



# TRAVELLING WITH YOUR DOG

**With the festive season here, many of us will be glad to pack it all in and head off on a well-deserved family holiday. But what if part of your family has four legs and a tail, and you can't bear to leave them behind? We spoke to our expert animal behaviourist, Lara Nobre, on the best ways to travel with your dog during the holidays.**

## Travelling by car

If you're taking your pooch on holiday with you, simply loading them in the back seat of your car and hitting the road is not a great idea – especially if you'll be driving long distances.

Your pet needs to be used to car travel in order to complete the journey without distress. Get them comfortable by having them simply sit in the car with you. Then start taking them on short trips around the neighbourhood, gradually increasing the time they spend in the car.

A dog carrier is a great way to keep your dog safe in the car on your trip, but make sure it is big enough for them to stand, sit, lie down and turn around in. Also ensure they are used to the carrier by having a couple of trial runs at home before your trip. A quick trick is to feed them in the open carrier so they begin to associate it with a pleasurable activity. Placing their favourite blanket and a few chew toys in the carrier will also help them stay relaxed on long journeys. Remember, your pet carrier should always be secured to prevent sliding in the event of sudden braking.

**Feed your dog a light meal at least 4 hours before the start of your trip as this will help prevent car sickness. Do not feed it while the car is moving, but give them enough drinking water. You should also stop regularly so your dog can stretch its legs and relieve itself.**

## Travelling by plane

If you're going on holiday with your dog, driving should always be your first option. Although flying is faster, it is not recommended for dogs – especially ones with "flat" faces, like bulldogs or pugs – and should only be considered when absolutely necessary. If you have no other option but flying for the holidays, your pet will be better off staying at home with a pet sitter.

In the event that your dog has to take a trip by plane, confirm that this is possible with your airline first. Depending on the airline, small dogs can travel with you in the cabin on domestic flights should they be in a dog carrier. On international flights your pooch, regardless of size, will have to travel as air freight or special cargo. Airlines have limits on how many animals they can carry, so it is best to arrange this way in advance. Most countries will require health and vaccination certificates, and proof of microchipping before your dog can be allowed entry. As requirements change depending on the country, it is best to confirm the specifics prior to travelling.

To reduce the stress of flying on your dog, always opt for a direct flight to avoid them being transferred to another plane. Tranquillising them is not an option as it affects their breathing during flight. Most airlines will refuse to carry pets in this state as they can suffocate. Instead, speak to your vet about a herbal calmer to soothe your dog.

## Identification

Your holiday destination might be foreign to your dog, which means they can sometimes easily get lost. Make sure they are identifiable by placing a temporary tag with their name and your contact details on their collar. An even better solution is to have your dog microchipped so they are easily traceable should they lose their way. It is also beneficial to have a photo of your dog handy to help with the search.



## In case of emergency

Inform yourself of where the closest vet at your holiday destination is. Should there be an emergency, you will be able to react quicker and get your dog the assistance it needs much faster. Also, always travel with a Pet First Aid kit with the bare essentials you would need to address any minor problems/injuries that may crop up.



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