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Manassas, VA 20112

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Can I Go Too?

by
Kimo

As told to
Peter Smolens
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Hi there, down here, at your feet! You know me, the one who wakes you every morning for my morning walk. I'm the best alarm clock you ever had. I hear you talking about summer vacation. Great! Where are we going this year? Across the country? Maybe to Europe? What's this? You're saying no, it's too much trouble to take the dog on a long distance trip.

I see you're checking the computer for area "kennels." After calling a few places, you found that the price for not taking me is quite high. So, how about taking me along? I'm not that much trouble if we do some planning before we go.

During the Trip
If we're going by train or airplane, call ahead to check on the ground rules they have set up for dogs. They usually require me to stay in a commercial pet carrier while we travel with them.

I don't mind these carriers, but I'll be separated from you. To make me more secure, put my favorite towel or cushion in the dog carrier. It has your sent on it. That will let me know your still around. Also, put a plastic or leather chew toy for me to play with during the trip. That will take my mind off being alone.

We'll need to get to the train station or airport early to check me in. This will also help me get used to my new surroundings. As an extra precaution, you might get something from the vet to calm me down while I'm on the train or plane. Remember, I'm just as excited about going on this vacation as the rest of the family.

If we're going by car, we'll have to work things out by our self. I won't cause a problem if we both follow some easy, but essential rules

While on the road there are a few things I'll need. Just like your children I get thirsty, hungry, and need a little security. Water is most important to me. It gets hot in the car and being underneath all this fur is no picnic. Bring my water dish with you in the car. I may feel like having a drink of water only when you stop the car. On the other hand, I might want a drink while we're on the road. Is that ok? Just pour a little water in my dish. If I drink it all, you can pour me some more.

Use a towel under my bowl because I tend to drool.

Try to feed me at my usual times, just as you would if I was at home. This will help keep my tummy calm. Between meals, it might be nice to give me a chewy biscuit while were ridding. I'll try to be neat, but you know how messy I can be.

I tend to shed my fur in the summertime, so please bring along my favorite blanket or towel. I don't shed all over the car. A blanket or towel will also make me feel more at home when I look out and see the land moving by so fast.

On the road, you'll probably want to stop and get something to eat. That's fine with me, but why don't you get it to go. Then we can all eat together. If you do go into a restaurant, ask the management if I can come in too. If I can't go inside, see about getting a window seat so that I can see you. You might try eating in shifts so that someone could sit with me. This way I know that you're still around.

Please don't leave me in the car with the windows open just a crack. I've heard the stories about animals and hot cars. The lack of air can be fatal to me. The sun can heat up the inside of the car, and I could roast!

Once You've Arrived

You're at the motel now. I hope you called ahead to see what arrangements the hotel has for dogs. If I can't stay with you, the hotel may have agreements with a local kennel where I can stay during this part of the trip. If you ask, some places will let me stay in your room. You might have to leave a deposit if I make a mistake. Check with the management on the local ground rules for me. Some managers would rather have us dogs than some children, and they will tell you so.

If you leave me in the motel room, I might bark and whine because I'm scared of being alone. So, before you go, leave some things around to reassure me that you're coming back. You might not know it, but your clothes have your scent on them. Leave a good supply of food and water along with my favorite towel or cushion. These items will also help me feel more secure. It also might be a good idea to take me out for a walk just before you leave and as soon as you get back. I want you to get your deposit back as much as you do.

When we stay with friends or relatives, remember to have some considerations for them. They might not enjoy the company of animals the way you do. They, in fact, might be fearful about having me as a guest. Remember to tell them about me when asking. Let them know about my habits and charms.

Think not only of them but of their pets too. My brothers and sisters sometimes don't take to kindly to intruders invading their territory.

Once we are there, try to put my food and water in the same location as at home. I tend to get excited about being in new surroundings so don't let me get overly friendly. I don't want to break things.

I know that we're going to have a great time and visit beautiful and exciting places together. As you can see, with a little planning from you, I'm not that much trouble to take along. The most important rule to remember is to make me feel secure like I was at home when we're traveling. By doing so, you make me feel more like a family member, which, in a way I am!

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