Feline Travel: Deciding to Take Her Along

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How does your feline family member fit into your summer vacation plans? Whether our cats accompany our travels or stay home is a major factor in planning family vacations. Ultimately, your cat's safety, health, and comfort should decide if she travels or not. To help in the decision making process, keep the following travel options in mind.

Have cat will travel

MANY ASPECTS of the travel industry have moved beyond pet friendly to the world of pet luxury. Most theme parks offer free daily pet sitting and some cruises pamper kitty with gourmet meals, massages, and more. In fact, it is now easier than ever to share worldly excursions - and thereby increase the bond you share - with your cat.

In addition, cats are not as demanding of travelers as other pets. In fact, many cats require the same amenities on the road as those found at home: Food, water, a clean litter box, and a comfortable place to sleep. However, cats are territorial and leaving the security of home can be very stressful. Cat accompanying your travels? Check out our travel necessity checklist.

Boarding your cat

NON-TRAVELING CATS can be boarded away from home. Accommodations include cat spas, veterinarian offices, and kennels. Still other kennel-less boarding services actually hire people to take your cat into their home while you're away.

The advantage to boarding facilities is that each offers supervised care of your cat. Those incorporated into a veterinarian's office also ensure immediate access to medical care if needed and many kennels have individuals to socialize and play with your cat. However, outside boarding facilities can be unfamiliar, and therefore stressful, to your cat. Also, ensure your cat is current on all vaccinations, since she will be exposed to other animals.

Keeping your cat at home

SOME PEOPLE prefer to keep their cat at home while away. Unless your cat suffers from severe separation anxiety, this is often the least stressful option. However, who is going to watch over your cat? The obvious choice is to ask friends, neighbors, or family members to watch your cat. One advantage to this is that friends and family often want to offer the best care they can. However, many may be

Questions to Ask
BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

- Does your destination allow cats? And is it safe?
- What veterinarians are available if needed?
- Is there proper storage for feline medications?
- Does your destination state require a health certificate?

Questions to Ask
BEFORE YOU BOARD

- Does someone check on your cat during the night?
- Are the boarding facilities clean? Do they smell?
- How well and how often are cages and litter boxes cleaned?

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unprepared for mishaps or accidents. Instead, a professional pet sitter may be a better option. These individuals can stay with or check on your cat on a regular basis. They should be experienced and insured. Always ask for references. No matter who you ask, however, give them your and your veterinarian's contact information.

- Are the cages cleaned between boarders?
- What is the regular feeding schedule?
- Will your cat be kept separate from other animals?

Questions to Ask
BEFORE YOU HIRE

- What is the individual's experience with cats? Emergencies?
- How do they relate to your cat during a personal interview?
- How frequently will they come to your home and when?
- Are they willing, and do they know how, to give medications?
- How often will they clean the litter box? Refill food and water?

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