



FEATURE

Packing for your Pack

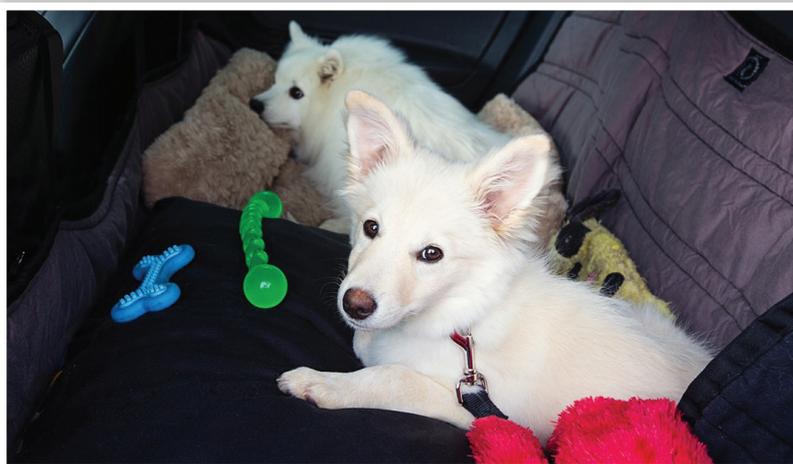
Tips for preparing for a Road Trip with your Dog



If you're anything like me, to enjoy a holiday you have to share it with loved ones, and that most definitely includes our dogs. And to make sure the dogs have everything they need whilst we're away, I've been known to end up packing more for them than for me!

Here's a look at what you want to consider when packing your dogs' suitcase for a road trip. Of course, what you take will depend on where you're off to, the climate there and the activities you're going to do, so pack accordingly.

Equip the Car



We humans wear seatbelts to keep safe, and it's important to do the same for our dogs. Make sure they are fitted with a crash-test approved safety restraint appropriate for the dog's size or travel in a crash-test approved travel crate.

We don't travel without a washable car hammock to protect the vehicle's upholstery. It makes cleaning-out fur, sand and other debris dogs will invariably bring back to the car after an adventure much easier.

Be sure to pay attention to their comfort during the journey. You might have the air-con on them, but direct sunlight through glass can still be uncomfortable so if your windows aren't tinted I recommend purchasing some inexpensive car shades.

Be prepared to feed and water your dog during the journey. One tip is to make sure you have easy access to a single meal serving for them. There's nothing more frustrating than stopping for dinner only to realise the dog food or their bowls are under everything else in the boot. Also, have for your car a rigid travel water bowl or a no-spill equivalent so dogs can always access water. And last but not least, have a dog first aid kit in the car. It's better to have one and not need it, than the other way round.



The Essentials for Every Trip

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Other essential items to take along are treats and poop bags. If your dog gets distracted in an unfamiliar place the treats will be helpful to get their attention and remind them of their training. And you must be responsible for your dog by cleaning up after them.

Don't forget any medication your pets may take, which also includes that essential heartworm preventative or tick-repelling products.

I'd also recommend taking along a spare collar and leash - in case they get damaged or wet and you want to dry them out. A long lead for keeping control in unfamiliar places (like for a beach romp if you're not familiar with any potential hazards of the area) or for securing at your caravan, campsite or accommodation. Lastly, consider a waterproof jacket, so that rain doesn't stop the fun when you want to explore outdoors. And speaking of getting wet, take a good supply of towels. These are invaluable for everything from drying fur post-swim, to cleaning up mess or accidents.



Be a Welcome Guest

Always do your homework and book accommodation that will welcome your dogs. Even so, be respectful of the privilege of taking your pet along and take care to leave the place clean and tidy.

Some examples of this:

- Take along a dog bed that your pet is familiar with and happy to sleep in (even if they don't use it at home!). It can help them to settle in unfamiliar surroundings if they have their own spot to head.
- Consider taking along some dog rugs or blankets, to give a sense of familiarity and to protect the floors and furniture.
- If you're worried about the dog damaging furniture or furnishing, then taking a collapsible crate is invaluable (side note - crate training your dog is highly beneficial for travelling as well as in many other aspects of life with dogs).
- If you have fluffy hair-shedding puppies (like we do) always groom them outside and try to clean up any visible hair that may have shed prior to departure.

Seasonal Equipment

Just like their pet parents, dogs need different clothing and equipment depending on the season. In summer a doggy life jacket is going to be of benefit for beach trips, especially if they aren't confident swimmers, or you're going to do activities like boating or paddleboarding. Also consider a cooling vest to avert heat stroke.

If your dog has thin fur or pale skin (especially on the ears or nose) then invest in doggy-sunscreen. And of course, for beach visits, make sure you've got their favourite ball or float toys - for obvious reasons!

At the opposite end of the spectrum with winter, make sure your dog has a warm winter coat, and possibly even snow booties or paw wax. And take extra warm bedding.

Grooming on the Go

Don't forget your dog needs routine grooming. Pack their brush and comb them through at the end of each day (this also serves as a tick check).

Detangling spray can come in really handy, especially if they're in and out of saltwater, and it also doubles up as a quick wash-and-brush-up if you don't have the facilities for a full bath and shampoo.

And lastly, don't forget your sense of adventure and the delight in a new discovery. Dogs come ready equipped with these! And that's just one of the reasons why travelling with dogs is such an incredible experience. Enjoy getting beyond your backyard!



Author: Kerry Martin

Dogs, photography and travel are what matters most to Kerry Martin, award-winning dog photographer and editor of Puppy Tales, a website aimed at helping pet owners make the most of life with their fur family.

A long-time passionate explorer, Kerry and husband Sam made their Dog Tales of Australia Tour dream with their fur-kids, Keiko and Summer, a reality!

The 56,400km road trip took in every state and territory and involved curling up in caravan parks, free camping, luxury accommodation (just a couple!), station stays, cabins and staying with friends.

Over this time Kerry captured 82,051 photographs and 41.5 hours of drone flight images. Memories to last a lifetime!

Puppy Tales Website: <https://puppytales.com.au/>
Dog Tales of Australia FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/dogtalesofaustralia/>
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