

UNIQUE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS FOR YOU AND YOUR PET

By Andrea Vardaro Tucker, ELS

For pet parents, vacation planning can be complicated; you need to decide if you will board your pet, get a sitter, or bring her along. If your pet is a good candidate for travel, consider choosing your destination with her in mind—you have plenty of options that are perfect for pets.

CHECK OUT THESE 5 UNIQUE LOCALES THAT WILL PUT YOUR PET ON THE MAP.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

You and your pet will get a greeting like no other in Asheville at the nation's first welcome center geared toward dogs. The Dog City, USA Official Dog Welcome Center offers plenty of resources, goodies, and even a weekly tour of the best dog-friendly spots in town.

"Asheville is extremely dog-friendly!" says Mary Donnelly, an Asheville resident and mom to a rescued Corgi/Sheltie mix named Sammy. "We love taking Sammy all over Asheville—downtown, by the river, or out on the trails. Lots of restaurants and breweries have outdoor seating areas, and most shops welcome dog visitors. Sammy loves hiking on the Blue Ridge Parkway, cooling off in a mountain stream, and then stopping by one of the dog bakeries in town for a treat."

You and your leashed dog or cat can also roam the grounds of the expansive Biltmore Estate, and although your companion can't join you inside, you can tour this landmark while your pet stays in a seasonal onsite kennel.

Asheville may be Dog City, but it's only about an hour away from the American Museum of the House Cat, where cat lovers can bring along their leashed feline friend and view a unique collection of house cat-related items. Your admission fee benefits the Catman2 shelter.



LAKE OF THE OZARKS, MISSOURI

This rustic destination prides itself on outdoorsy fun for people and pets.

While camping reigns here, you're not limited to pitching your own tent when you stay at the Lake of the Ozarks. Through Missouri State Parks' Cabins for Canines program, people who travel with up to 2 dogs can stay in Outpost cabins or a yurt (for a fee). You'll need



to use a crate or kennel (provided for free) if you venture out without your dog, but with so many opportunities to explore the outdoors, you won't want to!

Pets aren't permitted in the park's water areas, but if your dog wants to get her splash on, she's still in luck one weekend a year. The always-dog-friendly Dog Days Bar & Grill hosts the annual

Canine Cannonball DockDogs jumping contest (June 7-9 this year). Pet parents can cheer their dogs on as they leap into a big pool set up near the lake. The event has a greater purpose than just a fun day to spend with your pet. Dog Days manager Luke Hagedorn says, "[For] our main charity partner Dogwood Animal Shelter, it is one of their bigger fundraising events, and they adopt out multiple dogs that weekend as well."

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

You'll find everything here from ferry rides for furry friends to supernatural exploration during pet-inclusive ghost tours. There's no shortage of dining and drinking establishments with patios for pets or lodging options, including the historic Hotel Monteleone, well-known for its dog- and cat-pampering packages.



NOLA claim-to-fame Mardi Gras is too crowded for pets, but dogs and their parents can earn both beads and biscuits at the

only official Mardi Gras parade for dogs in New Orleans. The parade is now in its 27th year, according to Catherine Olivier, who serves on the board of directors of the Mystic Krewe of Barkus, a nonprofit organization whose proceeds benefit nearby animal rescue groups. "Getting to have a great time spotlighting your dog family member is special, and doing it with the stunning backdrop of the French Quarter is beyond belief," she says.

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SIGMUND FREUD

“
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”

ROGER CARAS

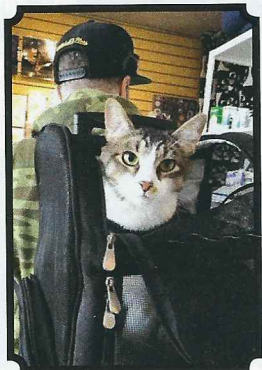
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This year's Grand Duke, Nike the Chihuahua, has been involved in Barkus for 9 years and on the Royal Court for 3 years. "Everybody loves this event, loves New Orleans, and has a great time!" says Nike's mom Robin Bush, of Gulfport, Mississippi, who has attended Barkus with her dogs since 1994.

In the ultimate endorsement, 8-year Barkus participants Howard and Lori Turoff and their dog Velvet, of Hoboken, New Jersey, love New Orleans so much, they plan to make it their new home this fall!

PORTLAND, OREGON

Consider yourself and your pet at home as you peruse Portland. You shouldn't have trouble finding a place to stay, with many hotels providing supplies and even events for their furry guests. Food carts throughout Portland make dining with your pet easy, but plenty of Portland's restaurants also welcome pets on their



patios and promote dog-friendly menu items. Portland has dog parks a-plenty for when your pup wishes to run free, and its numerous parks feature everything from gardens to hiking trails to get you and your canine or adventurous feline companion out and about.

Cats are just as welcome as dogs in Portland. "We encourage cat visitors in our shop!" says Dr. Laura Cochrane of cat-themed gift and supply store ROAR PDX. "Of course, this applies to cats who are truly comfortable being on a harness or in a pet stroller. We are seeing a growing trend in the 'Adventure Cat' movement, but not every cat feels safe

traveling (most prefer to stay at home). For those cats who enjoy adventuring, we always recommend a cat-safe harness and that people keep safety a top priority."

Throughout the city, special events are designed just for pets. A highlight includes Oregon Humane Society's Doggie Dash, a fundraiser that allows pet parents to run and participate in dog-centric activities each May (the 11th this year). One Sunday a month during the summer, Portland shuts down traffic within a neighborhood to allow people and pets car-free access to an entire street. Parks all over the city also hold free movie events, where you can catch a flick alongside your furry friend.

SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Your not-so-scaredy cat or pooch will find plenty of festivities in this coastal city once known for its wonderfully witchy past. For the past 4 years, the Salem Main Street initiative and the National Park Service have held a Howl-o-Ween Parade. Kylie Sullivan, executive director of Salem Main Streets, says, "It's been a tremendous success, now with over 100 pets participating annually—including dogs, cats, bunnies, pigs, and a bearded dragon—with far more observers in attendance."

Salem's many walking tours generally welcome pets, and one—Salem's Bark Ranger History Walk, hosted by Salem Maritime National Historic Site once or twice a year—is geared toward dogs. "Dogs and their companions have the opportunity to tour the historic site and maybe even learn some tidbits of history about famous dogs," says Curtis White, supervisory park ranger of the Salem Maritime and Saugus Iron Works National Historic Sites. Cats get their own chance to shine on Black Cat Tours, which highlight Salem's cat-heavy history and permit feline tourists.



Businesses throughout Salem cater to and welcome pets, and you'll have no trouble finding pet-friendly lodging in a historical setting. "People should not be limited with where they can travel because they have pets," says KrisTina Petty Wheeler, executive assistant to the general manager of the Hawthorne Hotel, which has hosted dogs, cats, ferrets, and a hedgehog.

Mary Ellen Calitri and Patty Ahern, of Long Island, New York, consider the Hawthorne Hotel a home away from home when they spend summer vacations and holidays there with their dogs Thor, a 12-year-old Yorkshire Terrier, and Oreo, a 14-year-old Pekingese. "Thor and Oreo love the Hawthorne's doggie [room service] menu and complimentary toys in addition to taking walks in the Salem Common across the street," Mary Ellen says. "It's a great dog-friendly town."

No matter where you're heading on vacation with your pet, follow all rules and regulations, keep your pet's vaccinations up-to-date, ensure she has proper identification, and ask your vet if your pet is healthy enough for travel. Once you've taken care of the planning, enjoy the time you get to spend with your pet!

Andrea Vardaro Tucker spent her 2006 honeymoon in Salem admiring all the pets out and about the spectacularly spooky town.