

Petiquette 101

Are you packing up your four-legged friend for a holiday? More than two-thirds of pet owners will travel with their fur children this year, according to the American Animal Hospital Association Pet Owner Survey. Although many owners do not realize it, traveling with your pet is a privilege not to be taken lightly. You and your pet are a team; you are pet ambassadors wherever you go — so act accordingly. If Fido the dog or Felix the cat like strangers, are housebroken, are flea and tick free, remain calm when left alone in a friendly but foreign environment, then and only then are they ready for vacation. It's an added bonus if Fido additionally has a training repertoire of "sit," "come" and "stay"—and walks on a lead nicely.

Gail Martz, owner of the Sherpa Pet Trading Company and the woman who single-handedly persuaded airlines to change their policies and permit small pets to travel alongside their owners, encourages pet owners to keep a low profile. "Although it is hard to believe that there are people who

your pet exercise and eliminate just moments prior to putting them in their travel bag upon entering the airport terminal.

Upon arriving at your destination, create a favorable impression by arriving with a clean pet who is flea and tick free. Purchase leashes in different lengths before the start of your journey so that Fido feels comfortable mulling about the guest house with short leash (4 feet or less) or romping in the play area with a longer (6 feet) or flexi-lead while outside. Keeping Fido engaged with outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming and sightseeing will keep him calm and relaxed indoors.

Once at your holiday destination, keep both Fido and Felix as comfortable as possible in their new environment by maintaining as much of a routine as possible. Pack familiar food, treats, bowls and toys, and try to maintain a similar ratio of quiet to play time as in an average day at home. Arrange to have any hotel staff who might need to enter your room do so while you and your pet are gone so that there's no surprise disruption to frighten or alarm him. Occasionally, simply the change of surroundings alone may be enough to agitate even the best-mannered pets, and they could revert to unfavorable behaviors they grew or were trained out of long

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do not like pets, plus, of course, those who are allergic to animals," says Martz, "we must practice our petiquette by being considerate of our fellow travelers and by not attracting too much attention to ourselves." She's particularly concerned about petiquette in regards to airline travel: "We want the airlines to continue to allow our pets to travel in the cabin along with us."

To that end, dogs small enough to be carried on board an airplane must be kept in their carriers for the duration of the flight—no exercising or lap sitting allowed. In fact, a calm and stress-free travel experience might just be the best itinerary for Fido and Felix — even though they are flying in the cabin with you, they will still be exposed to an increased altitude pressure of approximately 8,000 feet that can create respiratory and cardiovascular problems in small animals. You can keep them as comfortable as possible by purchasing a crate that is big enough to stand up, turn and lie down in, which they should get accustomed to before the trip. In fact, keeping your pet contained for the flight is such a good way to ensure everyone's comfort, most airlines require it. Some such as Delta Air Lines even insist that the pets "must remain in their kennels while in the boarding area, airport lounges and during boarding or deplaning." Don't forget, then, to let

ago. If Fido was once a nervous chewer or Felix a scratcher, plan ahead just in case, and bring a crate or confine him to the bathroom with a puppy gate. If you've got a barker or meower, you'll either have to plan on spending every minute of the day with him, or hire a nearby pet nanny to keep him company while you are out.

Also, make cleaning-up on a daily basis as easy as possible for yourself, your pet and the person ultimately responsible for your room. Feed Fido or Felix in the bathroom so that messes can be easily wiped off the tile floor, and have some handi-wipes in your luggage (and your carry-on) to wipe up crumbs or slobber. If your pet likes to sleep with you in bed, bring an extra sheet or blanket to prevent soiling, and brush him regularly to avoid excessive shedding. Remember, of course, to bring waste bags and pick up after Fido on the lawn, and clean Felix's litter box on a daily basis to avoid any odors. Most importantly, when you check-out make sure you leave your room just like you found it when you arrived — intact!



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