

CAMPING WITH DOGS



Our dogs can be great companions while hiking, camping or traveling. Here are a few tips to review prior to packing your tent

Before your Trip:

Talk to your veterinarian and make sure your dog is healthy and up-to-date on all required vaccinations, particularly rabies. Ask your vet whether your dog should be vaccinated against Lyme disease, a tick-borne disease. Discuss appropriate flea and tick control. Be sure your dog is protected against heartworms, which are transmitted by mosquito bite and have been reported in all 50 states, according to the American Heartworm Society.

Updated ID

Have an appropriate collar or harness with an identification tag, use a cell phone number where you can be reached at all times, (not a home phone number), on the tag, include an address because some camp grounds don't have cell towers. Make sure your dog is micro-chipped for additional protection in the event that your dog becomes lost and make sure the information is updated. Keep an updated photo of your dog on your phone in case you need to make "lost posters."

What to Pack:

- **Food and Water.** Bring enough dog food and water for your pooch. You'll want to bring his food bowls as well, so he has something to eat out of. If you plan on hiking, it may be a good idea to bring a collapsible bowl so your dog can re-hydrate while he's on the trail too. Do not allow your dog to drink from any standing water, it can be harmful. Put away all food when your dog has finished eating, wild animals will raid it just like human food.
- **Poop Bag.** For the environment and other campers, always clean up after your dog.
- **Long Leash and Carrier.** Bring your dogs' regular leash for hiking and walking, but bring a much longer leash, cable or tether so that she can securely roam around the campsite and check things out. Also bring a carrier if you need to confine the pet for a period of time.
- **Reflective collars glow Stick and solar powered outdoor lights.** Any drug store or home improvement store should sell a standard glow stick (or light stick) that you can manually activate by bending the stick and mixing the chemicals inside to wrap around the dog collar, or have a reflective collar/leash. Also bring along inexpensive solar powered lights to stake around the campsite.
- **First Aid & Health Records.** Take a copy of your dog's health records and vaccination reports, especially important if you are crossing state lines. Be prepared for first-aid, snake bites, cut paws, etc. Ask your veterinarian for details.

Backpacks: Depending on size, your dog should usually be able to carry his or her own food and water and there are a number of dog backpacks. See the resources listed below.



Protect their paws: Most dogs should be fine but consider the terrain as their paws could be easily hurt. Consider special dog booties for those areas.

What to Do with Your Dog While Camping:

1. **Sleeping with your Dog.** If space allows, let your dogs sleep with you in the tent. For safety and warmth. However, if your dog is rowdy or curious, he might decide the tent is too confining and find his own way out. Then you're stuck with a loose dog and a tent with an extra hole. Consider letting them sleep in the car, with windows cracked (if it's not too hot) or keep their leash on and let them sleep outside near your tent. However it is not wise to keep your dog outside with the threat of other animals and unfamiliar distractions.
2. **Other Animals.** You should always be aware of what other types of animals (domestic and wild) might be around when you're camping. Keep in mind that there may be other dogs at the campground, people horseback riding on the trails and little critters that your dog might like to chase running just about anywhere outside. If you're in bison or bear country you should speak with a ranger to make sure that your dog is safe and you're following the protocol for camping with a pet. Be prepared for the other types of animals that your dog could encounter on the camping trip. If you are unsure, stop by the ranger's station and ask.
3. **Don't allow your dog to drink standing water.** Do your research to make sure there's going to be plenty of water to filter where you'll be backpacking. Be sure to pack enough for both of you if there's nowhere to get more. Dogs are susceptible to *giardia* protozoa much like humans, so be sure to filter and/or treat their water just as you would if you were going to consume it.
4. **Hiking.** Do your homework and make sure the area allows pets. You don't want to get to the trailhead with an excited pooch only to have to turn around and take her back to the car because she's not allowed on the trail. Below is a link to pet-friendly campsites in the U.S.
5. **Keep close by.** Keep your dog close to you during your camping expedition. If you are unable to supervise your dog, be sure he is properly confined. Provide a carrier, crate, or portable fencing unit instead.
6. **Ticks, thorns, burrs.** While camping, check your dog's fur and skin regularly for ticks as well as for plant material like thorns or burrs. Plant materials should be brushed free of your dog's hair, if possible. In some situations, cutting or shaving the hair may be necessary to remove these items. Remove ticks promptly by grasping the tick near the skin and pulling gently and slowly away from the skin. Wear gloves when doing so. Do not handle ticks with bare hands as they can transmit diseases to you as well as to your dog.



Camping with your dog can be a lot of fun for you, your family and friends and, of course, your dog. As long as you follow these basic steps, camping with your dog will be a great experience for you and for her.

Resources:

Dog-friendly campsites: <http://petfriendlytravel.com/campgrounds>

Hiking with your dog: <http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/hiking-dogs.html>