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**JS ONLINE: ENTERTAINMENT:**

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**CORRECTION:**An article Tuesday in the Cue section about dog boarding misstated the price of a Dog Days of Wisconsin weekend. The cost is about \$420, not \$40.

**Dog owners have options for boarding their pets**

By **JACKIE LOOHAUIS-BENNETT**  
jloohaus@journalsentinel.com

Posted: Aug. 11, 2008

It's hard to wave goodbye when you only have paws.



It's also tough on the heartstrings. Summer trips can be the stuff of sadness when they separate pets and their people.

The traditional procedure has been to board dogs in a kennel during vacations, but that experience can be mixed.

"Dogs with behavioral issues, separation anxiety, or who don't like other dogs are likely to experience a lot of stress if kenneled," says Angela Speed, spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Humane Society. "Likewise, older dogs who have never experienced a kennel may not adjust well."

Happily, new answers are appearing to the old question: "What do we do with Tippy during family trips?" The options fall into two categories: To take or not to take.

For Beth Maresh of Cedarburg, the answer is: "Take." Her family has two "well-traveled pooches." The whole pack has been to South Dakota, Custer State Park and Wyoming in recent years: "We pile into the minivan."

The family is among the 29.1 million Americans who say they have traveled with a pet in the past three years, according to the Travel Industry Association of America. Canines are the most popular animal travel companions, says the association.

But pet owners can't always take their animals along on vacation. Here are some options if you decide to leave your dog behind:

**Do a pampered sleep-over**

Several local dog day care centers offer extended overnight boarding with playtime perks above kenneling.

Milwaukee's Central Bark downtown and north side locations, for instance, offer enough supervised exercise on playground equipment with other dogs to fill a six-hour day before lights out. Stays can range from overnight to three weeks.

"The main thing we're trying to do is keep them mentally and physically exercised. We find they're happier all around," says Katie Wilke, Central Bark general manager.

Donnybrook Inn, located in Cedar Grove, offers themed luxury suites for dogs, including a "Harley Suite," and a "Patriot Suite" complete with themed toddler beds and covers, and TV sets to help keep Fido relaxed and occupied. The inn is set on 80 acres of land with several dog swimming ponds. Owner Lesley-Rae Karnes is a champion dog trainer.

"There are no tears when the dog is left here," she says. "Kids get involved in selecting which suite the dog will use, and everyone feels good." It's about \$22 a night. Information: [www.donnybrookkennel.com](http://www.donnybrookkennel.com) or (920) 668-6511.

**Hire a sitter**

Professional pet-sitting companies allow your dog all the comforts of home - because he *is* home.

"In most cases I see dogs being much calmer than when they're kenneled. They know where their toys are, where their dish is. Their yard is just a few steps away," says Jane Lichtenberg, founder of Critter Sitters Inc. in Glendale ([www.crittersittersinc.com](http://www.crittersittersinc.com)).

Professional pet sitters can be hired to do as many visits a day as needed (costs vary but are about \$19 to \$25 a visit). But be sure to plan ahead because most professionals need to meet with owners and pets ahead of time.

"Pet sitters can administer meds," says Felicia Lembesis, executive director of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters.

"They need to know what should be done in an emergency, who the vet is, what the pet's habits are, the favorite toys. . . . Things like where there's a circuit breaker box in case of a storm."

Added bonus: Pet sitters can also make the house look lived in by opening and closing drapes, taking in the mail and watering the plants.

A professional pet sitter should be insured and have references. For more information on what to look for in a pet sitter, check out information from NAPPS at [www.petsitters.org](http://www.petsitters.org).

**Vacationing together**

So what if your lanyard-making skills aren't what they should be. Your dog won't mind as long as you keep toasting those marshmallows together.

That's the idea behind Dog Days of Wisconsin, a pet/person vacation. For one weekend a year - Aug. 22 to 25 this year - the northern Wisconsin girls' camp becomes pet friendly. You and Fido can hike, swim and dock dive, make dog-themed crafts and compete together in talent shows.

"People from the city really like it, because there aren't a lot of places you can swim off-leash with your dog," says Anne Hicks, assistant camp director. Fees run about \$420 with a cabin rental and all meals, but you can also tent, bring an RV or stay in a local motel.

More information: (800) 226-7436 or [www.dogcamp.com](http://www.dogcamp.com)

Here are some tips if you decide to take your dog on vacation.

**Are pets welcome?**

A "no pets allowed" sign can ruin any vacation. "Sleeping in the car is no fun for anyone," says Beth Maresh.

One growing resource to avoid obstacles is Fido Friendly Magazine, which offers detailed information on hotel and recreational facilities that are pet-friendly.

Each bimonthly issue includes hotel, city and state information and reviews; it's available at Borders and Barnes & Noble.

Readers can also subscribe online to the magazine at [www.fidofriendly.com](http://www.fidofriendly.com) for \$19.95 or join the Fido Friendly Travel Club, which includes six issues of the magazine and e-mail newsletter with updates as well as hotel discounts.

You can also use the Anne Hicks' search engine to find dog-friendly facilities in your destination city.

**Flying dogs**

For many years, pet owners lived with horror stories about animals dying in cold, unpressurized airplane holds.

Some airlines have improved their pet care. But be sure and find out the specifics with each airline and each flight. Ask where the pet will be put, in what conditions it will be kept and what happens if the flight is delayed for long periods.

Milwaukee-based Midwest Airlines recently began a Premiere Pet Program. Dog show veteran Susan Kerwin coordinates the program and worked with the airlines to design special pet care, including in-cabin carrier placement for small pets and crating in a forward area under the pilots cabin for larger animals.

More information: [www.midwestairlines.com](http://www.midwestairlines.com)

**Dog Boarding**



Photos/Jack Orton

Hank, a golden retriever mix, plays at Central Bark Doggy Day Care. Central Bark is among dog day care centers offering boarding.



Tia, a Yorkshire terrier, relaxes in a luxury den at the Central Bark Doggy Day Care.



Central Bark's Katie Wilke says dogs are happier when they get exercise.



Tiger Lilly, an English bulldog, ponders a trip down the slide.

**Packing For Pooch**

Fido needs his own tote full of travel supplies when vacationing. Milwaukee dog trainer Amy Ammen offers a checklist from her book "Hip Ideas for Hyper Dogs":

- » Medications
- » Food and treats
- » Food and water bowls
- » Favorite toys
- » Blanket, bed or collapsible crate
- » Brush
- » Collar with identification and rabies tags
- » Leash and long line for the occasional romp.
- » Health certificates

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