



News Release

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AAA AND BEST WESTERN STUDY REVEALS TOP ACCOMMODATION NEEDS AMONG PET TRAVELERS

Renowned pet expert Cesar Millan offers tips on hotel pet etiquette

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (July 19, 2012) – For many Americans, taking pets along on vacation can make the experience more fun for the whole family. A full 51 percent of travelers with pets say they would bring their pets along on every vacation if they could, according to a recent AAA/Best Western survey of individuals who traveled with their pets in the last 12 months. What hinders them from doing so?

Finding Welcoming Accommodations

Among top considerations in whether to include pets in travel plans is the need to locate welcoming, appropriately matched pet-friendly accommodations, according to the study. Specific aspects of the search include: finding places that accept pets (95 percent), learning about pet policies such as size limits and fees (49 percent) and getting details about available pet services (22 percent). One-quarter of pet travelers who have skipped this important planning step admit to sneaking their pet into a hotel or motel at some point in the past, creating anxiety that can affect pet behavior.

Plan in advance by using a reliable resource like *Traveling with Your Pet: The AAA PetBook®*, available in print and digital versions can alleviate concerns related to accommodations and other pet-travel preparations. The listings for pet-friendly AAA Approved and Diamond Rated lodgings throughout the U.S. and Canada provide important details like fees, permitted pet sizes, conditions of stay and pet amenities. Listings also include more than 600 pet-friendly campgrounds plus dog parks and attractions and national public lands that allow pets. Best Western offers more than 1,600 pet-friendly properties worldwide.

In the state of Virginia, there are over 100 cities and towns with pet-friendly accommodations. The Commonwealth boasts almost 250 locations offering pet services and amenities. Among the listings in Virginia are seven campgrounds across the state that welcome pets and their owners.

Pet Etiquette Considerations

Respondents also identified observations about other pet travelers, pinpointing several behavioral considerations for owners as well as their pets:

- Owners not cleaning up after pets (77 percent)
- Dogs that bark constantly (57 percent)
- Unleashed pets (49 percent)
- Pets not obedience trained (43 percent)
- Owners not notifying others that pet is aggressive toward people/other pets (41 percent)
- Pets not trained to relieve themselves outside (29 percent)

“Traveling with your dog can be a wonderful experience. Remember, a balanced dog makes a better traveling companion. Always nurture a balanced state of mind,” says pet expert Cesar Millan.

“Plan your vacation with your dog in mind. Here are some tips to make travel more fun and less stressful for your dog,” says Millan:

- Before you start your trip, take your dog for a walk.
- Feeding your pet in the car is not a good idea.

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- As you head out on the road, make sure you crate or harness your dog for safety.
- When stopping for a break, never leave your dog in the car, especially when it's warm outside. Even if the window is cracked open, the car can still heat up and be dangerous to your dog.
- Remember to bring your dog's scent with you. Having a favorite toy will comfort and relax him.

Travelers can also find useful tips for preparing four-legged travelers for the road or air, plus handy information on pet etiquette, insurance and emergency animal clinics, in *Traveling with Your Pet: The AAA PetBook* and on the AAA.com/PetBook website. The 14th edition publication is available at many AAA and CAA offices and select booksellers at a suggested retail price of \$18.95. The digital edition is available at online booksellers at a suggested digital retail price of \$9.99.

More AAA/Best Western 2012 Pet Traveler Study Results

- A full 93 percent said their pet makes a good travel companion, identifying these reasons:
 - Good cuddle buddy when away from home (27 percent)
 - Always lets the owner select the destination (18 percent)
 - Doesn't hog the hotel remote (12 percent)
 - Snores less than owner's significant other (7 percent)
 - Helps attract dates (1 percent)
- More than eight in 10 (85 percent) of pet travelers travel with their dog, and two in 10 (21 percent) travel with a cat.
- Top types of vacations enjoyed with pets:
 - Visiting friends and family (78 percent)
 - Road trips (50 percent)
 - Going to the beach (33 percent)
 - Camping (27 percent)
 - Visiting a city (23 percent)
 - Hiking (17 percent)

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*Numbers are approximate and can fluctuate.

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