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8 Steps to Take Before Flying With Your Dog



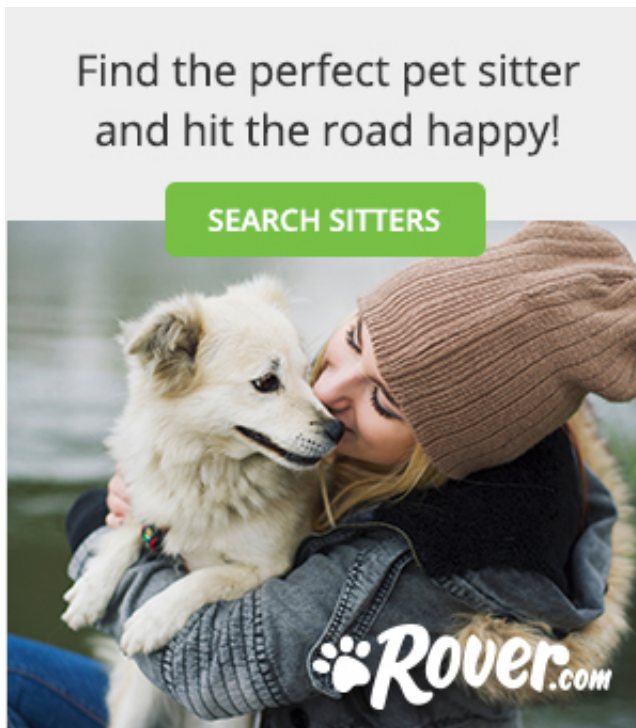
The friendly skies are not always so friendly. Between navigating crowded airports, squeezing into tiny seats, and shelling out big bucks for fares, flying can be a stressful experience for even the most seasoned travelers. So imagine how stressful it can be for your dog.

Flying with your dog is a possibility, but there's a lot you should know before you book your furry friend a ticket. [San Francisco trainer and owner of The Pooch Coach Beverly Ulbrich](#) is outlining everything you need to know before putting

your pet on a plane.

Research Your Options Before Flying with Your Dog

All airline pet policies are not created equal. While some airlines offer luxurious options like “Cuddle Class” in the first-class cabin, others may not allow your dog to fly at all. It’s not just a matter of space—some airlines refuse to fly dogs in the cargo hold for liability concerns.



Here’s a few of the major airlines that will **not** fly dogs in cargo:

- Southwest
- Virgin America
- Jet Blue
- Frontier
- U.S. Airways

Some [airlines have restrictions on breeds](#), mainly those with shortened airways that might have trouble breathing aboard the plane in cargo, especially under stress.

The general rule of thumb to fly in the less-stressful cabin is the **dog and crate combined can weigh no more than 20 pounds**. [This comprehensive site lists all the rule and regulations of flying with your pet](#), including fees and pet reservation lines.

Plan to Fly with Your Dog Weeks in Advance

Whether in the cabin or cargo, you'll need to prepare your dog for flying. Follow these expert tips for a seamless trip:



Whether in the cabin or in cargo, dogs have to fit comfortably in their crates and be willing to stay there for hours.

- **Step 1: Crate**

Training—Your dog should already be crate trained well before the flight. Your dog needs to be able to stand up and turn around in their crate. “Make sure they’ve had plenty of time to adjust,” Ulbrich says. “They should be able to sleep in their kennel and be comfortable with it.”

- **Step 2: Conquer Separation Anxiety**—Your dog must be able to lay

down in his crate by himself, even in the cabin. “They have to stay in a kennel underneath the seat the entire flight, so you have to make sure they can be in the kennel alone,” Ulbrich explains.

- **Step 3: Desensitize Noise**—Make sure your dog is desensitized to loud noises and crowds, which means he must be properly socialized. There are some exercises to help your dog be calm in the crowd. “Play some sounds of airplanes taking off in the house or loud noises over the speaker systems so the dog is desensitized to the noise and doesn’t think the sky is falling,” Ulbrich suggests.

Day of the Flight



Only guide and service dogs can travel unrestricted in the plane cabin.

somewhat,” Ulbrich says. The kennel is required to have a water dish attached, but the water may splash in flight, or your dog may be too stressed to drink. Be conscious of leaving food in the crate as well. “Don’t leave anything they could eat and choke on since nobody is there to help them.”

There are a few important things to remember the day of your flight.

- **Monitor your dog’s food and water intake.** This might seem like common sense, but frazzled pet parents might not consider how long their dog will be in their crate, unable to go potty. You need to balance this concern with keeping your dog hydrated during the flight. “You don’t want them to be dehydrated but you should restrict their water intake

- **Run, run, run!** Make sure your dog gets plenty of taxing exercise to wipe his energy out. “Even if that means if you get up at 3 a.m., you have to walk your dog for the longest walk they’re used to to make sure they’re as tired as possible and empty their bladders,” Ulbrich explains.
- **One last potty break.** You might be counting on that last pit stop to let your dog relieve himself. Make sure you do this either right before you check in (if you’re flying your dog in cargo) or right before you go through security (if your dog is flying in the cabin). Research your airport ahead of time to know where there might be a grassy area. “Some airports have dog-relief areas, but your last option might be a concrete sidewalk,” Ulbrich says. “Make sure your dog is used to going potty on the pavement, just in case.”
- **Make your dog comfortable.** Flying is stressful enough for us humans but imagine how stressful it is for a dog who is separated from you and doesn’t understand what’s going on. A shirt that smells like you can be comforting, as well as a familiar blanket or toy. Keep the weather conditions in mind, though. “When I fly my dog in the winter, I have a jacket on them,” Ulbrich says. “It might be best to have a little jacket, even a [ThunderShirt](#), which keeps them warm and calms them down. But if it’s going to be hot, make sure you don’t put too many blankets in there that could make them even warmer.”

Word of Warning

Before you commit to flying your dog in cargo, understand the liability the airline will take if something goes wrong. Familiarize yourself with the airline’s handling procedures and realize to the airline, you are “shipping” your dog.

“The luggage will come off first, so don’t panic when you don’t see your dog right away,” Ulbrich explains. “Even though you pay extra to travel with your dog, they take the luggage off first and then they take the live animals off.”

If you're not comfortable with the airline's policies, you could always travel by car or train, [sometimes even by boat](#)—or [find a loving dog sitter](#) at home. The most important thing is keeping our furry friends comfortable and making sure they arrive safe.

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By [Jacqueline Bennett](#)
September 2, 2015

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Lesa says

September 7, 2015 at 7:30 pm

Dogs are not allowed on Amtrak unless they are service dogs. No exceptions

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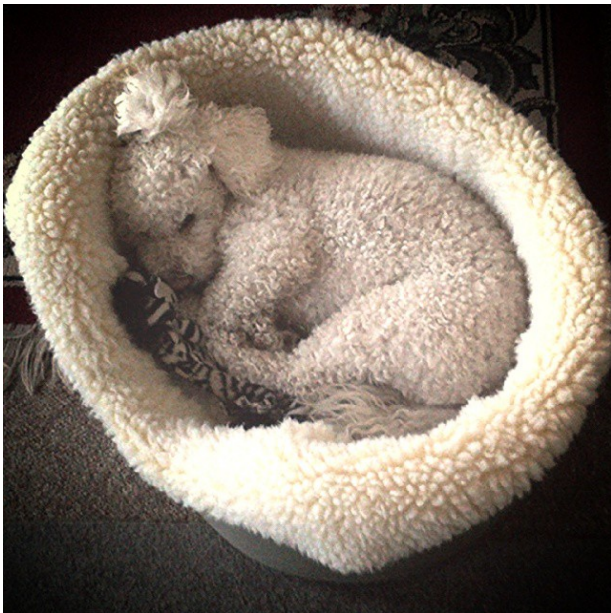
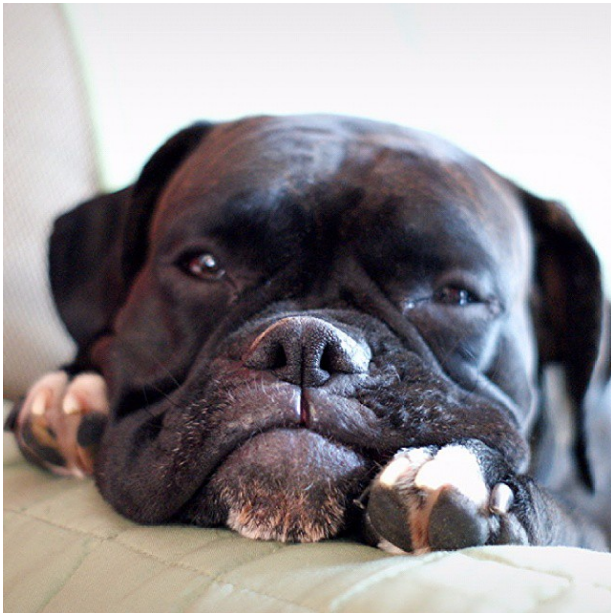


Audrey O.

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