

## Pooch Proof Your Resort!! Dog Lovers Travel Too!!

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I've said it before, working from home is here to stay! And I will say it again, work from "home" can mean... work from your favorite resort! With the trend of people getting more mobile for work comes another growing trend of bringing pets along when leaving home. Whether it is a working vacation or not, folks want to bring the whole family when traveling – including the four-legged, furry kind. Let's dig into what makes a stay truly friendly for both human and pet.



### A Whole New World

Including pets in the travel experience of your resort, can bring the benefit of an expanded demographic and an added revenue source. To do so, key decisions and clear policy early on are essential. First decide, if you are going to be "pet" friendly, or "dog" friendly. Are you prepared to take in the whole wild kingdom of monkeys, snakes, and fish? If not, I recommend shaping your pet policy specifically around the pooches.

Make sure you know the limits of your insurance policy, and if there are restrictions on any breeds you want to host. Check your local laws for clarification on how to treat emotional support animals. Know that regardless of your pet policy, guests who require service animals cannot be charged a pet fee and are not required to disclose they are bringing a service animal.

### Play by the Rules

To make sure all guests have a positive experience with visiting dogs, establish rules around what type of dogs are welcome. Clarify dog breeds that are accepted, restrictions on size or weight, and ages. Determine the number of dogs guests are allowed to bring with them. Is your limit two, or the whole pack?

Outline the behavior expected of both owner and animal staying with you. For example:

- Dogs are to be harnessed or leashed at all times outside of the room.
- Dogs must be housebroken and trained.
- Use designated areas only for pet relief and clean-up after dogs, using bags and receptacles.
- Dogs may be unaccompanied no more than 7 hours at a time.
- No dogs in pool

And don't forget about setting a fee per night. This establishes a level of accountability for pet owners. When setting the fee make sure to take into account additional cleaning necessary while maintaining a competitive advantage over kennel and dog sitter fees.

## “Bark”-itecture

“Barkitecture” is not just for designer dog houses. The idea of pet forward design can range from kitsch to design aspects that just make good sense for dog owners. Let’s focus on design choices for your resort that will help ensure your decision to invite dogs won’t bring with it unnecessary wear and tear.

In my article [3 Quick Tips to Refresh Your Timeshare Resort With FLAIR!](#), I touted the benefits of switching out carpet at your resort in favor of LVT. Luxury Vinyl Tile is a MUST for dog friendly rooms. It makes cleaning up quick and easy for both your guests and your housekeeping crew. LVT already has a longer life span than carpet and more so when it comes to pets.

While we encourage pets to sleep in their own luxury bed offered at check in (keep reading), odds are they will find their paws on the furniture. Be sure to use commercial grade upholstery. If not using vinyl upholstery (which can be surprisingly supple), select a tightly woven fabric with stain resistance such as Crypton. Where possible with tables and chairs, avoid wood legs and detailing that will easily show scratching, chewing, and peeing.

Consider your property and landscaping. You don’t want to invite dogs if there isn’t a convenient and safe place for owners to take a potty break in the middle of the night. Ensure the designated area for pet relief is convenient enough for your guests with pets and secluded enough that your guests without pets aren’t bothered. If your property is near a beach or muddy woods, include an outdoor dog washing station to make sure outdoor explorers keep the mess outside.

## Pet Amenities

The difference between “pet friendly” and “pet paradise” is all in the amenities. Receiving your guests with the expectation of their needs always leaves a good impression- and even more so when doting on their furry friends. Create a standard of care for canines and welcome them with a branded dog bed and food mat with two bowls. Add in extras like a pet specific throw blanket, poop bags, wet wipes, and treats. Provide a dog tag with your resort information for owners to use during their stay. All of these items are branding and marketing opportunities as well, when guests share on social media how thoughtful you have been for their fur family.

Concierge services for pets help take care of the human experience as well. Offer a curated guide to the great outdoors, with recommendations for locations, restaurants and activities welcoming to dogs. Include local vet and emergency services and sources for dog walking services. Expand your own offerings with mixers like “Canines and Cocktails” with dog-centric vendors and experiences.

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