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Travelling with Animals Nowadays

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During the summer months, and especially in August, trips always present an issue (aside from the obvious one of whether, in the current economic climate, you will in fact be able to travel!) – how to travel with our companion animals.

I have recently been in the USA and have, for the first time, used the services of United Airlines, an American company that has a special programme for taking care of the companion animals that travel with them. The ‘Pet Safe’ programme includes facilities such as enjoyment of rooms in different airports (such as Chicago, JFK, Las Vegas, etc.) during transit for the animals that travel in the cabin with their owners. Aside from the fact that the tone of the page is positive ("take your favourite pet with you on your flight"), the information provided for travellers is clear, useful and professional, and it also seems that United Airlines feels responsible for the security of companion animals that fly with them and that the company feels proud to offer services that contribute towards the welfare of animals and the comfort of their owners, such as relying on a Live Animal Office that runs 24 hours a day, the possibility of tracking pets from the origin to the destination and many other things.

Those of us that accumulate many hours of flying with animals know how satisfying it is when, from the very first moment, you are offered cordial and friendly treatment, in addition to security, towards the animal that travels with you. Not all companies are the same. I especially remember the French company Air France, which is exemplary in the boarding and un-boarding of animals that fly in cabin, also with the French ‘gentillesse’ characteristic, the chief flight attendant offering water to the animal after having dealt with the passengers. These are the details that make the difference. Travelling with an animal, for pleasure or for work – those that have to do it often will understand – is one of the many indicators of responsible tenancy, and which avoids abandonments. It is about incorporating good habits of care and the raising of our pets as part of our routines and influencing how social habits change, so there may be greater tolerance towards the presence of animals in public places. As is it tirelessly repeated in Spain by the [Affinity Foundation](#), animals are a source of health. It is becoming less and less difficult to find accommodation in hotels that permit companion animals. The law is also increasingly supports the simplification of regulations relating to trips with companion animals.

From the outset we have dedicated particular attention to this topic on our website. You may read the related articles in the [FAQ section](#), where reference is made to questions such as the following:

- [Can I travel by train with my companion animal?](#)
- [Within the next two months I have to travel to Germany with my cat; do I need any special document in order to leave Spain with my cat, or is just its health card sufficient?](#)
- [Can I travel by bus or metro with my companion animal?](#)
- [Can I travel long distances by bus with my companion animal? Can I travel with my companion animal by boat/ferry?](#)

• [Can I travel by plane with my companion animal?](#)

The ADS Investigation Group, which I manage at the UAB, has developed a report based on a rigorous and corroborated investigation on the travel habits of companion animals and on the applicable legal regulations. In a globalised world like today's, this is one of the services that those of us who have for years dedicated ourselves to investigation are under a moral and civic obligation to provide.

Aside from this, the international association IPATA (International Pet and Animal Transportation Association) which was founded in 1969, exists and consists of over 350 members in over 70 countries that gather together companies and official transports that prioritise the transportation of companion animals, that respect the principles of animal welfare, and that develop strategies for improving security services for the transporting of animals.

Indeed, up until now the European companies that are active members of this influential international association (IPATA) include Lufthansa, Air France and British Airways. It would be great if Spanish companies could unite through this association and that travellers (principally those with four legs!) would begin use it!

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