



Road Trips with Dogs

Hit The Road With Your Furry Friends This Spring!

By Teresa K. Tobat

If warmer temperatures and lower gas prices have you craving a road trip don't feel like you need to leave your dogs at home. You can hit the road for fun destinations—and enjoy the ride as you go.

This past December, I loaded up my two Chihuahuas and hit the road for dog-friendly Asheville, North Carolina. My first road trip with my furry friends had its up and downs, but I hope my travels will inspire you to bring your dogs along the next time you take a driving vacation.

How to prepare

Check with the vet to see if your dog is fit to travel, suggests Heather Hunter, director of public relations for AAA. Once your vet has given you the go-ahead be sure to request a copy of your dogs' vaccination records, as some hotels require these.

Next up: car safety. Start by purchasing harnesses. These usually come in two types: bucket seats or ones where you buckle your dog in. The bucket seats Solvit sent me were perfect for my 8- and 11-lb. Chihuahuas. These harnesses have a strap that hangs over the headrest, a strap that buckles around the seat, and a nice bucket carrier that's sized based on weight. My dogs, I think, loved having enough room to sleep and sit in these. I appreciated the interior strap so I could hook each dog's leash to it.

Next, you'll want to bring extra food, water, beds and maybe even toys. If you think your pets will be homesick, a favorite squeaky toy or even blanket might help them feel at ease. Finally, you'll want to plan well. Ensure that the destination has dog-friendly activities, places and things to do. Many cities have websites for visitors that list dog parks and local dog-friendly attractions.

Breaks

I took breaks every three hours on my trip, which added to my travel time. Rest stops are perfect choices for breaks, since most have generously-sized, pet-friendly areas. Once the sun goes down, I'd recommend using gas stations due to safety concerns. Just look for ones with grassy areas nearby. My dogs were equally as excited to frolic by a gas station as they were in a park.

What to expect

Your dogs will likely need more chances to get out than they would at home. The Double Tree in Asheville had a nice walking path behind the property where I'd take my dogs out in the morning and evenings. Before you book your hotel, call ahead to ensure the building is near walking paths and double-check their pet policy, especially if you'll be there for more than one night.

While it's best to take your dogs out adventuring with you, it's not always possible to see the sites with pets. If you plan to go out but want to leave your dogs in the hotel, I'd suggest hanging up a "do not disturb" sign. I put Autumn and Rocket in the spacious bathroom to cut down on messes, and I made sure to let the housekeeper know that dogs were there before I went out. I left the clock radio on when I was out to give them background noise.

Ups and downs

I loved having my two dogs with me during the trip. I'm usually flying solo when I travel, so having companions was nice. Plus, I felt like I was at home when I returned to two excited dogs every night.

But they did make things a little more complicated. Returning to



The Author's dogs, Autumn and Rocket.

the hotel every few hours was a pain. My boy Rocket is a little rambunctious, so I had to put him in a rolling carrier case when I left and entered the hotel room, which was time consuming. My biggest issue traveling with my dogs was noise. My dogs would

bark when they heard a commotion in the hallway. When I checked in, the staff informed me I'd get a call if my dogs were too loud. I thankfully never received one. If your dogs are barkers, hotel stays may not work for you.

Despite the downsides, I consider my first doggy road trip a success. I got to experience Asheville for the first time with my pups, and it made the trip even more pleasant. **ND**

Teresa K. Tobat is a travel writer and editor. Learn more about her travels at teresaktobat.com, and check out her dogs on Instagram at <https://instagram.com/picsfromchihuahuatown>.

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