



3 Options to Ensure That You *and* Your Pet Rest Easy When You're Away

Whether you're traveling for work or vacation, it's a challenge to find trusted care for your pets while you're away. You might choose to board your pet at a kennel or with friends or family, or perhaps it's more practical to hire a sitter.

Boarding at a kennel

The advantage to kennels is knowing you're leaving your pets with people who are well equipped to take care of them. While your pets might miss you while you're separated, they'll have plenty of other human and animal company, and hopefully, they'll feel less lonely and not experience [separation anxiety](#).

Some pets, however, do become stressed in unfamiliar surroundings, especially when their people are gone. You could take your pet for a dry run to introduce him to the sights, sounds and smells while you remain a reassuring presence. Verify that the kennel provides adequate time outside a cage area, particularly if your pets are accustomed to roaming freely in your home.

To find a high quality kennel, keep these questions in mind:

Your overall impression. Is the kennel clean and well lit, and does it have plenty of ventilation? Is the temperature at a comfortable level? Are outdoor runs and exercise areas sheltered from the weather? Do the kennel/cage area floors include bedding to keep animals off the floor?

Pet specifics. Does the kennel require all boarders to provide veterinary records of their current vaccinations? Must all dogs be vaccinated against kennel cough with [Bordetella](#)? Do the individual cages allow each animal to move around comfortably? How frequently are pets fed, and are you permitted to bring special food should your pet need it?

Other services. Are there veterinary services available should an animal become ill? Does the kennel provide grooming, bathing, training, nail-clipping, or other services?

Boarding with friends or family

When your pet's familiar with friends or family members who are willing to watch your critter while you're away, it's a great, lower-cost option. You and your pet already know the sitter and trust them, and that can be a huge hurdle, especially for [older, possibly less-adaptable pets](#).

Professional pet sitters

Pet sitters operate a few different ways. Some specialize in working with one particular kind of pet, like designated dog or [cat sitters](#). Some sitters will come to your house two or more times a day to walk, play with, and feed your pets. Other sitters [board pets](#) at their own homes, which offers a built-in set of possible playmates for your pooch. Many pet sitters also care for more than just cats or dogs, so if your home includes a [menagerie](#) of scaled, furry, and feathered friends, it's a good option to consider.

To find a high quality pet sitter:

Hire someone from a [well-established company](#) or an individual with great recommendations. Read reviews and talk to past clients to get a complete picture of the positives and any negatives. Check out Facebook pages, Angie's List, Care.com, and other social media. Ask your veterinarian for a recommendation, especially if you've got older pets with special needs.

After you've narrowed your choices, schedule appointments to meet with each candidate so you can learn their personalities and get a general idea about how they'll interact with your pets. Here's a list of [questions](#) created by the Humane Society of the United States that you can use to screen potential pet sitters. Make sure to ask for references from past clients, too.

The end of this tail

Most animals are fairly flexible and adaptable to their surroundings. Some—like fish, rodents, and reptiles—may not even notice a change in scenery (or their humans). If your pets can't come with you, it's worth your peace of mind to research all the options until you've found the one that will work best for you, your pets, and your budget.

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