

Furry holidays friends

It's not always easy to find someone who is able to look after your pets when you go away. There are many caravans parks and camp sites which will allow you to bring your best friend with you, and of course your family.

There are guidelines to follow and precautions to take, for you and your pet. Ring ahead and confirm that the park or site accepts pets and they may have guidelines of their own which must be adhered to.

While all your pet's vaccinations should be up to date anyway, double check with your vet about additional shots your pet may need. Also ask them for a copy of the vaccination certificate to take with you. Have your pet also go through a general health check before you set off.

A registration tag is useful only if you have an additional contact number like a friend's number who knows how to contact you, or your mobile number. Alternatively have your pet micro-chipped. It is a quick, easy and permanent way to find your pet, wherever he wanders off to.

Make sure before you leave that your pet is flee free. This includes all his bedding, blankets and travel gear as well as a first aid kit including bandages, burn cream and sting/bite solution. **Tip:** also pack a spare rug to cover any furniture at the place you're staying.

Don't forget your pet's bowls and food, it may be hard to obtain dog food you know he will eat and you know he will be able to stomach.

Dogs

From having a dog you would know that they are scavengers, hunters and explorers so make sure you know where he is at all times.

When travelling, make sure your dog is secure, preferably in a specially designed dog seatbelt, for his safety as well as your own. There are also 'canine carriers' available which are like little tents just for your dog. They can fold down when he's not using it and it can be strapped into the car while travelling.

Also NEVER leave your dog in the car, no matter how quick you think you will be. Dogs have different sweat glands to people and won't last long in a hot car.

Always clean up after you dog and make sure he is well behaved and won't bark all night and ruin your and others' holidays. Also check the signs posted at National Parks and beaches for permission to take your dog along.

Cats

Try to train your cat from an early age to walk on a lead. This allows you to take your cat outside of the caravan, tent or area you are staying in. **Tip:** don't let your cat out without a harness or lead. It must also be a specially designed harness as cats can slip out of their collars.

Cats are not usually going to obey any orders to stay within your campsite and if your cat wanders off, it may not be able to find its way back on its own.

When travelling, make sure your cat is secure in his carry box on the back seat. Also NEVER leave your cat in the car, no matter how quick you think you will be.

Also include kitty litter and a scoop to clean up after your cat, and make sure he is well behaved. Also check the signs posted at National Parks and beaches for permission to take your cat along.

Tip: don't let your pets scavenge in the wild. They can disturb wildlife and habitats as well as try and hunt native birds and disturb habitats for which you will be responsible. By following these few tips, there's no reason why your best friends should miss out on family holidays.