

Discover the Top 5 Dog-Friendly Hotel Chains in the US for Your Furry Friend

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As a pet parent, I know how distressing it is when heading out on a trip to have to leave your furry, four-legged family members behind. It can cause you to wonder whether you actually want to go on a vacation at all. And, of course, and the pain and anxiety of that separation goes both ways, with pets often getting anxious, depressed or developing behavioral issues while their owners are away.

Luckily, we're seeing an increase in pet-friendly accommodations being offered by hospitality companies across the U.S. Perhaps it's because of the recent boom in adoptions of pandemic pups and quarantine kitties, and the fact that more people are working from home and forming deep bonds with their fur-kids.

But, whatever the reason, hotel chains are steadily embracing the reality that travelers want to have their pets with them on their trips. And, rather than lose business to Airbnb or other vacation rentals that might offer more animal-inclusive offerings, more hotel brands are taking their "pet-friendly" approach from simply allowing pets in guest rooms to really rolling out the red carpet for their four-legged guests.

Of course, it's always important to do your research and double-check the pet policies of the property where you intend to stay, as individual properties may have their own rules, separate from those of the parent company. However, on the whole, these are the hotel chains that are among the most welcoming to pets:

1. Kimpton Hotels

Owned by IHG, Kimpton Hotels' collection of boutique U.S. properties boasts a broadly inclusive pet policy, inviting guests to bring their "furry, feathery or scaly" family members—regardless of size, weight and breed—all at no extra charge. Besides welcoming just about any kind of animal companion with open arms, there's also no limit on the number of pets you can bring along. Kimpton properties offer lots of special goodies to make sure pets get the pampering they deserve, including such amenities as plush pet beds, food, water bowls, mats, poop bags and door hangers alerting staff and guests that pets are present. The hotel chain even has dedicated Directors of Pet Relations on staff.

2. Virgin Hotels

At Virgin Hotels, four-legged guests are welcomed with open arms and are invited to stay with their owner for free, without any breed or size restrictions. At every property, pet pals receive plush dog beds, special treats, food and water dishes, clean-up bags, and a stylish Virgin-branded bandana. Plus, its pet-friendly chambers feature a porcelain watchdog that keeps guard just outside your door. The British-owned hotel chain currently has U.S. locations open in Chicago, Dallas, Las Vegas, Nashville, New Orleans and New York City.

3. Loews Hotels

Its “Loews Loves Pets” program proves that Loews Hotels is happy to have furry family members stay with guests of its various properties. The hotel chain really goes above and beyond, providing treats, bowls and placemats standard at check-in. Upon request, you can also get special pet beds, leashes, collars; pet toys, litter boxes, litter, scoopers; scratching posts and more.

There’s also pet-in-room door hanger to alert staff of pets’ presence, doggie pick-up bags, dog-walking route maps for owners, and connections to the best pet-walking and pet-sitting services around. On top of that, Loews offers gourmet room-service menus that are specially developed by the hotels’ Executive Chefs for cats and dogs.

Note that there is a limit of two pets per room and proof of up-to-date vaccinations is required. Individual locations may have different fees and specific policy details, so check with the property first.

4. Marriott:

A recent Skyscanner study identified Marriott as one of the most pet-friendly major hotel chains operating in America. Depending upon the particular brand and property you’re considering, pet fees, weight, and breed restrictions may apply and there may be rules about which hotel areas the pet can access. That said, there are at least 10 pet-friendly Marriott Bonvoy brands, and many offer dedicated amenities designed to make Fido or Fluffy feel like a VIP.

Some standouts include:

Westin hotels, which welcome small and midsize dogs, and provide them with a plush Heavenly Dog Bed for a supremely comfortable stay, along with other special amenities, free of charge.

Aloft hotels’ pet program is called “Arf, Animals Are Fun”. Dogs under 40 pounds are welcome, and they receive an Aloft-branded bed and bowl during their stay, along with complimentary treats and toys.

Element hotels welcome dogs weighing up to 40 pounds as part of its “Love That Dog” program, which provides guests with a signature dog bed, food, water bowls, pet cleanup supplies and more.

5. Hilton

Industry giant Hilton allows pets at roughly 80 percent of its total properties, according to a timely NerdWallet analysis. With seven pet-friendly brands under its umbrella: Canopy, Hampton, Tru, Homewood Suites, Home2 Suites, Embassy Suites and Hilton Garden Inn. While all will accept guests’ animal companions, individual locations’ pet policies vary, meaning they may only accept certain species, have limits on weight or the number of pets allowed per room, and charge different pet fees.

Depending upon the particular property, guests might be offered pet perks like dog treats, or guides for pet owners indicating where to find local dog parks and walking trails. Hilton’s partnership with Mars Petcare gives guests staying at any the above-branded hotels access to virtual access to members of the Mars Pet Expert Team, who are available to answer questions about pets’ health, wellness and behaviors.

