



Tips for moving overseas with pets

Moving overseas with a pet can be complex and costly, but it needn't get in the way of your new life. With the right levels of forward planning, you can make the move easier for both you and your pet. Here are some helpful tips.

Before you go

1.

How long will you be away?

The first question you need to ask yourself is whether your pet needs to travel at all. Depending on how long you plan to stay overseas, it could make sense to entrust it to a relative or friend until you return. This might help reduce the stress for both your pet and you, while also giving you peace of mind while away.



2.

Talk to your vet

If you have decided to take your pet with you overseas, then the next step is to talk with your vet. To start, find out whether travel is suitable for your animal. Older animals or delicate breeds can be at risk if travelling in cargo, especially long haul. Your vet can also advise you on necessary vaccinations, microchips and animal health certificates. Your vet, if authorised, can also issue you with a pet passport or similar travel documents.



3.

Check for any country-specific restrictions

Some countries may not allow your pet into the country. New Zealand, for example, doesn't allow the importation of birds, reptiles or other animals, while many countries have restrictions on certain breeds of dogs.



4.

Add up the cost

Shipping an animal overseas can be expensive. Alongside vaccinations and mandatory quarantines, there is the cost of airfares and pet shipping crates, which can run easily into several thousand dollars. This needs to be part of your budget planning.

5.

Consider bringing in the experts

Relocating with your pet can be challenging so using a professional international pet relocation company can help. Using a specialist will add to your costs, but it will also reduce much of the stress. A pet relocation company will manage the entire process from paperwork to quarantine. They can be especially useful when plans change – such as with flight delays or cancellations.

Preparing to leave

6.

Finding the right airline

It is unlikely your pet will be able to travel with you in the cabin on an international flight, so research airlines with good pet-friendly transportation services. Call the airline in advance for detailed information about check-in and cargo pet services and any specific requirements they may have.

Note for instance that some airlines have a minimum age restriction for international pet travel that may be higher than the International Air Transport Association (IATA) standard of eight weeks.



8.

Make your pet comfortable

Get your animal acquainted with the crate as far in advance of the trip as possible. When the day of the journey arrives, place some familiar bedding or favourite toys in there. Give your pet food and water no later than four hours prior to check in - this is an IATA requirement - but feed them less than usual. Your travel crate will have a secure water bowl but check with the airline to see if your pet will have access to food during the flight itself.



7.

Get the right crate size

We all want more room on a long-haul flight and your pet is no exception, so make sure you choose a suitably sized crate that is compliant with [IATA standards](#).

Measure your pet carefully to make sure it has enough space in the crate to freely stand and turn around. If in doubt, always opt for more space.



9.

Take out pet travel insurance

Hopefully you won't need it but it pays to be covered in case of any problems that may occur during the journey. Similar to your own insurance policy, pet health travel insurance will cover illnesses and injuries, and usually includes diagnostic tests, surgeries, hospital stays and medications.

Arriving at your new home

10.

Research quarantine requirements

Quarantine regulations vary greatly across the world, so make sure you are up to date on what is needed in your proposed destination. For some countries, no quarantine is necessary as long as all entry requirements are met. For others, quarantine is

mandatory and this can be anywhere from a week to six months, although home quarantine may be possible. Note also that in some countries quarantine facilities can fill up fast so make sure you reserve ahead of time.

