made, maybe you should consider another alternative. Your vet will also have information about kennels and boarding facilities.

Many people travel every day on aircraft with their pets. With these recommendations, you can be one of them! Have a great flight and a joyful reunion when you arrive at your destination.

Pet Travel Tips Checklist:
- Contact your airline about any specific restrictions. Each airline has its own set of regulations and fees.
- Take your pet to the veterinarian. Obtain and fill out all necessary paperwork required by your airline.
- Clip your pet's nails to prevent it from snagging them while aboard the aircraft.
- Remember, puppies and kittens must be at least eight weeks old to travel on an aircraft.
- Older animals may also have a difficult time flying. Check with your vet.
- Depending on the airline, some pets may be allowed to travel in the cabin with you. Contact your airline for its specific rules and regulations.
- Do not make the decision to tranquilize your pet without first consulting with your vet. It could possibly make it more difficult for your pet to travel.
- Be sure your pet's collar and kennel have identification tags that include your name, phone number and flight information.
- Check the weather and temperature forecast for your departure and arrival locations before making the decision to fly with your pet. Some airlines have restrictions if the weather forecast calls for temperatures above 85 degrees or below 45 degrees.
- Bring food, water, and one of your pet's favorite toys with you.
- It's recommended that your pet become acclimated with its kennel for at least a week before flying.

Have a safe and happy journey.