

Traveling with your pet: Tips for Spring Break

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Spring break is here, and many pet owners will head out in their cars with the kids and their pets to parts both known and unknown. Petfinder.com, the online database of homeless pets, has some tips for making the trip safer and more fun. First, make sure your pet has I.D. tags. "We hear too many stories of folks who lose their pets on holiday," said Betsy Saul, cofounder of Petfinder.com. "It's common sense to think about how someone will find you, should they find your pet, loose in some vacation spot far from home." She suggests an ID tag with both your home phone and your cell phone number on it. "If you don't have a cell phone, then you could use the number of a relative or friend on the tag as an alternate." Your pet may have a tag that gives his veterinarian's phone number, but that won't do much good if the veterinarian doesn't know how to reach you or your pet is found after business hours. If you've never been on a long trip with Bubba, it's a good idea to do a little dress rehearsal—perhaps a short trip. Nothing can be more nerve wracking than a 500-mile journey with a vocal pet. If you find your pet is not a good traveler, but you're bound and determined to take him or her along, a visit to the veterinarian to see if a mild sedative is advisable. Unintended Flying Objects Don't allow your pet to hang out the window, even if she loves to feel the wind in her face. "Dust and debris can get into your pet's eyes and nose," Saul said, "Not to mention the added danger in case of even a minor accident." Seat belts are available for pets and offer the best protection. "Not only is this safer for the pet," Saul said, "it also protects the humans in the car, in case of an accident." Carriers are an alternative that will keep small animals out from under the driver's legs, but be sure to buckle the crate down or it could be a Unintended Flying Object. Getting Hot If you travel to warmer climates, keep in mind that your pet shouldn't be left in a hot car. The temperatures inside can reach deadly temperatures very quickly. Park in the shade and open the windows to allow ventilation. However, don't leave the windows open wide enough to allow a pet to jump out or get his or her head stuck. Check on your pet frequently. On the other hand, if a ski trip is in the offing, remember that pets can suffer from hypothermia if left in cold cars for prolonged periods. Carry water and food for your pet. It's probably best to feed the pet when the day's travels are over to prevent nausea. Don't save unused canned food unless you can refrigerate it. Stop for exercise every two hours—this will be good for the human travelers as well—and don't forget a leash. Make sure your pet's vaccinations are up to date, and carry your pet's current proof of rabies vaccination. This could be very important should he or she become stressed and bite someone. Where to Stop Plan your overnight stops ahead of time or you may find yourself without a pet-friendly facility. Web sites like petwelcome.com will help you find places that will accept your furry family member. Advance planning can insure that there's no heartache in your spring break.

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