

Title:

Hot Dogs And Planes!

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Summary:

Hot dogs and planes! Summer is a good time for both of them. Why not try taking your dog flying with you if you haven't already?

I'm not talking commercial airlines here, this is general aviation. Little private planes owned by little private people who fly out of little private airports (or dirt strips as the case may be).

There are probably lots of people reading this who have put their dog in a crate and watched it vanish off into the cargo hold of the commercial jet...

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Article Body:

Hot dogs and planes! Summer is a good time for both of them. Why not try taking your dog flying with you if you haven't already?

I'm not talking commercial airlines here, this is general aviation. Little private planes owned by little private people who fly out of little private airports (or dirt strips as the case may be).

There are probably lots of people reading this who have put their dog in a crate and watched it vanish off into the cargo hold of the commercial jet for a trip and wondered if that animal would have disintegrated into a nervous puddle of goo by the time the plane landed at the destination...this is a completely different situation. We're talking a chance to get out of the house and have some fun with your pet!!!

Think of it as an opportunity to spend more quality time with your hairy (or scaly or slimy) friend. In addition to dogs I will also include all other "pet" animals that could comfortably fit in a small plane - cats, ferrets, guinea pigs, pot bellied pigs, ant farms, bullfrogs, you name it!

That said, a good plan when considering bringing your buddy along for his first

flight is to keep in mind how your pet reacts to riding in the car. If he is "gung-ho" about it, there's a pretty good chance that he'll enjoy the plane as well.

If the instant he rounds the corner and sees the car he barfs, this probably isn't going to be an enjoyable time for either one of you and perhaps you should reconsider.

However, if you are stuck between a rock and a hard place and your projectile-vomiting pet absolutely HAS to fly with you there is a product out there that works beautifully called Sic Sacs. Intended for humans, the developers probably wouldn't mind if you used them for a different species. (Assistant in full-body rubber suit to sit in back seat with pet and hold bag is highly recommended if you choose this option).

An important consideration when flying with an animal is hearing protection. You have it, so why shouldn't they? Their hearing is even more sensitive than yours.

Mutt Muffs! What, you say? A company called Safe and Sound Pets makes aviation headsets for dogs, which they call Mutt Muffs. The research and development behind this product is extensive and it is definitely worth looking into if you plan on taking your pooch on flights with you. They even engineered them to fit a dog's head with special straps!

There's no reason why your pet should have to suffer from noise when there is a product out there that you can train him to wear that will protect his hearing. With all different sizes (yes, there's one that will fit a cat) there's no excuse not to give this a try!

How to fly with your pet: You can start out slowly by just taking the pet to the airport with you. That's all. Let them get used to the sights and sounds.

Then your next trip you can put your pet into the plane, but don't take off yet - let the animal sit in the plane and get used to it. If you will be using a harness to secure them now is a good time to calmly give it a try. Nonchalance and acting like you have all the time in the world is crucial here if you have a skeptical pet.

A couple of dry runs like this are ideal as they allow the pet to acclimate themselves to the new situation on their own terms.

Eventually you can start up the plane and see how things go in the backseat. If you are happy with what is going on then keep the "baby-step" format going until

you are 100% sure that your pet is comfortable in the plane. Practice taxiing.

Then, finally, you can take off. As you can see, this is not an impulsive "Oooh it's Saturday, let's go flying for the first time today" type of deal. You MUST consider the pet's well-being, or you might end up paying a doggie psychotherapist a lot of money somewhere down the road. This is avoidable. Take your time. Plus, anyone who is a dog psychotherapist needs to be seriously questioned as to their sanity anyway.

Things to bring with you on that first fateful flight:

1. Yourself
2. Helper
3. Pet
4. Safety harness for pet to sit in back seat if pet is large enough
5. Food & water for everybody
6. Hearing protection
7. A sense of humor
8. Windex to clean nose prints off the window

Take advantage of summertime and spend some quality time with your pet - it may take a little bit of getting used to for both of you, but in the long run it will be well worth the effort, and it will ensure that you can spend more time together and less time feeling guilty for neglecting them at home while you go out and have all the fun!

So, there you were...not thinking about bringing your pet with you in the plane. You were worried that he might chew through his crate while you were out flying, but now you have a wonderful opportunity to spend more time with him. Carpe diem!

Looking for more information on private planes and dogs? Have you ever heard about the rescue group of volunteer pilots who fly animals in need to wherever their new home is going to be? They are looking for volunteers, so if you're interested in donating your time and flying expertise to help animals you can check it out. The internet is a great place to start your research. The organization is called Flying Paws, and after having taught your own animal to ride happily with you it should be a piece of cake!