

Caravanning or Camping with your dogs

THE DOS AND DON'TS



Article by Kerry Martin

Travelling, whether it be camping in a tent or with a caravan, is THE best kind of travel. To whet your appetite for em-bark-ing on your own dog inclusive caravan or camping adventure, here are just some of the reasons why:

- ✓ Dogs are the most agreeable travel companions
Nothing you want to do on holiday will ever be a bad idea to your dog. Camping out under the stars? Woof! A scenic hike? Woof! A swim at the beach? Woof, woof, woof!
- ✓ You'll see and explore more!
With caravanning or camping, you're more likely to get off the beaten track and more likely to explore by foot with your canine companion.
- ✓ Dogs make things more fun!
The joy that they approach any new experience with is contagious, and so much fun to see. More laughter and more play are guaranteed.
- ✓ You go places you otherwise wouldn't.
Your dog will take you on unexpected detours. Marvelling at the night sky on a reluctant toilet break, stumbling across a rockpool on your morning walk. The compromises you make for your pooch can become the highlights of your trip.
- ✓ It's good for you!
Aside from the physical benefits of the activity together, spending time with your dog is good for your soul. Companionship, laughter, play and snuggles make us happier.

Now to make your caravanning or camping experience the best it possibly can be - the dos and don'ts!

BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE

DO

- ✓ If this is your dog's first sleep under canvas or in the van, do a dry run first. Set up 'camp' in the backyard and spend a night under the stars to see if they're a natural camper, or what assistance or training they may need to make your trip a success.
- ✓ Search out the paw-fect campsite. Check out any restrictions and if additional fees apply for dogs. It also won't hurt to look for dog-friendly attractions in the area.
- ✓ Get your dog accustomed to their travel bed, or sleeping bag, in the comfort of your own home, so that it's nicely reassuring when on the road.



FEATURE



DO

- ✓ Make sure your canine companions are in good health and are properly and regularly treated against parasites such as fleas.
- ✓ Ensure your dog is microchipped and the details up to date. If your phone is likely to be out of range, then make sure there's a second number which can be reached.
- ✓ Take along enough dog food for the trip and then some spare. In the event of an unplanned delay, you need to be sure the dog is catered for.
- ✓ Pack a waterproof tarp or mat to protect the dog from damp ground and give comfort during rest periods.
- ✓ Before setting off, check any fire warnings and what weather to expect, so that you're well prepared.

DON'T

- ✗ Assume everywhere is dog-friendly. Sadly, some caravan parks or campgrounds are off-limits to our dogs. Doing your homework first, rather than just rocking up, can save from being turned away, or having to stay somewhere that isn't what you were looking for when travelling with your dog.
- ✗ Think your dog only needs water, a handful of kibble and dry ground to sleep on. Your dog has needs, which it is your responsibility to meet at all times. Plan ahead for your pooch so that all bases are covered, no matter where you are.

ENROUTE

DO

- ✓ Consider your dog's comfort, especially on long journeys. Stop frequently to allow them to stretch their legs and relieve themselves.
- ✓ Have a travel water bowl they can reach whilst in the car.
- ✓ Secure any other cargo so that it doesn't fall on to your dog.
- ✓ Keep the temperature and speaker volume comfortable within the vehicle. If you can, turn off speakers to the area your dog is in and ensure there is airflow to that area from the air conditioner.
- ✓ Consider using window screens in the summertime to help prevent direct hot sun on the dogs and therefore keep them cool.

DON'T

- ✗ Allow your dog to travel loose in your vehicle. In the event of an accident or breaking suddenly, they would become a missile flying forward. Look into a crash-test approved pod, harness, or crate to keep everyone safe on your travels to and from your destination.
- ✗ Leave your dog unattended in your vehicle on a hot day for any length of time. Dogs die in hot cars in frighteningly short amounts of time.
- ✗ Allow your dog to travel in the front passenger seat - the impact on a dog of the airbag expanding is enough to break their neck or kill them.



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ON ARRIVAL

DO

- ✓ Play by the 'rules'. They are there to help ensure the safety, comfort and enjoyment of all visitors.
- ✓ Ensure you have a sturdy collar and leash. They are essential for walks and at the campsite. In fact, if your dog loves swimming, make that two - a second collar for them to wear whilst the first one dries.
- ✓ Observe basics for your dog's welfare such as making sure they are secure at all times, providing fresh water, ensuring they have a place in the shade and out of the direct sun, and daily checks for ticks, nicks or cuts.
- ✓ Know the location of the nearest vet, just in case.

DON'T

- ✗ Allow your dog to wander loose around your site. This is for their safety and also the comfort and enjoyment of fellow travellers in the area. Consider taking a long line to give them that bit more freedom where space allows. Another invaluable aid is a stake for the ground, or for a little extra freedom, a zipline.
- ✗ Rely on finding a stream or water source at the campsite for your dog's drinking water. Remember, not all water is safe to drink, and if it's not recommended that you drink the water, then neither should the dog. Take water along, more than you anticipate needing.
- ✗ Allow your dog to bark unchecked. It's irritating to those trying to enjoy the serenity.
- ✗ Leave your dog unattended on campsites. It may be too hot, or otherwise unpleasant for them. There is also the potential risk to the dog's own safety from predatory wild animals, who will find a tethered dog easy pickings.





DURING YOUR ADVENTURES

DO

- ✓ Take along a couple of towels, specifically for the dog to use. If they don't get muddy, or jump in a lake, you may need to towel them down after rain.
- ✓ Pack a few of your dog's favourites toys, or long-lasting chews, so that they have something to do while you're chilling out around the campsite.
- ✓ Pack your dog first aid kit. Being outdoors exposes them to a greater risk of cut pads, insect bites, or small cuts, so have the necessary disinfectants and bandages on board with you.

DON'T

- ✗ Forget your dog's needs for exercise and mental stimulation every day, even though you might be relaxing on vacation.
- ✗ Think being at one with nature is no excuse for not pooper scooping. Pack plenty of poop bags! Fouling the campsite is not only disgusting but it discourages people from opening their facilities to canine kind.
- ✗ Overlook your dog's basic needs for a clean and tidy coat, even though you are away. Indeed, combing and brushing at the end of each day is a great way of checking for ticks, so that you can remove them immediately.

AND OVERALL THE LARGEST

DOS

- ✓ Have fun together!
- ✓ Take plenty of photos of the special times you have together.
- ✓ Share your favourite places to head with fellow dog lovers. Join us on Facebook in our group: 'Beyond the Backyard: Travel and Adventures with Your Dog' - here you can find recommendations from fellow campers and ask any questions you may have!

