



Top 10 Reasons **NOT** to Travel with Your Pets

by Thom Somes, "The Pet Safety Guy™"



Summer is upon us and what better way to spend your vacation than on the road with your pets? Think again. While you may enjoy seeing the sights, your pets are very sensitive to their environment and don't understand the changes of traveling. Pets—especially cats—may not be able to handle the stress of habitat changes. If your pet is young, old, ill or not going to be an integral part of your vacation, you should definitely consider letting your pet stay home and guard the homestead. Pets do best staying on their own turf. Please consider these ten items below before you decide to take your pet on a trip.

10 Accommodations.

Read the fine print. Some hotels allow pets **but** the disclaimer is the pet must not be left alone in the room. This can make going out for dinner or to a theme park with the kids impossible. Check in advance and don't try and sneak them in. Remember, you are responsible for any damage

your pet may cause. If your pet is going to be staying alone in the hotel room anyway, they might as well stay at home.

9 Plane Trips.

Check well in advance for airline requirements and conditions for pets traveling with you. Pets will be required to have a travel crate and recent health certificate from your veterinarian. Be warned, some airlines will not accept pets as cargo at certain times of the year. Even with a reservation, airlines can refuse transporting your pet if conditions are not safe. Cargo holds are not heated, cooled or sound proof and can cause possible death, injury and stress on your pet. Beware of medicating your cat. High altitudes can have an amplifying effect on "kitty downers." Unless you can guarantee conditions and book a direct flight, let your pet stay home and watch the *Travel Channel*.

8 Car Trips.

Numerous dangers exist for your pets inside and outside your vehicle. The first one that comes to mind is the danger of heat stroke, but other dangers can include air bags, unrestrained pets becoming projectiles hurting themselves and potentially others, getting hit by a car and insects or debris flying into the eyes and ears of pets whose heads are hanging out the window. All pets should be crated or restrained in a harness while riding in a vehicle.

7 Identification.

Trying to find your lost pet in a strange city will ruin your vacation. Pets lost away from their homes are at greater risk because they truly are lost. Strange sights and sounds disorient your pet, causing it to act in ways that put it at greater risk of being killed, hurt or picked up by strangers.

(continued)



6 Behavior.

Well trained and socialized pets tend to stay out of harm's way. But, the stresses of traveling can test even the best-trained and well socialized pet. Sometimes the best command you can give your pet is, STAY—at home!

5 Food & Water.

Drinking local water while traveling and changes in diet can cause stomach upset and diarrhea. Unless you are prepared to travel with food and water, keep your pet home.

4 Dangers, Diseases & Illness.

This ranges from allergies to ticks, depending on how you are traveling and the place to which you travel. Mosquitoes can carry heartworm; poison ivy on your pet's coat can get onto you. Skunks, snake bites, poisoning and giardia are just a few of the many hazards in store for the unprepared pet traveler.

3 Leashes & Laws.

All states have laws regarding your pets and you are responsible for obeying all of them. Every state has "Leash Laws" that are ticketable offenses. Keep your pets on a leash and obey the law or keep them at home.

2 Emergencies & Veterinarians.

Knowing pet first aid is important to your pet surviving a medical emergency. However, your pet could require hospitalization for a period longer than your planned stay. Trying to find an emergency animal facility while dealing with your hurt and injured pet is another way to ruin your vacation. Keep your pet safely at home.

1 You have a Pet Sitters International Member caring for your pet!

Hire a professional pet sitter for immeasurable peace of mind while you are on

vacation. PSI members can give your pets consistent, personal care and attention on a daily basis. They will even leave Animal Planet on the TV for them!

If you choose to travel with your pets, make a conscious effort to keep their best interests in mind. Follow all the DOs and DON'Ts and your pets can be excellent traveling companions.

If you leave your pets at home with a professional pet sitter, maybe you can come home from your vacation a day early to spend quality time with your pet. And remember to send your pet a postcard and bring home something for your pet sitter, too!

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