

pet friendly? Which should be avoided?

You should also know that there are no specific Foreign Service Directives covering pre-posting animal expenses: medicals, shots, certifications, airline-approved cages or flight costs, not to mention stockpiles of locally unavailable—but required—special food, supplies and medication.

Once you have done your homework, weighed the financial and psychological pros and cons and decided to bring your pet(s) on posting, your next step should be to consult with your vet. We

consultations. You have now received your PCF, which in our household stands for “Pet Confirmation Finalization.”

Moving day is stressful enough for humans. Cats and dogs can be equally affected. Everything they are familiar with is being removed. And in all the confusion and chaos, you may not have the time to sit down and explain what’s happening. Perhaps these tips might make things a little easier for you and your pets:

Bring the cage into the house a week or so before the move, leave the door open and place a favourite toy

- Tape their documentation (vaccinations, medical, etc.) to the side of the cage;
- Write a short note, in both official languages, which is also taped to the cage, asking if someone could please fill the small water container on the cage and gently speak the pet’s name.

Okay. You have arrived at your destination. You are now at customs, anxiously awaiting the arrival of your beloved friends.

The animals arrive. They look fine, if a little worse for wear. But—oh my! What is that gamy smell?! You look

Planning for pet travels begins with your choice of posting. A great deal of research into your prospective new location is a must.

have grappled with both the age and health questions. We came to the conclusion that we preferred to bring our cats Chompsky, who was 17 at the time, and Cyril, who has a heart condition, rather than leave them behind with family or friends. Tranquilizing your pet, on the other hand, is a matter to be discussed with your vet. Our choice has always been not to tranquilize, primarily because you can never be certain how long the medication will last or how it will affect the pets.

So you’ve done your research and

inside, or a towel or old t-shirt with your scent on it.

Try to board the animals or have them stay with friends or family when the packers arrive. Cats are especially curious and can be found hiding in boxes about to be taped up for shipment—not a pleasant thought!

When booking your accommodations, be sure to check with the hotel or motel to ensure that they allow animals and to find out if any additional costs apply.

Of course, by now, you have contacted the airline, so when you arrive at the airport you will have complied with all of their restrictions and regulations, and have placed the pet in an airline-approved carrier. You should also:

- Have a calm demeanour (animals can sense panic and stress);
- Place the dog’s collar and leash under the cage padding;
- Write on the front of the carrier “My name is Chompsky (or Fluffy, or Fido)” in the hope that some caring and friendly individual behind the scenes might speak their name and make them feel that they are not alone or abandoned;

lovingly into the cages only to have the dog turn her back on you and the cats hiss! Just like you and your human family, they are anxious, tired, hungry and in need of a bathroom break.

You should arrange with the mission—if you are arriving late in the day—to have a temporary litter box at the ready. In your carry-on, you should have brought the dog and cat treats and a small amount of food.

And now, a few days later, you are settling into your new home with all your family members. All is right with the world. And as you embark (there’s that pun again) on this new adventure with the whole family, I offer you bon voyage!

Diana Roué is currently working with the North American Platform Program. She has been on assignment in Beirut, Rome, New York and Pretoria and will be heading to Los Angeles as deputy mission consular officer this fall. She will be travelling with Miss Trillium, Leo, Murray, P.J., Bubble, Beasley and her husband John.

