

Feeding Fido festive foods – or not

(NC) The holiday season is quickly approaching. Bring on the list-making, gift-giving, party-going time of year. But what would the holidays be without delicious dishes to keep everyone feeling merry and bright? And by everyone, that includes our canine companions, of course. Check out this list of pup and pet-parent-approved festive foods, as well as those to avoid.

Enjoy pumpkin

Can you even call it a holiday feast without pumpkin? Good news for pups – pumpkin is not off the table for them to enjoy. In fact, pumpkins are a superfood and are full of nutrients. Feeding dogs cooked or plain canned pumpkin can also be beneficial for their digestion because pumpkin contains fibre – just be sure to serve it free of sugar and spices.

Avoid chocolate

There's no way to sugarcoat it – chocolate is a no-go for dogs. The presence of both caffeine and a chemical called theobromine make chocolate toxic to dogs because they aren't able to metabolize them the way that humans can. If ingested, chocolate can lead to a spike in heart rate and blood pressure, as well as vomiting, diarrhea, agitation, seizures and more. Pet parents should then monitor their pup closely and check with a veterinarian.



Chocolate is toxic, foods scrapes put on weight - be selective when feeding Fido festive foods.

Enjoy fresh meats

When cooked, fresh meat such as chicken, turkey, pork or beef, can satisfy cravings while also offering pups a nutritious meal that is easy to digest. Pet parents can also choose a kibble made with fresh meats as a convenient option that supports dogs' overall wellness, such as Now Fresh Good Gravy, which is made with easily digested fresh meats and nutrient-dense fruits and veggies.

Avoid table scraps

For many reasons, it's best to skip the table scraps. Not only could an allergen or toxin be present that pet parents may not be aware of, there are several other health risks associated with feeding dogs table scraps, such as digestive issues like vomiting and diarrhea, and even more serious problems like pancreatitis. Plus, giving dogs caloric-dense food can contribute to obesity.

Just like their pet parents, pups deserve to indulge a little over the holidays. But it's important to ensure that what they eat leaves them feeling great. Learn more about pet nutrition at nowfresh.com, and always check with a veterinarian about any concerns, especially when introducing new foods.

The surprising cost of owning a pet



From food to vet bills, insurance, grooming, sitters, medication and toys, costs of owning a pet are surprising.

(NC) For many people, pets are treasured companions that offer love and affection, however, the financial responsibilities that come with pet ownership can be steep. From food to vet bills, insurance, grooming, sitters, medication and toys, costs can add up quickly.

According to a recent report by Rover, the lifetime cost of owning a cat can range from \$13,000 to over \$70,000, depending on factors such as the size of the cat, its health needs and its lifespan. For dogs, the lifetime cost can be anywhere from \$17,000 to over \$50,000.

Kristy Irwin, product group owner at TD, understands the importance of budgeting for a pet, drawing from first-hand experience with her golden retriever. She notes the following considerations for prospective pet parents.

Understand the costs.

Create a list of all ongoing expenses associated with pet ownership and create a budget. This includes food, veterinary services, pet care, grooming, pet insurance and toys. If you're looking to get a puppy or kitten, don't forget about the initial costs associated with them. These include adoption or breeder fees, initial vaccines, neutering or spaying and new pet care items like food bowls, leashes and litter boxes.

Prepare for the unexpected.

Once the average monthly cost of pet ownership is determined, consider setting up a pet emergency fund. This fund can help alleviate the financial stress that comes with unplanned expenses, such as a medical emergency or replacing damaged household items.

Spend mindfully.

While it can be tempting to buy a new pet everything you think they'll need right away, Irwin suggests getting the necessities first and waiting on the extras. See what can be purchased secondhand, such as crates and pet carriers. Save on boarding fees by leaning on family and friends to help with pet care when possible. While it may not be feasible all the time, having a loved one look after your pet when you're away can cut down on dog walking or pet sitting costs.

Adding a pet to your home is like welcoming another

family member. Just as you would budget for groceries and household expenses, it's important to think about the expenses that go along with your furry friend.

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