

5 Tips for Camping With Your Dog

Ghostwritten for camping website

Dogs make excellent companions for our forays into the great outdoors. Let's face it, they're pretty easygoing, don't mind just sitting in silence, and they take genuine pleasure in the ability to run and swim and hike and explore, which helps remind us of why we're spending time camping in the first place. But before departing on a trip with your canine friend, here are 5 tips that can save time, money, and help make your trip a pleasurable experience for everyone.

Visit Your Vet

Your dog should be current on their vaccines. A current rabies vaccine is a must. It's a legal requirement, and if your dog should bite someone, for any reason, you will need to show proof of a current rabies vaccine. Consider a leptospirosis vaccine as well. Lepto is nasty bacteria shed in the urine of wild animals. If your dog ingests it via a pond, puddle, or grass, they could become ill. If you haven't given your dog the lepto vaccine before, you'll need an initial shot and a booster 2-3 weeks later. You might also want to ask about vaccination against Lyme disease if you are headed to an area where there are a lot of ticks.

While you're there, make sure you have enough of any medication your pet needs, and don't forget to apply a flea and tick preventative before leaving.

Pack Them a Bag

Designate a bag for your pet's stuff so that you can keep it together in one place. This includes harness, leash, treats, favorite toys, a bed, medication, and proof of vaccination. Bring a couple of towels as well, because the chance that your dog won't get wet or dirty during the trip is zero.

Make Sure They Are Welcome

National and most state park trails do not allow dogs, so be sure to check whether your destination and stops on the way are dog friendly. Bureau of Land Management properties often do allow dogs to roam freely, so check out their website at <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en.html>

Be Prepared for Animal Interaction

You know your dog better than anyone else, so it's up to you to police them with regard to any interactions with other people's dogs. If you know your dog isn't

that friendly towards other canines, keep them nearby and be aware of anyone approaching. Managing their interaction with wildlife is more difficult. While exploring your dog might come in contact with a raccoon, skunk, or other wildlife. Hopefully there won't be any trouble, but if there is a scuffle, examine your dog closely for any bites or wounds. These may need flushing by a veterinarian and a course of antibiotics, but you'll be glad you got that rabies vaccine.

Be Considerate of Others

Not everyone is as much of a dog lover as you are, and they have the right to enjoy their camping experience without being bothered by your dog. Most campgrounds will require you to restrain your dog somehow, and not by tying their leash to a tree. You can use a stake with a lead that is 20 feet long. This allows your dog some range of movement without roaming. Another option is a portable exercise pen.

With a little thought and planning, you can take your dog on a camping trip and have a great time together.