

# Unique, Pet-Inclusive Travel Destinations

By Andrea Vardaro Tucker, ELS



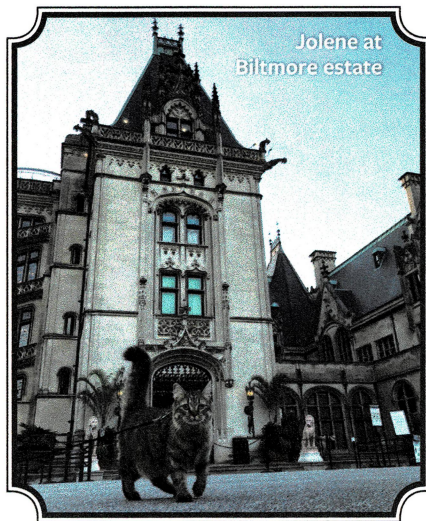
Does your pet deserve a getaway? If you're anything like most US pet parents who plan to travel with their dog or cat,\* your answer is probably yes. If so, let's tour some unique, pet-inclusive destinations that might inspire you to book a pet-friendly trip.

## Asheville, North Carolina

There's no better spot to start than Asheville, known as "Dog City, USA," according to Michael Poandl, public relations manager of the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Asheville is an extremely dog-friendly community," he says. "In fact, we sport the nation's first-of-its-kind 'dog welcome center' downtown."



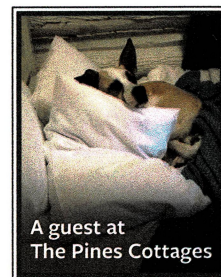
But pets of the feline persuasion won't feel left out in Dog City. Alex Sinda, who resides in Asheville with Elvis, a whippet mix, and Jolene, a tabby mix, says, "If you're allowed to bring your



dog, chances are you could bring your cat too—if your cat is into the adventure lifestyle."

Throughout Asheville, pets can enjoy excursions like dining and shopping downtown with their favorite people, exploring lakes and hiking trails, touring historic sites, and attending special events throughout the year.

When they need a break from all that activity, families with dogs, cats, and other types of pets can find pet-friendly lodging like The Pines Cottages, which features 4-acre grounds and a personal cottage or cabin for each



Zoo.Arts, Jack the Sparrow (Shutterstock); @jojoandbrobro, The Pines Cottages



family—complete with pet bowls and treats. There’s even a resident kitty named Hugo, who is a sort of mascot and visits some guests’ cottages!



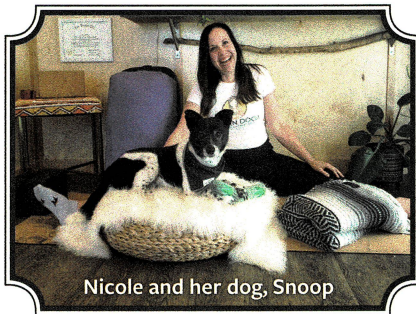
### Austin, Texas

Austin consistently ranks among the most pet-friendly US cities, and it’s especially great for active families. Hiking and biking trails throughout Austin welcome dogs and cats, and kayaking with pets is another popular activity.



Chester

“We love taking [black cat Chester Lamar] to the Greenbelt and Lady Bird Lake,” Austin resident Feliza says. “It is important because they get to have a different experience than just being in the house all day.”



Nicole and her dog, Snoop

For families staying with canine companions, one unique experience worth checking out is doga—a gentle yoga practice integrating dogs. “Booking a session with Austin Doga is a great option for folks and dogs who are looking for an enriching and meaningful experience on their vacation,” says Nicole Vykoukal, a psychotherapist, yoga teacher, and founder of Austin Doga: Yoga with your best friend. “Just like us, dogs need healthy sources of stimulation and a break from the mundane.”

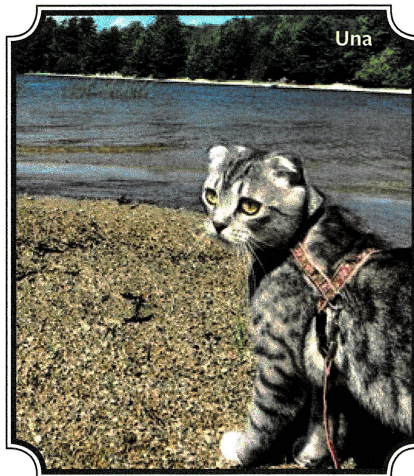
### Bar Harbor, Maine

In this coastal resort area, outdoor adventurers can explore hiking trails, ponds, and beaches. In town, ice cream shops, breweries, and other restaurants cater to pets, along with aptly named pet supply store Bark Harbor.



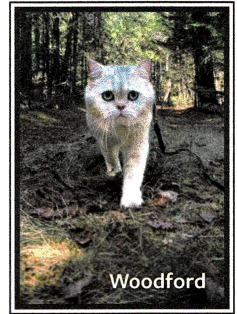
Pippy

Maine-based photographer Heather Anderson and her pooch, Pippy, also enjoy Bar Harbor’s special events, including the Early Bird Pajama Sale & Bed Races every November and the summertime Seaside Cinema outdoor movie showings. Heather says, “In addition to dogs, who are by far the most popular pet to visit the area, it’s not uncommon to see cats, bunnies, ferrets, and even turtles out and about in Bar Harbor. Last summer, I actually saw a woman ‘wearing’ a snake while she was shopping.”



Una

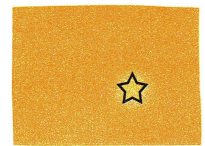
Una, a Scottish fold, and Woodford, a British shorthair, are 2 cats who frequent Bar Harbor’s trails and beaches and like paddleboarding, swimming, and camping while visiting. “Una and Woody love going on trips in the car and hiking, so instead of leaving them at home all the time, I will take them with me,” says Izzy Courtemanche from Franklin, Maine. “Most people are very surprised when they see them walking the trails and most of the time mistake them for dogs at first.”



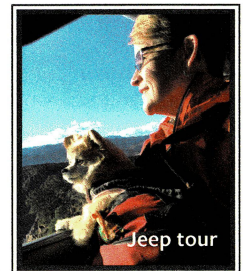
Woodford

### Colorado Springs Area, Colorado

Outdoorsy pet-friendly fun abounds around Colorado Springs. Like most places on our list, this area has plentiful hiking trails and parks, plus everything from dining to shopping locales that permit pets. But it also boasts some really unique experiences.



“Finding pet-friendly accommodations is becoming easier, but finding activities you can enjoy with your dog that are out of the ordinary is a bit more challenging,” says self-described avid outdoorsman Will Colon,



Jeep tour

\*Seven in 10 Americans planning to travel with their pet this year say their pet deserves a getaway. News release. PR Newswire. August 18, 2021. Accessed March 13, 2022. [prnewswire.com/news-releases/seven-in-10-americans-planning-to-travel-with-their-pet-this-year-say-their-pet-deserves-a-getaway-301357711.html](http://prnewswire.com/news-releases/seven-in-10-americans-planning-to-travel-with-their-pet-this-year-say-their-pet-deserves-a-getaway-301357711.html)



who owns and operates Colorado Jeep Tours and the website RoyalGorge.info. Many of his Jeep tours help people and pets spend time outdoors together. “Most dogs enjoy the adventure of getting out of the yard and experiencing all the smells nature has to offer,” he says. “And all parents love to see their fur babies get excited to experience something new.”



Another adventure that awaits human and pet travelers is the Manitou Cliff Dwellings, where people and their leashed pets can explore ancient Puebloan ruins and museums displaying cultural artifacts. “It is good to include pets on your outings as they are very much a part of many families,” says general manager Michele Hefner. “In most cases, the other visitors love having the opportunity, with permission, to interact with people’s pets. It makes for happy visitors.”

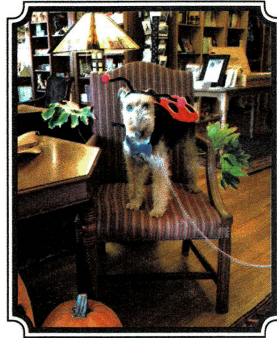
### Mendocino County, California

This West Coast destination prides itself on being truly pet inclusive—from transportation to luxury dining and lodging accommodations. One such example is the Stanford Inn by the Sea

eco-luxury resort. Just some of its pet-friendly touches include an area for guests and their pets to dine together, bowls and house-made treats in guest rooms, and even Catch a Canoe with outriggers that pets can board to travel up scenic Big River.



“Pets are a part of our family and add to our enjoyment of life,” says Joan Stanford, the resort’s owner and innkeeper along with her husband, Jeff. “If we leave them behind, we miss them and are happy to see other folks with their pets.”



one fully feel the interconnectedness with our Earth, each other, and all beings, including our dog family.”

Interested in exploring any of these amazing sites? Research travel rules and local laws that may apply, and check with your vet to see what your pet needs to safely set out on an adventure with you. Happy travels!

*Andrea Vardaro Tucker lives outside Pittsburgh with her family, including a senior Westie, who now prefers to spend her human family’s vacations being pampered at her grandparents’ house.*

Jane Wicklund, who has stayed at the resort with her husband, Rick, and their dogs, says that Hadley, their sweet golden retriever (and, previously, their dog Maggie) always enjoys their visits to Stanford Inn. “She feels most welcome



as a guest and loves the comfort, the animals, the gardens, the river, and dining together as family,” Jane says. “Stanford Inn makes



Michele Hefner, Stanford Inn by the Sea