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## Your Smart Dog Traveling With Your Dog March 2010

**I**n just a couple of weeks, Tango and I will head out on a road trip to [ClickerExpo](#) in Lexington, KY. ClickerExpo is a dog-friendly conference, welcoming conference-goers the opportunity to bring their friendly dogs along. We'll be driving, as I'm not comfortable putting Tango in the belly of an airplane – we'll be making the day-long trek in the Element. This article will help you decide if you should consider taking your dog with you, how to travel safely, dog etiquette when traveling, and how to keep your pet safe and comfortable once you reach your destination.

**Not all dogs are suited for travel. Things to think about when deciding whether to take your dog are things like:**

- **Age of your dog** – a very young or very old dog will find traveling more difficult.
- **Dog's comfort level** – is the dog laid back or is he more prone to anxiety and worry? Would travel increase the anxiety?
- **Activity level** – is your dog going a mile a minute from dawn to dusk? Will your trip accommodate that activity level? Think about how you'll exercise your dog at the new location. Plan before you go.
- **Dog-friendliness of location** – is your dog welcome at the hotel? At Aunt Marge's? Will there be additional dog-related fees? Will there be house-rules by which you must abide? Know these in advance to avoid surprises.
- **Mode of travel** – Can you get there by car? Or must you travel by air? Is your dog eligible to fly in the cabin or must he be stowed in the cargo area in the belly of the plane? I would rather drive two days than put my dog on an airline as cargo.
- **How much time can you devote to your dog once you reach your destination?** If you'll be gone more than you'll be with your dog, it might be wise to leave your dog home.

**If you've decided that your dog will enjoy the trip and have thought through all the questions above, now you'll need to think about the actual trip and the necessary supplies and preparations.**

**If you're traveling by car, you'll want to crate your dog.** Even in low-speed collisions, your loose dog can become a projectile – seriously injuring passengers or becoming injured himself. A crate protects the dog and passengers by containing the dog, even in the event of a rollover. If a crate isn't practical, your dog can travel with a travel harness that limits his movement without the bulkiness of a crate.

**No matter how you decide to contain your dog in the car, you'll want to be sure your dog is wearing a collar with identification and phone numbers.** In the event of an accident or an escape from the car, the dog could be separated from you and become lost in unfamiliar territory. A sturdy collar with identification tags (with your home and cell phone numbers) are a must-have item.

**Keep emergency contact information about your dog in the glove box – this information can be put on an index card along with a small picture of your dog.** The card should contain your dog's name, breed, date of birth, color, and unique markings. You should also provide your contact information and any medical information pertinent to the dog (medications he's on, medical conditions, etc.).

**Also, travel with a good, high quality photo of your dog.** If he becomes lost, you can use that picture to put up "Lost Dog" signs.

**Never, ever, leave your dog alone inside a car,** even if the temperatures are cool. The temperatures inside a car can skyrocket, even on cool days.

**Pack a copy of your dog's vaccine history (including proof of rabies) with you as well.**

**If you're traveling with your dog on an airplane, you have two possible options:** if your dog is small enough, he can ride in the cabin under your seat. You must have an approved pet carrier and the



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dog must remain in the carrier for the duration of the flight.

**If your dog is too large to fit in the cabin, he must ride in the belly of the plane in the cargo section.** Check with your airline for specific requirements. Your dog must be crated in a hard-sided plastic crate. Spend a month or two acclimating your dog to that crate before you plan to travel with him. Put his name and a clever note on the outside of the crate to encourage the handlers to interact nicely with your dog. "Hi my name is Bowser and I'm an American Staffordshire Terrier. Please talk to me!" **Carry food and water with you onto the plane so you will have it available to your dog as soon as he's delivered to you at baggage claim.**

**Upon arrival at your destination, it's important that you follow common etiquette.** Ask your hosts or the hotel what the dog rules are – and abide by them! **Always pick up your dog's waste, maintain a polite distance from other travelers or guests, and strive to keep your dog from barking, whining, or causing a disturbance.**

**Try to leave the place cleaner than when you found it.** Always keep your dog on leash when outdoors. A six foot leash is a guarantee against your dog running away if startled. If you're staying in a hotel, carry a collapsible crate with you so you can contain your dog when leaving him in the hotel room. You don't want your dog dashing out the door when the turn-down service arrives or upon your return to the hotel room.

**Keep your dog on his regular feeding and exercise schedule.** Bring enough of his own food to last him for the entire trip – switching foods could lead to gastrointestinal upset. You will also want to bring interactive toys (Kong, Premier's Busy Buddy, Kibble Nibble, Squirrel Dude, etc.) to keep your dog busy and prevent him from damaging the furnishings. **Remember to bring all medication with you and also bring your veterinarian's telephone number.**

For even more dog-friendly travel tips, visit [PetfriendlyTravel.com](http://PetfriendlyTravel.com) and the [American Humane's Pet Travel Tips](#).

**I can't wait to hit the road with Tango.** He's a great traveler and is content to sleep the many miles between rest stops. He'll keep me company during the conference as well, attending the sessions with me and keeping my nerves at bay when I have to deliver a session at the conference. It's hard to be nervous with your dog on the stage.

**If you decide to travel with your dog, take time to prepare and pack thoroughly.** Be sure to bring your camera so you can capture your adventure on film! Have fun and safe travels.

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