

Wilmette Pet Center

"the place for people who love pets"

Travelling with your pets

Whether it's for the end of summer vacation, spring break, or the family Christmas trip, more and more people are travelling with their pets. AAA and Best Western estimate that over 50% of people take their cat or dog with them on their trips, so vacations are no longer just for two legged family members! There are several things to keep in mind, though, when taking your cat or dog with you.

Flying:

If you're contemplating taking your pet on a plane, be sure to contact the airline well in advance of your trip to find out what's required in the way of documents and fees and to make arrangements. Each airline has their own rules and regulations, so make sure you're prepared.

For airlines that do accept pets in carriers, we are proud to carry the SHERPA carrier; it meets all airline's requirements for taking your pooch on board with you. If you're looking for a different arrangement, check out [PetAirways](#). It's the only dedicated pet airline where your pet travels in the main cabin and is cared for by On-Board Pet Attendants.



Driving

When driving with your pets, it's a good idea to get them used to travelling in the car. For many pets, the car ride reminds them of trips to the vet, so many look on car rides with fear. For nervous pets, begin by taking brief trips in the car around the neighborhood. It's also a good way to see what their anxiety level is. Take longer trips around town once they're comfortable with brief jaunts.

These are some of our favorite products for helping reduce fear and anxiety and fear, whether it's from travelling or something else.

- Thundershirt – this all natural, drug free system used pressure to help keep dogs calm. Its dramatic calming effect works for over 80% of animals, and had a 100% guarantee (so there's no risk for trying it!) Read more about this great product [here](#).
- Calm Shen – This herbal remedy from the trusted people at Herbsmith uses Chinese herbal remedies to help bring the body



back into balance, reducing anxiety and fear. Begin using this 2-4 weeks before your trip to get the best effect. See more on the [Herbsmith](#) page.

- Comfort Zone – Mother cats and dogs produce pheromones when nursing their young. These are called appeasing pheromones, because these scentless chemical messengers help relax and calm anxious animals. Use the spray in the car, on the pads in crates or on cloths situated around the car. Find out more [here](#).

Make sure that you stay calm and relaxed. We once had a dog trainer in, talking about dog behavior, and she mentions that we all have a tendency to speak in soft, higher pitched voices when our dogs are nervous. This can make some dogs more nervous, as you (alpha of the pack) sound weak and afraid. She recommends, when our dog gets nervous, to deliberately drop our voice an octave and to be very matter of fact in the way we speak. This tells you pup that you're calm and confident and can help them relax (we see this a lot when customers come in with their people; it can be surprising the change that come over some dogs when we try this.)

On long drives, don't forget to stop and give your dog potty breaks; When your kids need to go, you can be sure your dog needs to stretch his legs. Have plenty of water to offer during breaks. Be sure to put the harness well before opening the doors, and attach an extra tag on their collar, with the phone number and address of where you'll be staying.



Some dogs can get motion sickness when travelling by car. Some people have found relief for their dogs by giving them a tiny bit of sugar, like a jelly bean, before travelling – never give a dog chocolate or sugar-free candy, as these can be dangerous. Better yet, use [Animals Apawthecary's](#) Ginger Mint. It contains certified organic ginger root, peppermint, fennel seed, and chamomile to help soothe and calm upset tummies.

Just as you need to wear a seat belt for your safety, so does your dog. Use something like Four Paw's Safety Seat Support Harness. This dual purpose harness attaches to the seat belt, keeping your dog safe and reducing driver distraction.



When we talk about a dog seat belt, this is not what we mean.

Find the perfect place to stay with your pooch by using this website to find pet friendly hotels: <http://www.petswelcome.com/>. Or download these apps to help you find dog friendly parks, beaches, hotels, and dining spots while travelling:



[Dog Friendly.com](http://www.petswelcome.com/)
or [Dog Friendly](#)



[Bring Fido](#)

Small animals

Some small animals can be taken on airplanes. Be sure to use an airline approved carrier, and again, be sure to call your airline to find out restrictions and requirements. Whether you're flying or driving, be sure to take along enough food for the journey, as well as fresh water and treats, in addition to any medications. Make sure all carriers are properly labeled with your contact information or that of where you're staying. Keep them in their carriers, too; it's better they be a little cramped and safe than running around the car, distracting the driver. If you're crossing state lines, be sure to check the regulations on bringing small animals into that state; in some places, you may need a vet check up, and in some states, animals like ferrets are not allowed.

Birds

Some birds can be taken on car rides, but it can be stressful. Do the same thing you would with a dog: start off with brief car rides to see how well your bird travels (or not). Never take your parrot out of their carrier outside, as they can get frightened and stressed very easily. Make sure you trim their wings, so they do not suddenly take off in a strange location far from home.

Reptiles

Do to their unique needs, it's probably best to leave your reptiles at home. If someone's watching your reptile, get a bug card, so they do not have to purchase insects themselves to feed your pet.

Fish

The best advice for travelling with your fish is: Don't. There's no need, it's too stressful, and they're not going to enjoy it too much. Use a vacation feeder block to be sure your finned friends to make sure they get enough food. These work best in tanks with filters, as this will help remove any waste. Having a neighbor stop by a couple of times while you're gone can be helpful and ensure that your fish are doing fine.



Boarding:

For those who can't travel with their pet or worry too much about their inexperienced neighbor caring for their pet, we have the answer: **board them with us!** We provide all the basics: a clean, separate, roomy cage, species appropriate diet (anything from pellets to insects), hay for small animals and appropriate heat for reptiles. We do tend to book up pretty fast, so give us a call at 847-251-6750 and make your reservations early. Check out our [website](#) for more information on our boarding services and to fill out your boarding form at home.