



Traveling long distances with your dog or cat in the car can be a troublesome experience. Here are some helpful tips that will make the journey pleasant for both driver and critter.

1. For at least a week before the long trip, give the pet familiarization rides once a day. Prepare a comfortable sitting area in the passenger or rear seat area. If the pet is nervous, leans out the window or wanders throughout the car during your test drives, firmly put it back in the intended seat. Speak cheerfully and do some reassuring petting until the pet knows to stay in place during the long ride.

2. If your pet is extremely nervous and jumpy in the car, and trial runs don't calm it, consider using a cage. This will not only prevent distracting the driver and passengers, but will also prevent jumping out an open window while the car is on the road.
3. Bring plenty of pet food and fresh water, enough to last the number of hours or days you'll be on the road. Bring along familiar food and water dishes. Take reward snacks for times for praise and reassurance. If there's a favorite toy, take it along.
4. When you stop for gas and meals, be sure the pet has potty time. For your cat, a portable sand box may be most convenient. Use a pooper scooper and plastic bag to clean up.
5. No matter how gentle and well-trained the pet is, keep a leash on throughout every stop. Unfamiliar sights and sounds can cause panic and running away.
6. If your trip involves overnight stays, contact ahead to be sure the motel/hotel accepts pets. Some will not allow them in the rooms, but provide kennels on hotel grounds. Be prepared to pay an extra fee for pet lodging.