



**Articles & Tips >Articles**

## **Day Trips with Your Dog**

Go ahead, get out and enjoy the gorgeous weather with your furry friend. Here are some expert hints for finding dog-friendly locations and keeping the day fun for everyone



Does your dog leap to his feet when he sees you heading for the door? Sure, you'd love to take him with you on more than just walks, but maybe you're not sure where to go - and how to get there comfortably. Here are some ideas and hints from Margaret Littman, author of *The Dog Lover's Companion to Chicago* and co-owner of the website [dogfriendlylife.com](http://dogfriendlylife.com).

**First, know your dog.** When choosing an outing, take into account your dog's personality. So, for example, avoid crowded dog parks if your pet is fearful or aggressive toward other dogs. Choose a quiet trail if he'd rather run solo.

**Be car smart.** Not every pet is happy to hop in the car. Ease your dog into longer trips by spending increasing amounts of time sitting in the car in the driveway (return calls or read to fill the time). Treats are always a good way to entice a reluctant pooch, but be careful not to go for a long trip right after he eats. A calming lavender spray may also help. If all else fails, ask your vet if medication might help your dog handle car travel better.

Littman recommends using a dog crate or harness, for your dog's safety as well as yours. And for long trips, stop regularly to let your dog exercise.

**Hit outdoor cafes - but carefully.** Many places are happy to host your dog at an outdoor seating area, but don't assume all are. Local laws and some restaurants' rules may put a dog biscuit in your plans to soak up some sun and sip a coffee while your pooch watches people, so call ahead. [Dogfriendly.com](http://Dogfriendly.com) is a great place to search by state for dog-friendly lodging, cafes, stores, parks, and other attractions.

**Plan and pack.** Depending on how long you'll be out, be prepared. Pack plenty of extra plastic (waste disposal) bags, a leash, treats, and a water bowl or bottle. The smarter your preparation, the more fun you'll both have.

**Check the calendar.** There are lots of fun dog-themed events, from human-pooch 5Ks to "pup" crawls; many are charity events. Scour local news and events sites to find one that will attract like-minded dog lovers. For example, [Splash Dogs](http://splashdogs.com) ([splashdogs.com](http://splashdogs.com)) holds dock-jumping events for water-loving dogs around the country.

**Be adventurous!** A doggy day trip needn't be limited to a visit to your usual dog parks or beach. Sports like stand-up paddling and kayaking are great for bonding with your canine friend. Just grab a dog-sized life vest before you get out on the water. That said, tailor activities to your dog's breed when possible, says Littman. Poodles and retrievers may enjoy water sports and events, while dogs bred to hunt are good for tracking and hide-and-seek games. Small dogs are better suited to, a ride in a cart or carrier for a parade.

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