

Traveling With Pets

Just a quick reminder for those of you who plan on travelling outside the US with your pets this season:

Start planning early!

Unlike travel within the US, where most airlines just require proof of current rabies vaccination and a health certificate signed within 10 days of travel, many foreign countries have very specific requirements for importing dogs and cats.

As soon as you have an idea of your destinations, go online and copy the requirements to enter each of the countries you plan on visiting. These requirements can change without notice, so start early.

Our most popular destination seems to be the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, so lets use them as an example. You must apply for an import permit to the Director of Agriculture and send a processing and fax fee (money order or cash only). It can take 2 to 3 months to receive this permit, and it is good for one entry up to a year. Once you have this permit, your pet must be seen by a licensed/accredited veterinarian within 48 hours of your arrival. If you are travelling by boat, there is some leeway due to weather constraints. Your vet will issue you an international health certificate (some countries require a USDA stamp, with can be obtained in Miami).

Before you make this appointment, make sure your pet satisfies all their requirements for vaccinations, etc. It is ideal not to vaccinate your pet too close to your departure date to avoid post-vaccination reactions, which might complicate your travel plans.

Many pets have not had all of these vaccinations, as they are not all considered core vaccines in this country. If you have your pet vaccinated annually off the Reef, try to make sure these vaccines are given at that time.

Some countries (not the Bahamas) require a rabies titer. This blood test is only run by two labs in this country and can take up to 3 to 4 weeks to get results. Other countries require a microchip, which is always a great idea.

As you can see, there is a lot to plan for. My best advice is to start early. We will be glad to help you navigate all the paperwork to make your vacation a pleasure. Please feel free to call us with any questions.

Thank you,

“Dr. Mae”