

Cat Friendly Travel

Despite previous unpleasant experiences, a cat can be taught that a carrier and travel don't have to be stressful!

1. Carrier - A Happy Place

- A carrier should be cozy and secure – look for one that can easily be opened from both the top and side and has a solid base to help your cat feel properly supported. The top of the carrier should come off quickly and not require you to pull or tip your cat out (we recommend a carrier with clips closures.)
- Try removing the top of the carrier and placing soft blankets, treats or toys in the bottom – something to get them used to sitting in the carrier. Cats do love boxes after all! After getting your kitty comfortable with the lid off, assemble the carrier (leaving the door open at all times,) and place it out in your living area or somewhere that your cat likes to lay. will help to desensitize the cat to the carrier.
- Reward your cat as soon as they go inside the carrier, so they associate it with something positive. Once they are comfortable with this, move to rewarding them for being in the carrier with the door closed. Feeding your cat their meals in the carrier will also help.
- When lifting/holding the carrier with your pet inside, be sure to hold from the bottom or sides NOT from the handle on top as this will swing them around – think elevator swinging on a cable (not fun!)



2. Car Rides - Practice Makes Perfect

- For comfort and safety, place your cat's carrier flat in the car by propping up the rear where the seat dips using a towel or book, so your cat doesn't feel like they are sliding backwards. Buckle in the carrier in through the handle on top to avoid possible injury should there be a sudden stop or swerve.
- Once you have mastered the carrier, take your cat out in the car on random occasions just to get them adjusted to going places. You can start by just putting the carrier in the car, turning it on and playing music without driving to get them used to it.
- When you feel they are ready, start bringing your cat on short driving trips. Be sure to end in a location that they like – for most cats this would be home. If the only place they go to is the vet, your cat may associate the car with a bad experience!
- When your cat is relaxed in the car every time you go on a short trip, you can increase the driving distance and give treats through the carrier while you are out driving around.

3. Feliway – Get Cozy

- Facial pheromone (Feliway) diffusers/wipes/spray will help to calm your cat, especially before a visit to the vet. You can spray in the carrier, car, etc. – anywhere you would like them to feel more comfortable and secure.
- If using a spray, apply 15-30 mins before using the carrier/getting into the car so the alcohol in the spray evaporates and does not bother your cat's sensitive nose.

4. Anti-anxiety - Take the Edge Off

- For some very stressed and anxious cats, we can dispense a medication which will help with travel day anxiety. Get in touch to discuss the options available to you!

