

# VACATION WITH PETS: HOW TO TRAVEL SAFELY?

Many dogs just don't like to drive in a car, but also it can present certain safety risks. According to data, up to 32% of people leave their pet completely loose in the vehicle, which usually results in certain distractions and risks. **Owners can make the trip more pleasant for their four-legged friends with a few tricks as well as make the overall experience somewhat safer.**

For some dogs, drive in a car is like torture. They whimper and bark from stress or even vomit. You can get your animal used to driving slowly and carefully. The dog must first learn that driving is not dangerous and that he does not have to be afraid.

The cornerstone of evil often lies in puppy age. Because the young dog is almost always picked up by his new owners by car. He is suddenly separated from siblings and his mother. Also, unusual driving noises must be considered as a factor.

The puppy's sensitive sense of balance can become confused due to the movement of the vehicle. If he has to throw up too, he can combine this unpleasant experience with driving.

## **Travel Safely with Tasty Driving?**

However, owners can make the car and driving "tasty" for the dog. As a first step, you can put food in the car.

If the dog gets into the new car without hesitation and stays calm, you train the animal with the engine running. Experts advise getting into the car yourself, buckling up and pretending to drive off.

But the car should only start when the dog shows no signs of stress such as panting or drooling. The route could be gradually extended, and the speed increased – provided the animal remains relaxed.

## **Finish the Training with a Good Moment**

Basically, every training session should end with a good moment. At the latest when the dog shows the first signs of stress or discomfort, you have to stop. To minimize external stimuli when driving, the rear windows could be darkened.

In order to transport the dog safely in the car, there are various systems on the market. Upholstered safety harnesses, for example, give the dog in the back seat a certain amount of freedom of movement, but have an impact on the animal's body in the event of a crash.

A stable separation net or grid keeps the dog in the hold, but the animal can be thrown around during an

accident. Experts advise using grids according to the DIN 75410–2 standard, which is extended from the roof area to the loading floor and is firmly anchored.

## **Dog Transport Box**

According to experts, the safest way to travel in a transport box is in the back of the trunk. It's advised that the box should be positioned behind the backrest in the direction of travel, and the seat belts from the rear seat should be closed – even if no one is sitting there. This increases the stability of the backrest in the event of a crash. Small boxes can be placed in the footwell behind the front seats.

The transport box should be large enough for the dog to stand upright in. As with driving, the dog has to get used to the box with patience and motivation. It can initially be in the house and also serve as a retreat.

## **Car Treats to Help with Adaptation**

At the beginning of the training, the favorite toy or reward cookie can be in the front of the box and later put a little further back so that the dog conquers the box step by step. If the dog stays relaxed in the box, you can feed it there so that it has to stay in it for a while. But the box must remain open.

In the next step, the dog is allowed to eat a chewing bone in the box. If the dog wants to leave the box with this, the chewing bones are removed. It can only be eaten in the box.

If the dog now likes to go into the box without hesitation, you can close the door for the first time, but only for a few seconds. If the box is later in the car, it must be attached so it does not slip when you get in and out of the car.

## **Drive to a Quiet Place with a Nervous Dog**

What if the dog is barking constantly while driving because instead of being scared, the dog is rather excited with joy? Then take your dog to a quiet place. Read a newspaper there and sit comfortably in the car. Only when your dog has calmed down and lies down after a while, you can drive home and stop training.

The only question left is: which car fits which dog? Basically, high–roof combinations are well suited for large dogs and boxes. **Other large station wagons are also an option. However, not all models offer enough space for a dog crate in the trunk due to sloping rooflines and rear windows.**

If you often travel in the mountains or on bumpy slopes, off–road models could be an alternative. Vans also score with good space.

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