



Travelling With Pets Part II

Including your furry companion in your holiday plans can be very rewarding for you both. Part 1 of this series discussed keeping your pet happy and healthy en route - in this article I will discuss choosing your destination and keeping your holiday a healthy and happy one.

Finding a place to stay on holiday that will welcome your cat or dog is the key to a successful trip with your pet. Fortunately, more and more members of the tourist trade are becoming aware of the demand for pet friendly holidays and the UK offers an excellent choice of B&Bs, hotels and camp grounds that accept and welcome pets. The internet is a great source of information, and there are several books available that list hundreds of places available to the animal loving traveler. These can be found at veterinary surgeries, book shops and public libraries. There are also lots of holiday homes, caravan parks and hotels abroad that also welcome pets, but do book well in advance and be sure to check the small print. This will avoid the hassle of arriving at your pre-booked caravan in France with your trusty St. Bernard to discover that they only welcome dogs under 20kgs! It is also an excellent idea to ensure your pet is microchipped prior to travel and that they are well identified with a collar and tags, which should include your holiday and home addresses.

The different climates and indigenous species of the countries we visit on holiday may increase the risk to our pets of infection by diseases not normally seen in the UK. To prevent this risk there are some precautions that you should discuss with your vet prior to setting off. Leishmaniasis - a serious and potentially deadly disease is transmitted by the sand flies found on Mediterranean beaches. Fortunately, we now have collars that protect

pets from these infectious flies. Heartworm, a blood parasite transmitted by mosquitoes is also found in most European countries and is easily prevented with monthly medications. These are only examples of possible disease threats abroad, and I highly recommend a discussion with your vet prior to travel to determine which preventative medications are most appropriate for your pet. An ounce of preventions is really worth a pound of cure in this case!

A word of caution for those travelling through Europe with large breed dogs. Recent legislation in several countries, Germany in particular, has included harsh laws regarding certain dog breeds perceived as "dangerous". These include, but are by no means limited to: Rottweilers, Dobermans, Bullmastiffs, Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers and even the unlikely Pyrenean Mountain Dog. If your dog is on the list of "dangerous breeds", or is a crossbreed that resembles a breed on the list, you may be required to muzzle your pet, be turned away from the border, or in the worst case a dog may be seized and possibly destroyed. I implore owners of large breed and guard-type dogs to check carefully with the authorities of each country you plan to travel through to find out if there is any legislation which may affect you and your pet.

I hope these tips will ensure a smooth and safe holiday with your pets. Heeding the precautions will be well worth it when you are enjoying a photo album full of fantastic times with Fluffy or Fido. Bon Voyage!

Colleen Bray BSc DVM MRCVS is a veterinary surgeon at Midforest Veterinary Practice in Lyndhurst, and is thrilled to be providing veterinary services for the New Forest community. She is Canadian, and trained at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph, Ontario. She is married, and currently owned by her Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, three cats, the practice ferret and a Haflinger pony.