

Enriching the lives of pets and their loved ones

Pet *Enthusiast* Nebraska - Iowa magazine

Staycations
...with our buddies



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Summer 2010



Staycation!

Ready for summer fun? No need to plan an elaborate trip--have fun with family, friends and pets at home!

By Maggie Marton

Instead of hitting the road for your family vacation this year, consider taking a staycation - a vacation right in your own home. Utilize your time off to hang around the house to save money and the hassle of traveling, and you'll also have time to bond with your household pets. Incorporate new activities, play backyard games, or mix up your regular walking routine, and your pets will enjoy your staycation as much as you do.

Hit the Town

Consider visiting a new dog park, like Prairie Pastures Dog Park in Clinton, Iowa, which was named one of the top 40 best dog parks in the country by Dog Fancy magazine. Or simply take a different route for your daily walk. Another option is to pack a picnic for the whole family. Bring snacks and drinks for the people and a water bowl and dog treats for your pet.

Play Together

Playing with your dog strengthens your bond and provides a foundation for future training. Dawn Antoniak-Mitchell, Esq. CPDT - KA is a trainer and co-owner of the BonaFide Dog Academy LLC in Omaha, NE. "Play is training without the pressure," said Antoniak-Mitchell. She suggests tossing a toy for your dog in the backyard. Teach your dog to play fetch. Playing is a great way to involve your kids, too. "You don't have to necessarily be training the dog to be engaging the dog," she said. "You're always teaching - every time you interact with your dog, it's learning something."

"While it seems like playtime isn't teaching your dog any new tricks or obedience, Antoniak-Mitchell said that play has a lot of meaning for the dog, which strengthens your bond and makes you even more valuable to your dog."

Focus on Fun

Instead of working on obedience during your staycation, play training games that exercise your dog's natural instincts. Antoniak-Mitchell suggests teaching your retriever to fetch or teaching your terrier to find a scented toy hidden in your yard. While it seems like playtime isn't teaching your dog any new tricks or obedience, Antoniak-Mitchell said that play has a lot of meaning for the dog, which strengthens your bond and makes you even more valuable to your dog.

Just Relax

"A lot of our dogs live the same lifestyle we do - go, go, go - and they never learn to shut off," said Antoniak-Mitchell. "It's as simple as sitting on the couch to watch a TV show or find a quiet spot under a tree somewhere." Plan down time with your pets: sit together on the couch and watch a movie, take a nap together, give your pet a massage, or even just sit on the porch and enjoy the weather. Relaxing together will decrease your stress level, and you will develop a stronger relationship with your pet.

Dining Outside at a Local Restaurant

There are many local restaurants and wine bars that allow you to bring your dog and sit outside. If you know that a restaurant has an outside seating area, call the establishment beforehand to make sure they are okay with you bringing your pet.

Go for a Leisurely Drive

Instead of always having a purpose to where you need to drive, load your pups in the car and take a leisurely drive around town or out in the country and have fun exploring your neck of the woods. Make sure pup is secure in the seat. Seatbelts and goggles are sold locally to help your pet enjoy the car ride. Also be sure to keep in mind of the heat and do not leave your dog in a car unattended when the weather gets warmer.

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On The Road Again!

If you travel with your pet, take steps to ensure a safe and seamless vacation. "You can't take chances with your pet's safety," said Sandy Robins, a pet lifestyle author and expert who is currently working with PETCO and Sherpa on their "Guaranteed On Board" program. Here are five things to consider the next time you take your pet on vacation:

Plan Ahead

Robins suggests starting with your destination city's website because many list pet-friendly accommodations. Call each hotel to determine their pet policy. Are there weight restrictions? Can you bring multiple pets? Do they offer pet-related amenities?

Pave the Way

Notify airlines, hotels, and other accommodations that you're coming with your pet. Robins said some people smuggle their pet onto a plane or into a hotel, but if there's an emergency, you'll be unable to speak up about your pet's safety.

Pack Thoughtfully

Bring enough of your pet's food to last the entire trip in case you can't find the right food at your destination. If you're flying, Robins suggests one of the "Guaranteed On Board" programs bags, which have been pre-approved by several airlines. Also, she suggests bringing Rescue Remedy and a comfort toy to help soothe your pet on a bumpy journey.

Be Prepared for an Emergency

Make sure you also have your pet's ID tag and vaccination records. In case of flight delays or flat tires, ensure your pet has access to water. "Pets dehydrate like we do," said Robins, who suggests bringing a fold-up dog bowl or asking the flight attendant for ice cubes that your pet can lick.

Have fun!

By planning ahead, you can focus on enjoying your vacation with your pet! **PE**



Tunes for the road!

Above: Roxi Copland, photographed in the Cover Story with her family, has an incredible Jazz CD. Check it out!

Below: Thank You to Mr. and Mrs. Janke photographed below with their Cherry Red 1966 Mustang.





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