

What to Do With Your Pet When You Travel:

How to Choose the Right Caregiver

Traveling without your pet can bring a mix of guilt, worry, and uncertainty.

Who will take care of your dog or cat? Is it better to leave them at home, with a family member, at a friend's house, or at a pet boarding facility? How do you choose someone you can truly trust? And, most importantly, **how will your pet feel while you are away?**

If you are facing this dilemma, know that you are not alone.

For people who consider their pets part of the family, planning a trip also means planning for their care. And that concern is completely understandable: you want to make sure your companion is safe, comfortable, and well cared for while you are away.

The good news is that **there are several ways to care for your pet while you travel**. The key is choosing the option that best fits your pet's personality, routine, and individual needs.

In this article, you will discover **what to do with your pet when you travel, how to choose a trusted caregiver, and how to prepare your dog or cat to spend time away from you.**

What should I do with my pet when I travel?

When your pet cannot come with you, there are several possibilities:

- leave them at home and hire a pet sitter;
- ask a trusted family member or friend to care for them;
- have your pet stay at someone's home;
- hire a professional pet caregiver;
- use a pet boarding facility or pet hotel;
- combine different options depending on your circumstances.

The best choice is not necessarily the most convenient option for you.

It is the one that provides the greatest safety, comfort, and well-being for your pet.

A social dog may enjoy spending a few days at the home of someone they already know. A cat that is strongly attached to its territory, on the other

hand, may feel more comfortable staying at home with visits from a trusted pet sitter.

That is why, before making your decision, consider **how your pet usually reacts to changes in their environment and routine.**

How do I choose where to leave my pet while traveling?

There is no single solution that works for every animal.

Your decision should take several factors into account.

1. Your pet's personality

Is your pet social or more reserved?

Do they enjoy meeting new people?

Do they get along well with other animals?

Do they become anxious when their environment changes?

These characteristics can help you determine which option is likely to be most comfortable.

2. The length of your trip

A two-day trip requires different planning than being away for two or three weeks.

The longer you will be away, the more important it becomes to have a reliable person who can provide consistent care.

3. Your pet's routine

Does your dog need regular walks? Does your cat have specific feeding times? Does your pet take medication? Do they require special care?

The more complex your pet's routine, the more important it is to choose someone who can follow it properly.

4. The environment

If your pet will stay somewhere else, make sure the environment is safe.

Gates, windows, stairs, other animals, small objects, plants, and cleaning products are just some of the things that deserve attention.

5. The caregiver

It is not enough to find someone who simply **“likes animals.”**

You need someone who has **the time, responsibility, and ability to care for your particular pet.**

Is it better to leave my dog at home when I travel?

In many cases, staying at home can be a good option for dogs that feel more secure in their familiar environment.

Your dog remains surrounded by familiar objects, smells, and spaces.

If someone is available to stay at your home or provide appropriate visits, this option may prevent the stress of moving to a completely different environment.

However, remember that **dogs need interaction, exercise, and stimulation**, in addition to food and water.

Simply leaving plenty of food and asking someone to stop by briefly is not enough.

The caregiver needs to understand your dog's actual needs throughout the entire period.

Where should I leave my cat when I travel?

For many cats, their familiar environment is extremely important.

Moving temporarily to another home can represent a significant change in their routine.

For this reason, depending on the cat's personality, **keeping them at home with visits from a pet sitter or trusted person may be a comfortable option.**

The caregiver should check on the cat's needs, including:

- food;
- fresh water;

- litter box;
- hygiene;
- environmental safety;
- interaction;
- behavior;
- possible signs of illness or discomfort.

If your cat has specific needs, make sure those instructions are clearly written down.

Who should I leave my dog or cat with when I travel?

This is one of the most important decisions you will make.

The person may be a family member, friend, neighbor, professional caregiver, or pet sitter.

But how do you know who is truly prepared?

Start by looking at **responsibility and availability**.

Can this person follow your pet's schedule?

Do they have experience with animals?

Can they administer medication if necessary?

Would they recognize an important change in your pet's behavior?

Would they be able to take your pet to the veterinarian in an emergency?

It is also important to observe the relationship between this person and your pet.

Does your pet seem comfortable around them?

Does your pet accept their attention?

Does your pet remain calm when they are nearby?

A trusting relationship can make the period of separation much easier.

How do I choose a trustworthy pet sitter?

A pet sitter can be an excellent option if you prefer your pet to remain at home.

But before hiring someone, have a detailed conversation.

Ask about:

- experience with animals;
- previous clients and references;
- daily visit schedule;
- length of each visit;
- walks, when necessary;
- feeding routines;
- medication administration;
- emergency procedures;
- communication with the pet owner;
- availability during the entire period.

If possible, arrange a meeting before your trip.

Watch how the professional interacts with your pet.

A good first impression is important, but it does not replace experience, references, and proper planning.

How do I choose a pet hotel or boarding facility?

If you are considering boarding your pet, visit the facility before making your decision.

Pay attention to:

- cleanliness;
- safety;
- organization;
- available space;
- sleeping areas;
- daily routines;
- how animals are grouped or separated;
- supervision;
- emergency procedures;
- vaccination and health requirements.

Also ask how the staff handles animals that are frightened, anxious, or struggling to adapt.

Do not be afraid to ask questions.

You are trusting someone with the care of a member of your family.

Will my pet miss me when I travel?

This is one of the questions that worries pet owners the most.

Animals can notice the absence of someone they live with every day. Changes in their routine may also affect their behavior.

Some pets may become quieter or look for their owner.

Others may seek more attention.

Some seem to continue their normal activities with very little change.

Every animal reacts differently.

That is why it is impossible to predict exactly how your pet will behave.

The best approach is to understand your pet's normal behavior and prepare them for the change ahead of time.

Will my dog be sad when I travel?

Your dog may show changes in behavior, especially when there is a significant change in routine or environment.

However, it is important not to automatically interpret every behavioral change as sadness or missing you.

If your dog becomes unusually quiet, stops eating, vomits, develops diarrhea, drinks significantly more or less water, or shows any other physical symptoms, the caregiver should contact a veterinarian.

A behavioral change can have many possible causes.

That is why observing your pet carefully is more important than trying to guess what they are feeling.

How can I prepare my pet to be away from me?

Preparation can begin before your trip.

If another person will care for your pet, give them an opportunity to become familiar with each other.

Invite the caregiver over for a few visits.

Let them participate in feeding or walking.

If your pet will stay somewhere else, visit the location beforehand.

When possible, try short periods away before leaving for a longer trip.

This gives you the opportunity to identify potential difficulties in advance.

Don't change your pet's routine right before your trip

One common mistake is making several changes at the same time.

Unless necessary, avoid changing your pet's food, schedule, or other major aspects of their routine just before traveling.

The more predictable your pet's daily life is, the easier the transition may be.

Whenever possible, maintain:

- feeding times;
 - regular food;
 - walking schedule;
 - familiar objects;
 - favorite toys;
 - sleeping arrangements;
 - normal bedtime routine.
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What should I leave for the person caring for my pet?

Create a simple **"pet care guide."**

It does not need to be complicated, but it should contain the information someone else needs to maintain your pet's routine.

Include:

Feeding

- type of food;
- amount;
- feeding times;
- dietary restrictions.

Routine

- walking schedule;
- rest periods;
- favorite activities;
- important habits.

Behavior

- fears;
- situations that cause stress;
- interactions with other animals;
- ways that help your pet calm down.

Health

- medications;
- relevant health information;
- regular veterinarian;
- emergency veterinary clinic.

Contacts

- your phone number;
- a second emergency contact;
- veterinarian;
- emergency clinic.

This simple guide can make a huge difference.

You know details about your pet that another person might take weeks to discover.

What should I prepare before traveling?

Before you pack your suitcase, make sure the caregiver has everything they need.

Leave:

- enough food;
- fresh water and appropriate bowls;
- medications;
- hygiene supplies;
- litter, if you have a cat;
- leash and collar;
- toys;
- bed or blanket;
- important documents;
- emergency contacts;
- veterinarian information.

It is also a good idea to leave some extra food in case something unexpected happens.

And if your pet will stay somewhere else, consider bringing familiar objects such as a blanket or favorite toy.

A familiar smell can help the animal recognize the object as part of their normal routine.

Should I video call my pet while I am away?

This is highly individual.

Some animals seem to respond well to hearing or seeing their owner.

Others may become confused or more restless after the interaction.

There is therefore no universal rule.

One simple alternative is to ask the caregiver to send you **photos and short videos of your pet during the trip**.

Besides helping with your homesickness, this allows you to keep an eye on your pet's eating habits, behavior, and routine.

And it can help you enjoy your trip with greater peace of mind.

What should I do if there is an emergency while I am traveling?

This is something that should be decided **before your trip**.

Do not wait until an emergency happens.

Talk with the caregiver about:

Who should be contacted?

Which veterinarian should see your pet?

Which veterinary clinic or emergency hospital should be used?

Who can authorize necessary care if you cannot be reached immediately?

Is there a second person who can help if the primary caregiver cannot get to your pet?

Keep all contact information easily accessible.

Good planning cannot eliminate unexpected situations, but it can prevent them from becoming even more difficult.

How can I help my pet adjust to my absence?

A few strategies can make this period easier:

Keep the routine

Familiar schedules can provide predictability.

Keep familiar objects nearby

A bed, blanket, and favorite toys can help the environment feel more familiar.

Maintain activities

Walks, playtime, and mental stimulation should continue according to your pet's needs.

Avoid unnecessary changes

The fewer major changes happening at the same time, the easier the transition may be.

Choose a prepared caregiver

A responsible and attentive person can make a significant difference.

What should I do when I return from my trip?

The reunion can be emotional.

Some pets become extremely excited. Others may need a few minutes before returning to their usual behavior.

Do not interpret a quieter reaction as a lack of affection.

Every animal expresses emotions differently.

Return to your normal routine and give your pet attention, affection, and the activities they enjoy.

After a few days, the trip will likely become just another experience in your pet's life.

Traveling Without Your Pet Does Not Mean Abandoning Them

Guilt can appear when you see your companion staying behind while you pack your suitcase.

But there is a huge difference between **leaving an animal without care** and **carefully planning who will look after them while you are away**.

You can travel.

You can rest.

You can work.

You can visit people you love.

And you can still be a responsible pet owner.

Good care begins before the trip.

It begins when you look for the right caregiver.

When you prepare the necessary information.

When you think about your pet's routine.

When you leave emergency contacts.

When you choose the environment that best suits your animal.

And when you consider not only what is most convenient for you, but also what provides the greatest safety and comfort for your pet.

Your pet may notice your absence, but thoughtful preparation can make the experience more predictable and secure.

And when you return home, there is one thing no amount of planning can replace:

the reunion.

Checklist: Is My Pet Ready for My Trip?

Before leaving, check:

- ☐ I have chosen someone responsible to care for my pet.
- ☐ The caregiver knows my pet's routine.
- ☐ My pet has already spent time with the caregiver.
- ☐ I have decided where my pet will stay.
- ☐ I have left enough food.
- ☐ I have prepared any necessary medications.
- ☐ I have left familiar toys and objects.
- ☐ I have provided my veterinarian's contact information.
- ☐ I have provided an emergency contact.
- ☐ I have explained what to do in an emergency.
- ☐ I have explained important habits and behaviors.
- ☐ I have agreed on how often I will receive updates.
- ☐ Whenever possible, I have allowed my pet to adapt before the trip.

If you can check all of these boxes, you have already taken an important step toward making sure your pet is safe and comfortable while you are away.

Frequently Asked Questions About Traveling Without Your Pet

Can I leave my dog home alone while I travel?

It is not advisable to simply leave a dog alone for the entire duration of a trip, even if food and water are available. Dogs need care, interaction, hygiene, safety, and, depending on their routine, regular walks and supervision.

Is it better to leave my cat at home or at a boarding facility?

It depends on the cat, the quality of the boarding facility, and the care available. For some cats, remaining in their familiar territory with a pet sitter may be more comfortable. For others, a well-managed boarding facility may be appropriate.

How long can a pet stay without their owner?

There is no single period that is appropriate for every animal. Age, species, personality, health, and routine all matter. What is important is making sure a responsible person is caring for the animal throughout the owner's absence.

Will my dog think I abandoned them?

We cannot know exactly how every animal interprets the absence of their owner. Dogs can notice changes in routine and may show behavioral changes. Careful preparation and a stable routine can help during this period.

Is hiring a pet sitter a good option?

It can be, especially for pets that feel more comfortable at home. The professional should be selected carefully based on experience, references, availability, and their ability to handle emergencies.

Should I take my pet on vacation?

It depends on the animal and the type of trip. Not every trip is suitable for a pet, and traveling with an animal may involve long journeys, changes in environment, and other factors that need to be considered. The decision should take your pet's individual needs and well-being into account.

Conclusion

Knowing what to do with your pet when you travel is, above all, a matter of planning.

There is no perfect solution for every dog or cat.

There is the solution that best respects **your own pet's personality, routine, needs, and safety.**

If your pet will stay at home, choose someone responsible to check on them.

If they will stay at someone else's home, allow time for a gradual transition.

If you choose a pet sitter or boarding facility, research the service and get to know it before your trip.

Whatever option you choose, leave clear instructions, emergency contacts, and everything the caregiver will need.

Because caring for a pet also means understanding that sometimes love means **arranging the best possible care for them even when we cannot be there ourselves.**

And that is also a way of staying close.