

Traveling With Pets

by Heather Reimer

Oct. 2007

With the strong Canadian dollar, you may be contemplating a shopping jaunt across the border or an autumn mini-vacation. If you don't have a reliable pet sitter and your dog doesn't like being left in a kennel, it's now easier than ever to take him or her with you.

Traveling with pets used to be a headache. Crossing borders was a nuisance and pet-friendly accommodations were few and far between. But in recent years, things have changed.

With so many people owning pets and treating them like children, the hospitality industry has had to adapt. Now you'll find most hotels and motels (especially in the US) eager to please their pet-loving clientèle.

If hitting the road with Rover appeals to you, start by doing some research online to identify pet-friendly hotels at your destination. Call and ask for specifics about their pet policy before you make the booking. Depending on the hotel, pets may stay for free or cost up to \$20 a night extra. Some hotels ask for a damage deposit, but most don't. And there may be a limit on the size of dog they accept.

Some have set aside special rooms for pets, while others will only allow pets to stay in smoking rooms. The most accommodating hotels will give you a main floor room with an outside entrance so late night bathroom breaks are easier... for everyone.

If your dog is a barker, some daytime noise is tolerated but don't leave him alone in the room at night. You may return to a posse of angry guests.

Before You Travel:

- Be sure your pet's vaccinations have been updated in the last 12 months and bring proof to show at the border.
- Don't take pet food across the border; it may be confiscated due to meat import bans.
- Don't feed your pet before a long car trip; they can get car sick, too.
- A seat belt harness will keep your dog safe and prevent him from moving around the car and distracting the driver.

You may be pleasantly surprised by how much your dog enjoys traveling, seeing new sights and, especially, smelling new smells!

Update: Tippy the tabby cat, who was featured in last week's article about Virden's stray cat population, has found a new home. Thanks to the Empire Advance for making the plight of homeless cats like Tippy known.

Heather Reimer is the founder of the Virden Pet Network, a free online pet listing service.