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International travel with your dog

August 16, 2010, By Cheryl Smyth, ARTICLE, LIFESTYLE

If your plan to journey beyond Canadian shores, you need to be aware that pet travel varies greatly in other countries. It's important to be well-prepared for an international trip.

Getting your dog across the border to your destination may be as simple as having basic paperwork confirming vaccines given, or as complicated as having to quarantine him for a set time, depending on the

country's requirements.

A PET-FRIENDLY WORLD?

Most Europeans love dogs and many enjoy having them in their establishments, with the exception of the stricter United Kingdom. France tops the list by enthusiastically welcoming your dog and letting him sit at your feet in restaurants, both casual and fine dining, and allowing him almost anywhere else you want to explore, inside and outside.

On the other hand, Americans and Brazilians love their canine buddies, but not in restaurants (patios are occasional exceptions). The United States and Australia provide many dog parks and pet-friendly destinations.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Mexico has a variety of vacation spots that offer dog-friendly lodging, restaurant admittance, and romps on beaches and in dog parks. Though a segment of the country values dogs as much as we do, countless abandoned, typically unhealthy dogs roam the streets. To control their numbers, poisoned food is sometimes intentionally put out. You'll therefore want to watch your pet closely, and keep him leashed.

In many developing countries, diseased mongrels wander freely. It is important to keep your dog and yourself away from them.

Numerous countries cater to visiting pets, since satisfying travelers with pets is good for business. Be aware, though, that because we love our animals so much, it may be difficult to see how poorly other societies treat their animals. China and South Korea, for example, have reputations for treating dogs cruelly, yet China offers quite a selection of dog-friendly accommodations.



TIPS FOR TRAVEL



- In Canada, we usually only need to administer protection from fleas and other parasites for about half a year, since they're

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not an issue in winter. In warmer countries, your dog needs to be protected year round. Insects can carry diseases not found in Canada. For instance, we have ticks known for the threat of Lyme disease, whereas some ticks in the Caribbean can transmit a type of erlichiosis.

- If there is extreme heat at your destination, dogs with heavy coats might not be comfortable. Beach lovers need to be careful of hot sand on tender canine pads; whereas city tourists need to be careful of hot pavement.

- If your dog isn't used to the cold, make sure you pack a doggie coat and booties. And watch for substances used to melt ice on roads and sidewalks such as salt, which can irritate your dog's pads.

- Car rental agencies vary in their policies regarding pets in their vehicles, since damage is a possibility and the potential of fur left behind is a concern. If a rental agency accepts a dog in one of their cars, they will likely expect it clean on return or may charge a fee to clean it themselves. Some companies may require your dog to travel in a crate. If not, covering the seats with a blanket will help to keep the vehicle clean. It's best to check beforehand, as even individual locations of a big company may have their own rules.

- From the crowded cities of the world to the vast open regions, policies for getting around using public transportation – buses, trains, taxis and ferries – vary considerably. Inquiring beforehand will help your trip run more smoothly.

- If you'll be flying to your destination, check the airlines to see how pet-friendly they are. Some will only allow dogs to travel in their cargo holds, which brings up all sorts of issues.

- When making reservations, always mention you'll be bringing your dog, even if their ads specify that dogs are welcome. Some places charge extra fees, or only offer designated rooms. Others restrict the size or type of dog.



- If your dog has a sensitive stomach, you'll want to bring a supply of his food just in case you can't find any available in stores during your trip. In some parts of the world, bottled water is not only important for you, but also for your dog. Bring water from home for a dog that easily gets sick from a source it isn't used to.

Cheryl Smyth has been a writer for a few years and photographer for almost 20 years. The desire of having her dog, 'Tessi', with her on her travels has inspired her to discover and write about all that pet travel has to offer. Some of her travel stories and photography can be found at cstravelsandpics.ca.

dogsincanada.com/travel

More on traveling with your dog in tow

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