

## **Behavior Solutions: Traveling with Your Pet**

Dogs are considered a part of many families and more people are deciding to include them in their travel plans. While you know that your dog would love to spend a week on the beach by your side, there is also a lot of preparation that goes into taking your dog with you. To ensure that you both have the best time possible, take the advice of the traveling trainers at Starmark Academy for smooth sailing (or camping, or driving, or flying) on your next trip.

### **Should You Take Your Dog?**

Many people like to bring their dogs on vacation with them, but there are times when your pet may be better off staying behind. One of the first things to consider is, is your dog in a healthy enough state to travel? Since traveling can be somewhat stressful for some dogs, older or pregnant dogs or ones with certain health conditions may be better off left in the capable hands of a vet, boarding facility, or pet sitter.

Other considerations are: where are you going; is the destination dog-friendly; how will you travel; how long is your trip; what time of year is it; will your dog be safe traveling with you; will your dog be able to get medical attention if he needs it? Thinking about all these things will help you to decide if taking your pet is a good idea. If there is any doubt, staying at home may be a better option for your dog.

### **Where are You Going and How Long?**

Deciding where to go is probably the best part in planning a vacation. Some destinations can be more dog friendly than others, though. A vacation to a busy city, for example, may not be the ideal for a relaxing getaway for your dog. Other destinations, like theme parks and some state parks, may mean that your dog spends a lot of time secluded in your hotel room instead of by your side partaking in the fun activities.

If you are going to another state, check on vaccination requirements and make sure your dog has all necessary inoculations and records before leaving. Many foreign countries have a quarantine period, during which your dog will have to be housed at an approved quarantine site at your expense for a predetermined amount of time before he is allowed

to be out and about. (Quarantines are to help protect pets and other animals from any diseases that may not have been introduced to that country.) They can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months, and it most likely won't be much of a vacation for your dog. Some foreign countries will also require a USDA International Health Certificate as proof of your dog's health.

Look into hotels in the area that you are planning to go to make sure they allow pets and what, if any, restrictions they have. Inquire about deposits (sometimes refundable) or pet fees for cleaning expenses, as well as restrictions on size or breed of dog, length they are allowed to stay, where in the hotel they are allowed, and if they are allowed to stay in the room in your absence. You may request a bottom floor or a lower level room, if possible, so that potty trips outside are easier. Ask the hotel if there is an area on the grounds or nearby that you can potty your dog.

To ensure that others may continue to bring their pets with them, be respectful of other guests by being responsible with your dog: clean up after him when you take him for a walk; report any damage that has happened to the room immediately; keep your dog quiet and well mannered. Obedience training is a way of communicating to your dog what is expected, making him a better companion and a joy for people to be around. The Starmark Pro-Training Clicker is a fun and easy way to teach your dog commands like sit, down, quiet, and many others. Visit [www.starmarkacademy.com](http://www.starmarkacademy.com). For a complete Pro-Training Clicker guide with these and other useful exercises.

If you do plan to leave your pet in the room alone, bring a crate in which to confine your dog and let someone at the front desk know that your dog is in the room alone. Condition your dog to remain quietly in his crate before your trip so he will be better used to it.

This will help prevent escapes in the event one of the hotel staff must enter for cleaning, etc. You may consider requesting that your room only be tended to only during a certain time so that you can schedule to walk your dog at that time. (Refer to Starmark's Behavior Solutions: Crate Training on [www.starmarkacademy.com](http://www.starmarkacademy.com) for more information on crate training your dog.)

Since more people are traveling with their dogs, many hotels are now offering special services, such as doggie room service, welcome baskets filled with treats, among others. A few hotels even provide walking and playtime services for a fee. Inquire about special

services such as these when making your reservation so your dog can have as good a time as you while on vacation.

How long will you be away- a few days or a few weeks? Also, will you be staying in one place or traveling to many? The length of time you are gone can help determine whether you want to bring your dog or not. If you plan to be away for a long time and are going somewhere that is dog-friendly, you may wish to bring your pet in lieu of boarding him for a long period. If you will be traveling to several places in that time, it may be less stressful for your dog to stay at home instead of having to readjust to each locale. Consider your dog's comfort and make your decision from there.

### **The Road Trip**

If you are traveling with your dog by car, be sure to allow enough stops so that your dog can get out to potty and exercise. If you have to stop overnight during your journey, find hotels along the way that will accept your dog. Keep your dog safe and secure in your vehicle by confining him to a crate or restraining harness. This especially applies if you are traveling with your dog in the bed of a truck. Sudden stops or sharp turns of the wheel can cause your dog to slide around (or out of the vehicle) and become injured. If you leave the windows open, leave them cracked just enough to allow air to blow through, but not enough for your dog to hang out. Window barriers that allow you to keep your windows open for the fresh air, but prevent your dog from leaning out, are available through many pet supply catalogues and stores.

If your dog tends to get carsick, try to condition him to being in the car by taking him on short trips while you run errands. The more comfortable he is in the car, the longer he can ride. Wait to feed your dog until you arrive at your destination to help prevent stomach upset. You may also ask your veterinarian if there are medications available that can help to settle your dog's stomach.

Consider the climate you will be traveling through and the temperature outside. When traveling during summer or through warmer climates, beware of leaving your dog in the car. Dogs have a low tolerance to high temperatures and the inside of a car can quickly climb to over 100 degrees. At this high temperature, irreversible brain damage can begin to take place. Instead, take him with you or leave him behind in the hotel room.

## **The Plane Ride**

If you plan to travel by air, most airlines allow dogs to fly either in the cargo hold (where luggage is kept) or under the seat if your dog is small enough. Each airline has its own restrictions for size, breed, age, and space available. Puppies must be at least eight weeks old to fly. When making your flight plans, check with the airline to make sure they will allow your dog on the flight. Most will ask for the breed, size of your dog, and size of his crate. Some airlines have restrictions on the breeds of dogs they will allow to fly, or the size of dog they are able to accommodate, so check with your airline to make sure your dog will be able to fly. Since there is limited room in the cargo area of the plane, make your dog's reservation in plenty of advance to ensure that he will have a spot.

Airlines will require that your dog is contained in an airline-approved crate (call your airline to check on their particular standards). The crate will need to be large enough for your dog to stand, turn around, and lay down comfortably; is secure and sturdy; have grips on the sides for easy moving; a towel, or absorbent material, in the bottom; and plenty of air holes for ventilation. A "Live Animal" label and a label with your name, home address (as well as where you will be staying), and contact phone number will need to be affixed to the crate. Include your 800 number if you have one, or instructions to call collect.

The cargo area of the majority of planes is not climate controlled, so most airlines have temperature restrictions for flying animals. This means that if the temperature reaches above or below their predetermined safety range at the starting or ending point, or any stopping point in between, your dog may be placed on another flight if available, or not allowed to fly. Some airlines will also restrict flying Brachycephalic (snub-nosed) dogs like pugs, Boston terriers, and Pekingese, when the temperature rises too high because of their susceptibility to overheating. Another option to prevent this from happening during hot summer months and cold winter months is to choose an airline that provides climate control in their cargo area. Though it may be more expensive, it will be worth it to greet your dog when he safely gets off the plane.

When checking your dog in for his flight, you will need to show a current health certificate from your vet stating that your dog is current on all his vaccinations and is healthy to fly. Health certificates are typically only valid for ten days, so if your trip is

longer than that you will need to make arrangements with a vet in the area you are visiting to have a new certificate issued. Most airlines do not accept dogs that have been sedated unless a veterinarian states on the health certificate it is necessary.

### **Packing for Your Pet**

Along with all the things you must pack for yourself for your trip, your dog will also need some things packed for him. Essential items to bring are: food (if you are uncertain that his brand of food will be available in local stores); water from home (if your dog is sensitive to changes in water); collar and leash; crate with comfortable bedding; all necessary medications (including heartworm and flea prevention if he will be due during your trip); waste removal bags; chew toys or treats; health certificate and current vaccination records. The Everlasting Treat Ball™ is one way to keep your dog happily occupied when he is in his crate. Fill the Treat Ball with your dog's food or Every Flavor Treats™, then cap off the ends with Everlasting Treats™ to entertain him while you are gone.

You may consider packing a first aid kit for your dog, especially if you plan on doing any hiking or other outdoor activities. Other items you might bring are: a sheet to cover hotel furniture if you plan on allowing your dog on it; dog bed; cleaning items (carpet cleaner and disinfectant); baby wipes to clean dirty paws; lint/hair remover; and grooming supplies like a brush and nail clippers.

Though it's not something people like to think about, there is a chance that you and your dog could become separated while traveling. To prevent this, keep him crated in your room if you won't be there, and always keep a leash and secure collar on your dog when you are walking him. Keep current identification tags on your dog with your name, address, and an emergency phone number where you can be reached. You may consider having a temporary tag made up with information for where you are staying while on your trip. Also bring a recent photograph, as well as a detailed description of your dog including name, breed, sex, age, size, microchip or tattoo number, and any other information that would help to identify him.

**Bon Voyage**

Your vacation should be a fun and relaxing time for both you and your dog. At Starmark we believe that a well-behaved and well-trained dog is a happy dog and a better companion. Each dog is unique, and so is each owner. That's why we use a variety of techniques, customizing your dog's training experience to suit his personality and your individual needs. Using our travel tips and training techniques, which emphasize consistency and patience, you and your canine traveling companion are sure to have a great time together.

**Trainer Developed: Academy Tested**

The certified training and behavior specialists at Starmark Academy created this behavior solutions guide with you and your dog's needs in mind. Products mentioned in this guide are available at PETsMART and other pet supply retailers, as well as online at our web site: [www.dogtrainingandboardingaustin.com](http://www.dogtrainingandboardingaustin.com). All products, guides and videos are tested and approved by the training directors of Starmark Academy, our accredited school for professional dog trainers. It is the hands-on experience of our training division, combined with the vast technical knowledge and experience of the Starmark Academy staff that allows us to bring you useful and unique dog training and behavior solutions. We train dogs just like yours every day; we work with pet enthusiasts just like you every day. Thank you for choosing Starmark, the world leader in pet education.

For additional pet solutions and information about our products, please visit Starmark online at our Web sites: [www.dogtrainingandboardingaustin.com](http://www.dogtrainingandboardingaustin.com); [www.schoolfordogtrainers.com](http://www.schoolfordogtrainers.com); and [www.aboutdogtraining.com](http://www.aboutdogtraining.com).

## **Starmark Trainer Recommended Equipment**

Starmark Everlasting Treat Ball™—A great way to keep your dog busy! The unique shape of the ball allows it to wobble and roll around on its own. It is hollow, so you can also hide treats or a meal in it.

Starmark Everlasting Treats™— All-natural chew treats designed to fit on the ends of the Everlasting Treat Ball™. They also are great by themselves as tasty snacks.

Pro-Training Treats™—Bite-size treats to fit inside the Everlasting Treat Ball™. Used alone, these treats are perfect as tasty food rewards during training.

Pro-Training Clicker™—A fun and easy way to teach your dog obedience commands. It's like saying "Well done," on time, every time your dog does something you like.

Pro-Training Collar™—The training collar that will help you walk your dog instead of your dog walking you. It provides gentle control with an attractive design that works like a training collar without looking like one.

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