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Dogging It - Pet-Friendly Options Across The U.S.

By Josephine Matyas

According to Erin Caslavka, editor at *Ark & Tent*, an online travel magazine about uniting people and animals through travel "More and more people are travelling with their pets. Some hotels are now going out of their way to accommodate travellers with their pets and some are putting together specific pet-friendly packages." *Ark & Tent* is a good starting point for planning travel with dogs or cats – the website contains information on pet-friendly restaurants and hotels, local parks, and tips from locals on the best places to have a positive pet-travel experience in their city. www.arkandtent.com.

While Travelling

Who doesn't have a client that insists on travelling with their pet? Here are a few basics to keep in mind:

Pets in carriers (small dogs, cats and even some birds species) are allowed as carry-on or checked baggage on some major airlines (including Air Canada, American Airlines and United Airlines). Details vary, so contact the airlines at the time of reservation.

If travelling by train, Amtrak allows only service dogs. No other pets are allowed at any time.

While Staying

More and more hotels (including some luxury properties) are now welcoming well-behaved dogs to their guest ranks, including one of the world's finest hotel chains, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts. The pet policy varies by property but details can be found at www.fairmont.com or by calling the hotel.

For guests that are unable to travel with their pets, there are "employees" at a few Fairmont properties that may help to stem their pet-withdrawal. Under Fairmont's canine ambassador program, pooches that were originally trained as guide dogs are now happily re-employed at one of the world's leading luxury hotels. At The Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston, Catie, the hotel's black Labrador Retriever, is so popular that walking appointments must be booked through the concierge.

The Atlantic City Pet Hotel & Grooming (located within blocks of Atlantic City's attractions and casinos) is a licenced kennel and the city's only 24-hour pet hotel. Cats and dogs can stay for the daytime or overnight – walk time, playtime and exercise time is all included. Pick-up and drop-off services to all hotels in Atlantic City. www.atlanticcitypethotelandgrooming.com.

The Residence Inn by Marriott in Somers Point, New Jersey is an all suite hotel located between Atlantic City and Ocean City. Suites feature fully equipped kitchens, living rooms, free high-speed Internet access and daily breakfast buffet. They accept pets of all sizes, but there is a limit of up to two pets and a one-time per stay US \$100 non-refundable pet fee. www.marriott.com/aiyac.

The Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel's Love That Dog Program allows one dog (up to 36 kilograms) per room at no extra charge (in traditional rooms only). Fido will be provided with a Sheraton Sweet Sleeper Dog Bed, along with a Pet Welcome Pack that provides information and supplies, including food and water bowls with a floor mat, cellophane waste bags, latex gloves, and signature dog identification tags. A list of specialty services available through the hotel concierge includes: a list of local walking and sitting services with bonded/insured providers, locations of the



Credit: Fairmont Resorts & Hotels

nearest runs and parks, contact information for 24-hour veterinarians, a list of local grooming services with same-day service and locations of local pet stores. www.sheraton.com.

And at the Hotel Indigo properties in San Diego, Atlanta and Jacksonville hotel guests with their dogs can join in on the fun at the hotels' Canine Cocktails Happy Hour. The event is a social hour that mixes dog-friendly guests and local residents and their canines. Guests at the hotels can take advantage of special packages: a doggie bag at check in, use of a dog beds, treats and lint brushes in the room. www.hotelindigo.com.

While Shopping

Waterloo Premium Outlets in Waterloo, New York is a shopaholic's dream, with 100 designer and name brand outlet stores. The centre's outdoor environment is pet-friendly, and various "doggie parks" are close by, including Wegmans Good Dog Park at Onondaga Lake County with fenced treed areas for both small and large dogs, water faucets and benches. Nearby, the Ithaca Dog Park is a two-hectare fenced park next to the marina at the Allan H. Treman State Marine Park. Amenities include a grassy area, some shade, water fountain, picnic tables, and a separate activity area for small dogs.

Woodbury Common Premium Outlets in Central Valley, New York features 220 designer and name brand outlet stores, from Barneys New York to Valentino. The centre's outdoor environment is pet-friendly and the mall's Lululemon store offers doggie treats and fresh water for pets.

To find out more about the Discover America - Canada Committee, attend a meeting or receive the bi-monthly newsletter, contact them by fax at (416) 352-5567, by e-mail at admin@seeamerica.ca or visit www.seeamerica.ca

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