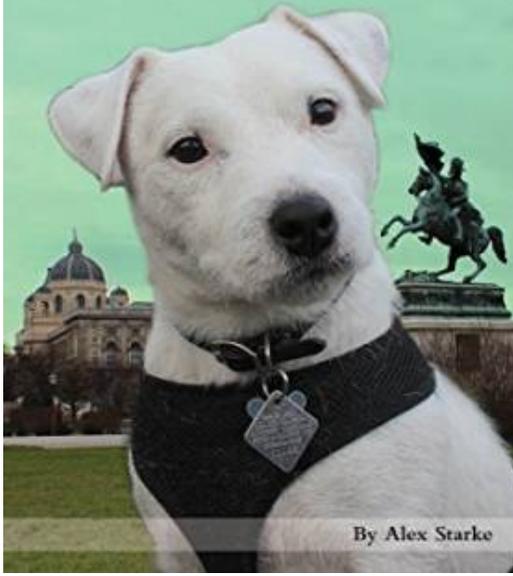


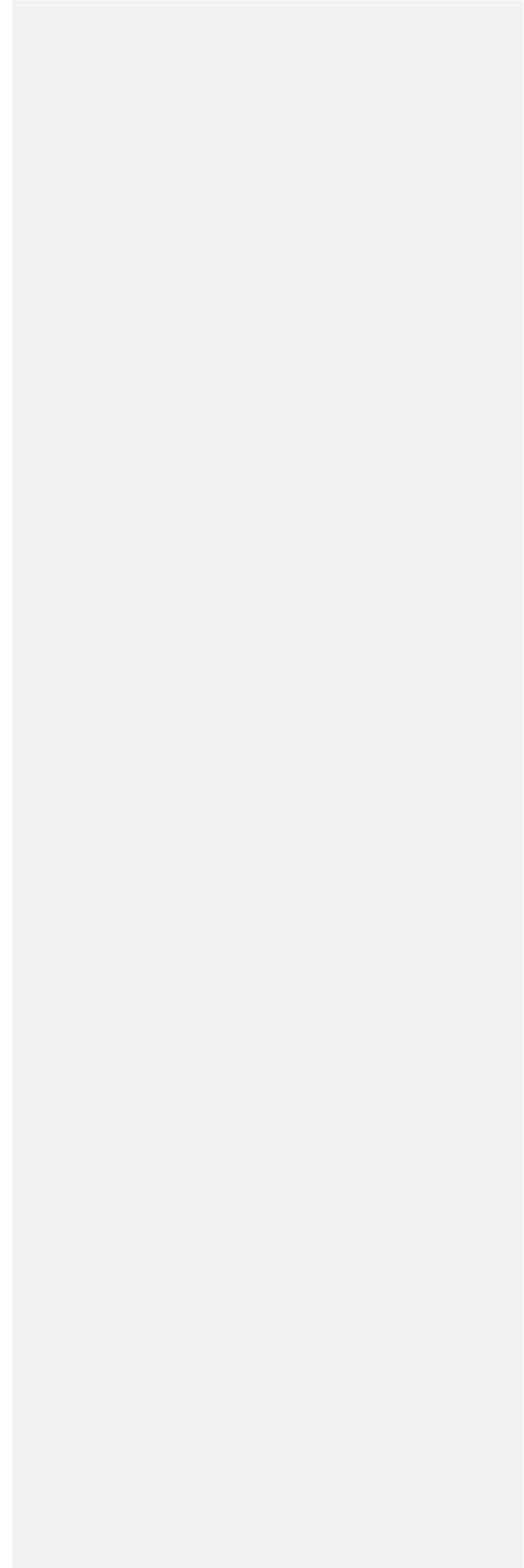
A Quick Guide to
FLYING WITH YOUR DOG
from the USA to Europe



By Alex Starke

A Quick Guide to Flying with Your Dog from the USA to Europe

Alex Starke



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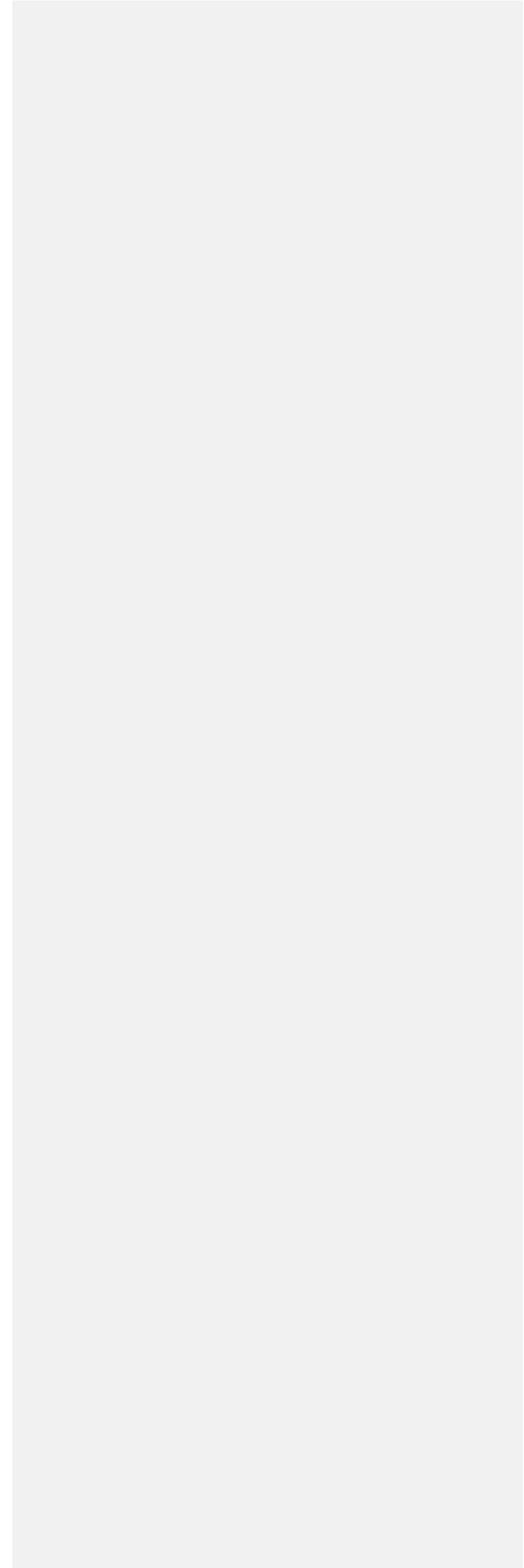
Published in the United States by Five Jacks Publishing
Longmont, Colorado

Cover Design by Anne Starke

www.starkeconcepts.com

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Anne Starke for editorial suggestions and for her wonderful cover graphics



This guide is dedicated to my traveling buddy, Thor. I could not have written it without him and his patience with me trying out all of the carriers and other gizmos on him.

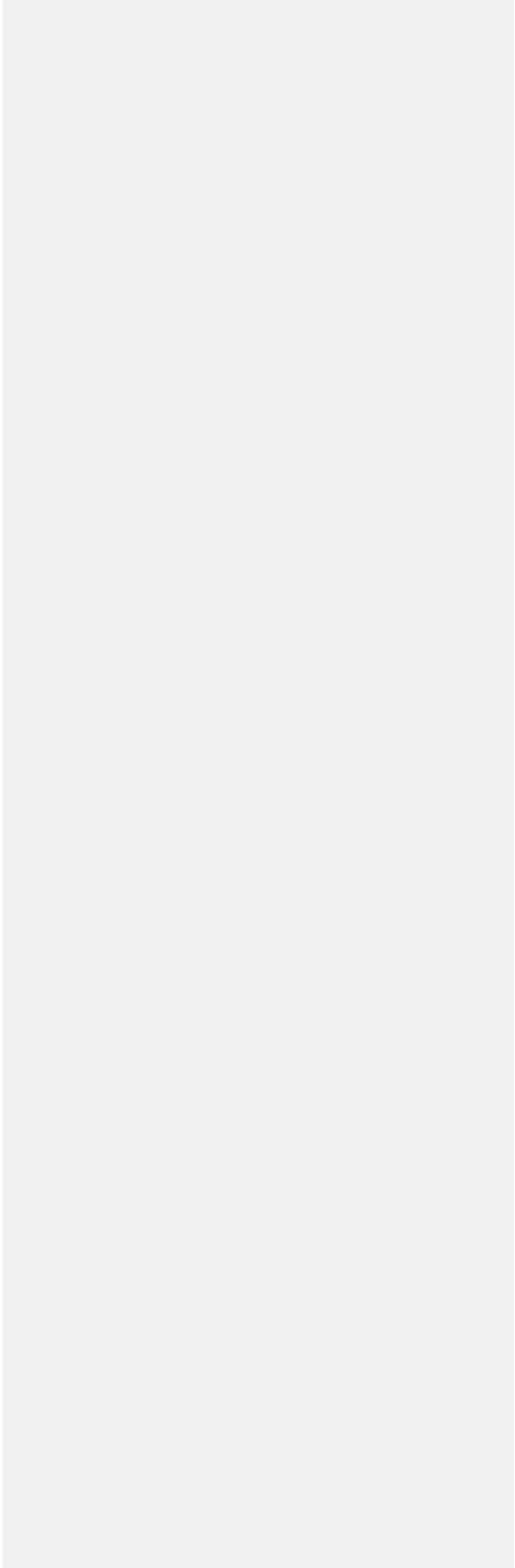


Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Checklist](#)

[Links](#)

[About the Author](#)

Introduction

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This guide is for those of you, specifically within the United States, who have always wanted to take their furry pal over the pond with them to Europe. We have done this three times thus far with our Jack Russell, Thor, who loves to travel with us.

One of the reasons I decided to write this quick guide was simple: I kept seeing inquiries on various travel forums asking how to bring your dog to Europe. I answered those questions many times and finally produced this little guide that I felt would give people the basics on what they needed to do. Of course there are many other lengthier and detailed books out there, most of them very well written. This guide is for those of you who want the basics of what paperwork is needed, vaccinations, micro-chipping, and what you need to know for transporting your buddy. I have also included some of my thoughts on lodging, public transit, and some other things as well. Really, though, I want to make this as fun of an experience as I can for you in a quick, easy read.

I will endeavor to give you the benefit of my research for you to take your furry friend to Europe in the least stressful way. After all, you want to take your dog on a vacation of a lifetime, you don't want to have to spend a lot of time fretting over research. Of course, you will have to do some homework and legwork, but I will supply the basics for you. In the end it will all be worth it, because you will be sharing an adventure with your dog, not leaving him or her at home.

I am going to use the specific examples of our journeys to Austria as my point of reference for most of what you will need to know. Being as how Austria is part of the European Union, the paperwork required for any of the member countries and those that are signatories on the Schengen Agreement, will be essentially the same – more on that later.

Specific products or services that I mention are just things I have employed for our trips with Thor. In other words, I am not getting remuneration for anything, other than your purchase of this guide, for which I thank you very much.

One other thing – this guide does not cover the UK or Northern Ireland. They have different rules that apply. What I'm giving you in this guide is for the EU countries and Switzerland only. When we take Thor to the UK, I will add a section based on our personal experience.

The chapters in the guide are laid out pretty much the way I proceeded to get everything in order for our trips. Let me tell you that the first trip to Vienna was the most daunting, simply because we had not done this before, but in the end it was worth all of the research and minor distress. Believe me, after that the second trip was almost a walk in the park.

As a fellow dog-lover, I am going to do my best to guide you through the processes involved, plus interject some personal advice as well. So without further eloquence, let's get down to it!

Chapter 1

Getting Started

Let's start with a few preliminaries. First off is to ask the question: why you want to take your dog in the first place? Here is a little story of how we came to our decision to finally bring Thor.

In early September of 2011, having come into a bit of inheritance money, my wife Anne and I started thinking of going to one of our favorite cities in Europe, Vienna. We had traveled to Vienna on several previous occasions, loving each visit, but never during Christmas. Vienna, with its Christmas Markets, seemed too perfect to pass up and so we began to plan.

I must say that on our other journeys to Austria—while beautiful and very enriching—we always missed our dogs. On one trip as we biked from Linz along the Danube back to Vienna, we stopped in the little village of Dürnstein for the night. Our landlady had the cutest little Jack Russell terrier female pup and allowed Anne to make friends with her. We both stroked the little pup and thought so longingly of our dogs who were far away, wishing we had at least one of them with us. This same thought came to us on our next two trips to Vienna, we always missed “the kids.” For this new adventure we had both decided that we would take our Jack Russell, Thor, with us.

One thing that was very important to us and will be to you as well when reaching your decision, is assessing whether your dog is up for undertaking a journey such as this. With Thor it was an easy call, he is a quite laid back Jack Russell—if there is such a thing—and does not freak out over new experiences and situations. Thor has a book out as well, titled Thor's Travels, which is told from his standpoint about his first trip to Europe. It is available in print and e-book format.

Of course all dogs have different temperaments so it is up to you to make an honest assessment of how you think your buddy will do on a long flight. If you have a dog that is super-hyper and goes out of his mind at the drop of a hat, you may want to reconsider or at least have a

meeting with your vet to get his opinion. In the end you are going to be the one to make the call on the issue. Think it through very carefully in consideration of your pal's welfare.

If your dog is a short muzzle breed, like a Pug, Boston terrier, and others, you may not be able to bring him along. This is due to the problems they would endure trying to breath in a pressurized cabin or baggage hold. Many airlines will not allow these types of dogs to fly, so check with the particular airline you are thinking of using.

Speaking of certain breeds, there are restrictions on travel for what some countries classify as fighting dogs such as Pit Bulls, American Staffordshire Terriers, etc. I urge you to check with both the airline you will use and the websites of the particular country or countries you will be visiting.

It must be said that if your dog is sick close to the day you are to travel you will be getting someone to look after him or her while you are away. Do not travel with a sick dog—that could have very bad consequences. I know you'll do the right thing for your pal.

When you are contemplating your travel dates keep in mind what the likely temperature will be. You don't want to fly your pal in the hold during 110 degree weather or if it is -10 degrees. Of course if your buddy is going in-cabin, no worries.

So, after all of your soul-searching and contemplation, let's assume you feel your pal is going to be able to handle the journey. Very good. Now we'll get down to the nuts and bolts.

Chapter 2

Destinations

Well, I am guessing you have made a decision on where you want to go in Europe. If you have, or if you haven't, let's think about a few things first.

Ask yourself what you want to do when you are in Europe. Is it visiting museums, going to the opera or concerts? This will prove to be difficult as most all of these venues are not going to allow dogs in. That doesn't mean you can't do any of these things, it just means you need to be creative. If you are thinking a musical evening in a major concert hall would be nice, see if your hotel can recommend a pet-sitter. We found that this is a service offered in many cities (although we have never used one).

Museums could be done the same way by using a pet-sitter if you wish. What we do is one of us sits at a café with Thor and watches the world go by while the other goes into the museum. We then switch places...you get the picture. Not a bad thing, just watch how many aperitifs you imbibe while waiting, you wouldn't want to make the museum a blur, would you?

Most of our trips with Thor have not involved museums or the like. We wandered Vienna with him taking in the sights, food, and Christmas Markets. Another trip we were in the Austrian Alps and hiking was the main event. I guess what I am saying is that with Thor we tried to keep it to an outdoor venue as much as possible. There were exceptions of course, like Venice or Milan, but all were fun and very doable. Whatever you do, don't leave your buddy alone in a room or apartment while you go out for fun. That's unfair to your dog and risky to the safety of the room.

As far as cafes and restaurants go in Austria, you will find that a well-behaved dog is most welcome to join you and stay under your table. All of the establishments we went to also brought Thor a dish of water and sometimes a treat. We found that in Switzerland this is the same as well, with the exception of Ticino Canton. We also had no issues wherever we went in Italy.

In my investigations on this subject I have found that countries like Germany, France, or the Netherlands are very dog-friendly. As far as eating and drinking is concerned you should be just fine. The best way, when in doubt, is to point to your dog and ask if it is okay.

A quick note about dogs in Spain and Portugal. Though we have not been there with Thor I have done some research and have found that it could be a problem for dogs on buses and public transit; namely, unless your dog is very small and in a carrier, they will not allow them at all. I am also fairly sure you will have problems with lodging and restaurants as well. If you are planning travel to these countries I urge you to do your homework so as not to be disappointed.

The Scandinavian countries like Norway, Sweden, and Finland may not allow your dog in cafés, restaurants, and shops. Be aware and do more research if you are thinking of any of these destinations.

Having your dog with you in a café or anywhere else can create an opening for some nice conversations with locals. We had been to Vienna three times before and had only a few conversations with locals. On our first visit with Thor though, people would stop us in the street to admire Thor and ask us about him, the same thing in cafes and restaurants. It was really great. We had to brush up on the German for “no he’s not a puppy, he’s 3 years old!”

Another bonus in Vienna is that the concert hawkers that try to corner tourists into buying tickets to touristy classical concerts leave you alone. I think it was because we had Thor and they assumed we were not tourists. I even had a guy come up to me and ask if I spoke English so he could get directions to the Kunsthistorisches Museum. I told him haltingly that I spoke ‘a little’ and pointed him in the right direction.

We found that having Thor with us on our subsequent visits to the Austrian Alps, Varenna, Italy, and other areas, got us into lots of great conversations with locals and other tourist from around the world. The first thing usually discussed after the amazement that you brought your dog is how you got him over to Europe.

Chapter 3

Airlines

Well, now that you think you know where you're going to go and what you plan on doing, let's talk about airlines. I will relate to you our experiences with Lufthansa, mainly because that is who we used.

We had flown with Lufthansa on many earlier trips to Vienna and liked them quite a lot. Lufthansa has a good reputation for traveling with dogs, so it was an easy call for us. Lufthansa's policy for pets can be found online at their website so always give it a review, in spite of what I will tell you—policies can change, you know.

For an in-cabin journey from the USA to Europe on Lufthansa your dog and carrier can weigh no more than 8 kilograms (around 18 pounds) total. The carrier needs to be airline approved and of a size not exceeding 55 cm x 40 cm x 23 cm (approximately 21.75 in x 15.75 in x 8 in) and must fit under the seat in front of you. Your buddy should have enough room in the carrier to stand up and turn around in it. As of this writing the cost for in-cabin transport from the USA to Europe is \$100.00 each way. I tried a Sherpa carrier, but it was a bit too tight for Thor. In the end I took a Snoozer large pet backpack with roller and handle. Thor was of a weight though that I had to modify it extensively. You can always email me for the details on that.

For larger dogs you are talking about going in the hold. For that you will require an airline compliant carrier that gives a dog plenty of room to move around in. The fees for taking a dog in the hold vary according to the size of the carrier, anywhere from \$200.00 to \$400.00 each way. You will need an empty water dish affixed to the inside front of the crate door so airline personnel can give the dog some water along the way. Another idea is to freeze the water in the dish so your pal can lick it as it melts. For the crate we used a Petmate Pet Porter. The dog dish was a Lixit Carrier Cage Crock.

The first trip to Vienna we were nervous about Thor being a few pounds over the limit for in-cabin so we opted to send him in his crate in the hold. I know some of you may panic at

the thought of that, but as far as Lufthansa went they were great. They let us know when he was loaded aboard every flight, that the captain was aware and had adjusted the temperature in the hold for Thor's comfort. Personnel along the way filled his water dish too. We were worried about him of course, but he arrived in Vienna happy as heck and unscathed.

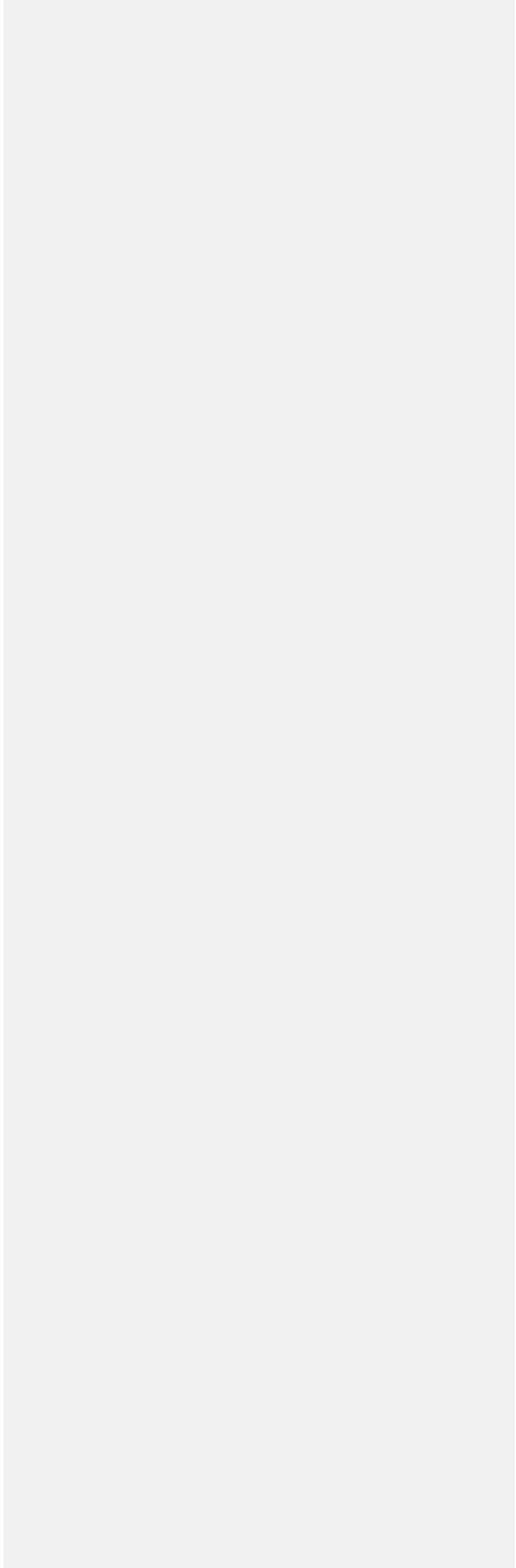
On our next trip we took him in-cabin with the Snoozer. He and the carrier were very close to the weight limit—maybe a pound over—but we decided to risk it. Now I am not in any way telling you to try and fudge the rules. That is something to consider carefully if your dog and carrier are close to being over the weight limit. We didn't get challenged or weighed at the counter though, just admired. That is not to say it doesn't happen, so be aware.

Whichever way you opt to transport your dog you must call the airline well in advance and let them know. Most airlines have a limit on how many dogs they will take per flight, especially for in-cabin transport. Some, like US airways will not accept in-cabin pets at all on flights to and from Europe. Never just show up at the airport with your dog without letting the airline know, they most likely will not let him or her fly, and there goes your trip. I always call after getting my tickets and inform them. I do another follow-up call a few days before flying just to make sure all is well. When you talk to your airline make sure they have the dog listed for all legs of the flight, coming and going. The last thing you want are problems at the counter when you check in.

As I have said we used Lufthansa for our flights and what I gave you was their policy. If you go with another airline check the policy on their website or call them. They are different from airline to airline. Use the web to check the airline's record with dogs as well—a discount airline might be a disaster for your pal. Another thing to keep in mind is if you are doing a multi-leg flight make sure it is on the same airline. If not, you could have problems in the transfer. If you—as an example—fly United into Frankfurt and your connecting flight is on Swissair, you are dealing with two different pet policies. You will need to call both United and Swissair to get everything straight. Don't assume that because both are members of a code-share that the rules are the same. Make the calls, do the research, and you will both arrive at your final stop okay.

Okay, so now you've picked your airline. Before you buy those tickets let's look into the paperwork and other requirements you'll need for your furry friend.







Chapter 4

Paperwork and Vaccinations

Your pal will need be micro-chipped with a European Union compliant chip, which is a 15 digit (Standard 11784/11785) chip. In our case the vet used a brand called Datamars. You have to be clear with the vet's office that you require this specific type of 15 digit chip, because in the USA there are other styles used that are not compliant with EU standards. I had to call three veterinarians until I found one who knew what I was talking about. I also discovered it is a good idea to call around because every office seemed to have varying prices for doing the chip.

Second step after the chip has been implanted is a rabies vaccination. Let me reiterate. You need to have the rabies done after the chip has been implanted. The order is essential. So, you may say, but my dog just got a rabies shot. Doesn't matter. After that chip gets implanted you're going to get a booster for your baby, like it or not. I had Thor implanted with the chip and then the rabies same day at the vet's office...in the right order of course. You cannot travel until 21 days have passed from the date of vaccination—keep that in mind while planning. If you go on a second adventure with your dog to Europe, you'll already have the chip so you will just need to make sure the rabies is current. You also won't have to wait out the 21 days.

Okay, chipping and vaccination are done. Now time for some government bureaucracy.

First go to the website for USDA/APHIS; it gives you all the information needed to have the proper paperwork, etc. The site also has downloadable forms for the particular country in the European Union you are landing in, which in our case was Austria. The forms for any of the European countries are essentially the same, some are in English, some in the native lingo, and some in both. Just make sure to get the forms for the country you will be landing in, not the country you are catching a connecting flight in. Here is what I mean. When we flew from Denver to Vienna we had to catch our connecting flight in Frankfurt. We actually did not go through customs until we landed in Austria, so we needed the Austrian forms for Thor.

You can do this two different ways. The way we did it was to download the forms and then took them to our vet so he could fill everything out. You'll need the rabies certificate and dated proof of the microchip with the 15 digit number. Our Datamars chip came with a card that had the chip information on it. After the vet had done his thing I called the regional office of APHIS and made an appointment to bring over all of the forms, certificate, etc. They'll charge you a fee for reviewing and stamping the form with the official and holy USDA stamp. You can also have your vet (if he offers the service) do all of the paperwork and fax it for you to USDA. Some do this for a varying price range so call around is all I can say.

Very important to remember is that once the paperwork is stamped by USDA you have 10 days to get to your destination or the form is invalid. What I usually do is get all of it done about five days before I depart. That gives me a little time just in case the vet made a mistake in filling out the form—I still have time to get it corrected and stamped. Plan accordingly!

Keep the original paperwork with you while you travel and also a copied set, just in case. Make sure you have the rabies certificate with the forms as well. I have to tell you that on our first two trips nobody asked to look at the forms, but when you come back into the USA you can bet that US customs will want to see them. On Thor's last trip Swiss customs did ask for and review the paperwork. They also did a reading on his microchip to verify the digits. So be prepared.

I know all of this sounds daunting, but trust me it really is not that bad and you will get through it. Just be sure to keep your process and timelines in order. Remember, in the end you'll have your dog with you to share a wonderful adventure. That makes it all worthwhile in my book!

Now, you've got your paperwork, airline, and destination set. Right? Okay, maybe still thinking about it. That's okay too. The following pages show example USDA paperwork that I used on my last trip. Also an example of the rabies certificate. After that let's talk a bit about what kind of lodging you want for you and your dog.

RABIES VACCINATION CERTIFICATE

ADAPTED NASPHV FORM 51

PRINT - use ball point pen or type

Tag fee \$: _____
Tag #: 11142
Cert. Serial #: _____

Owner's Name & Address

PRINT LAST FIRST MI TELEPHONE
STARKE Alex _____

NO. STREET CITY STATE ZIP
_____ Laymont CO 80504

SPECIES: Dog Cat Other
SEX: Male Female Altered
AGE: 3 Mo. to 12 Mo. 12 Mo. or older
SIZE: Under 20 lbs. 20 - 50 lbs. Over 50 lbs.
PREDOMINANT BREED: Jack Russell
COLORS: Black/white
NAME: Thor
(Specify) microchip 981020005661207

DATE VACCINATED: 5 24 12
Month Day Year
PRODUCER: FIDG
(First 3 Letters)
Veterinarian's # 3239
License No.

VACCINATION EXPIRES: 5 24 2015
Month Day Year
1 yr. Lic./Vacc. 3 yr. Lic./Vacc.
Vacc. Serial (Lot) No. 1215351A
Veterinarian's Signature: Peter W. Rodgers
Address: Boulder Co 80504

VAC0410001

ANNEX II

COUNTRY: USA

Veterinary certificate to EU

Part I: Details of dispatched consignment	1.1. Consignor Name Alexander Starke		1.2. Certificate reference No 60145773		1.2.a.	
	Address Longmont, CO 80504		1.3. Central competent authority			
	Tel. [REDACTED]		1.4. Local competent authority			
	1.5. Consignee Name Alexander Starke		1.6.			
	Address Omesberg 438					
	Postal code AT-6764					
	Tel. +43 (5583)3664					
	1.7. Country of origin US		ISO code USO		1.8.	
	1.11.		1.12.		1.10	
	1.13.		1.14.			
	1.15.		1.16.			
			1.17. No(s) of CITES			
	1.18. Description of commodity DOG			1.19. Commodity code (HS code) 010619		
			1.20. Quantity 1			
	1.21.		1.22.			
1.23.		1.24.				
1.25. Commodities certified for: Pets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
1.26.		1.27.				
1.28. Identification of the commodities						
Species (Scientific name)	Identification system	Date of application of the microchip or tattoo [dd/mm/yyyy]	Identification number	Date of birth [dd/mm/yyyy]		
CANIS FAMILIARIS	PETLINK	21/4/2012	981020005661207	01/08/2008		

COUNTRY USA

C0145773

Non-commercial movement of five or less dogs, cats or ferrets

Part II: Certification

II. Health information II.a. Certificate reference No II.b.

I, the undersigned official veterinarian of United States of America certify that: II.1. based on the declaration in point II.7, the animals satisfy the definition of 'pet animals' as provided for in point (a) of Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 998/2003; II.2. at least 21 days have elapsed since the completion of the primary vaccination against rabies... II.3. the animals come from a third country or territory listed in Section 2 of Part B or in Part C of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 998/2003; II.4. the details of the current anti-rabies vaccination and the date of sampling are the following:

Table with 6 columns: Microchip or tattoo number of the animal, Date of vaccination [dd/mm/yyyy], Name and manufacturer of vaccine, Batch number, Validity [dd/mm/yyyy] (From, To), Date of the blood sample [dd/mm/yyyy]. Handwritten entry: 98102005661207, 24/5/2012, Fr Dalge, 12.15351A, 24/5/2012, 24/6/2015.

II.5. the dogs have not been treated against Echinococcus multilocularis; II.6. the details of the treatment carried out by the administering veterinarian in accordance with Article 7 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1152/2011 are the following:

Table with 3 columns: Microchip or tattoo number of the dog, Anti-echinococcus treatment (Name and manufacturer of the product, Date [dd/mm/yyyy] and time of treatment [00:00]), Administering veterinarian (Name in capital, stamp and signature).

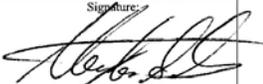
II.7. I have a written declaration signed by the owner or the natural person responsible for the animals on behalf of the owner, stating that:

I, the undersigned Alexander STARK, [owner or the natural person responsible for the animals described above on behalf of the owner] declare that the animals will accompany me, the owner, or the natural person that I have designated to be responsible of the animals on my behalf and are not intended to be sold or transferred to another owner.

COUNTRY **USA**

CO145773

**Non-commercial movement of
five or less dogs, cats or ferrets**

II. Health information	II.a. Certificate reference No	II.b.
Place and date: Longmont, Colorado 26-08-2014		Signature: 
<p>Notes</p> <p>(a) The original of each certificate shall consist of a single sheet of paper, or, where more text is required it must be in such a form that all sheets of paper required are part of an integrated whole and indivisible.</p> <p>(b) The certificate shall be drawn up at least in the language of the Member State of entry and in English. It shall be completed in block letters in the language of the Member State of entry or in English.</p> <p>(c) If additional sheets of paper or supporting documents are attached to the certificate, those sheets of paper or document shall also be considered as forming part of the original of the certificate by the application of the signature and stamp of the official veterinarian, on each of the pages.</p> <p>(d) When the certificate, including additional sheets referred to in (c), comprises more than one page, each page shall be numbered, (page number) of (total number of pages), at the end of the page and shall bear the certificate reference number that has been designated by the competent authority at the top of the pages.</p> <p>(e) The certificate is valid for 10 days from the date of issue by the official veterinarian until the date of the checks at the EU travellers' point of entry and for the purpose of further movements within the Union, for a total of 4 months from the date of issue of this certificate or until the date of expiry of the anti-rabies vaccination, whichever date is earlier.</p> <p>(f) The competent authorities of the exporting third country or territory shall ensure that rules and principles of certification equivalent to those laid down in Directive 96/93/EC are followed.</p> <p>Part I:</p> <p>Box I.11.: Place of origin: name and address of the dispatch establishment. Indicate approval or registration number</p> <p>Box I.28.: Identification system : Select of the following : microchip or tattoo <i>Date of application of the microchip or tattoo</i> : The tattoo must be clearly readable and applied before 3 July 2011 <i>Identification number</i> : Indicate the microchip or tattoo number <i>Date of birth</i> : Indicate only if known</p> <p>Part II:</p> <p>(1) Any revaccination must be considered a primary vaccination if it was not carried out within the period of validity of a previous vaccination.</p> <p>(2) A certified copy of the identification and vaccination details of the animals concerned shall be attached to the certificate.</p> <p>(3) Keep as appropriate. Where the certificate states that certain statements shall be kept as appropriate, statements which are not relevant may be crossed out and initialled and stamped by the official veterinarian, or completely deleted from the certificate.</p> <p>(4) The rabies antibody test referred to in point II.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - must be carried out on a sample collected by a veterinarian authorised by the competent authority, at least 30 days after the date of vaccination and three months before the date of import; - must measure a level of neutralising antibody to rabies virus in serum equal to or greater than 0.5 IU/ml; - must be performed by a laboratory approved in accordance with Article 3 of Council Decision 2000/258/EC designating a specific institute responsible for establishing criteria necessary for standardising the serological tests to monitor the effectiveness of rabies vaccines (list of approved laboratories available at http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/approval_en.htm); - needs not be renewed on an animal, which following that test with satisfactory results, has been revaccinated against rabies within the period of validity of a previous vaccination. <p>(5) A certified copy of the official report from the approved laboratory on the results of the rabies antibody tests referred to in point II.3 shall be attached to the certificate.</p> <p>(6) The treatment against <i>Echinococcus multilocularis</i> referred to in point II.5 must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be administered by a veterinarian within a period of not more than 120 hours and not less than 24 hours before the time of the scheduled entry of the dogs into one of the Member States or parts thereof listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1152/2011; - consist of an approved medicinal product which contains the appropriate dose of praziquantel or pharmacologically active substances, which alone or in combination, have been proven to reduce the burden of mature and immature intestinal forms of <i>Echinococcus multilocularis</i> in the host species concerned. 		

COUNTRY USA

Non-commercial movement of
five or less dogs, cats or ferrets

CO145773

II. Health information	II.a. Certificate reference No	II.b.
<p>⁽¹⁾ This date must precede the date the certificate was signed. ⁽²⁾ This information may be entered after the date the certificate was signed for the purpose described in point (e) of the Notes and in conjunction with footnote (6).</p> <p>The signature and the stamp must be in a different colour to that of the printing.</p>		
<p>Official veterinarian</p> <p>Name (in capital letters): [REDACTED] Qualification and title: DVM Date: 26/08/2014 Signature: [Signature] Stamp: [REDACTED], DVM [Signature]</p>		

Date: 8/27/2014

[Signature]

JACK E. ELLITHORPE, D.V.M.

Chapter 5

Lodging

You'll find that most European hotels, B&B's, apartments, etc. allow pets. Of course there are exceptions to this, so doing your homework is a good idea. Now you can use middle brokers like Booking.com or others, most have filters so you can get the establishments listed as pet friendly. Personally I use these sites to find interesting places then I contact the owner directly. For me it is essential to have a dialog one on one with the establishment's owner or proprietor, that way there are no misunderstandings about cost, fees, and if they really do allow pets.

Sometimes you may even get a better deal when going direct. Here is a good example: When I found a place to stay in Lech am Arlberg, Haus Braunarl, I contacted them via email. In return I received a great offer for our eight day stay plus the landlady waived the usual per day fee for Thor. I also got a better deal when we rented an apartment in Vienna over Christmas by dealing directly with the owner. If you are interested, I've got all of my recommendations for where we stayed on Thor's website listed at the end of this book.

For us, we usually like to rent an apartment and settle in for 5 days or more. Of course everybody has their own thoughts on this, so I'll let you be the judge of how you want to handle the style of your lodging. Just remember that your dog might like to settle into a place and get his bearings for a few days before rushing off to a new location. I know Thor loves to get into a neighborhood and read the local papers, leaving a few messages himself on trees and shrubbery for the local dogs.

Wherever you end up remember to be a good traveler and clean up after yourself and your dog. Bring some chew toys or whatever so they get munched, not the furniture.

So now let's move on and talk about some more prep work for your dog before you go.

Chapter 6

Preparing your Buddy

If you haven't already, you'll need to get your pal used to the carrier or crate for the journey. You don't want to wait until the day of departure, which could be a disaster. When Thor first saw the Sherpa and realized I wanted him to get in it, he looked at me like I was out of my mind. Luckily he is a sucker for treats and soon his reluctance melted, he became very excited to get in and get zipped up.

I took Thor everywhere in the Sherpa and later the Snoozer, usually to the dog-park. He liked that a lot and started to equate the carrier with nice things like treats and playing ball at the park. So in a short period of time whenever I brought out the carrier, he would eagerly jump in ready to go.

The crate was pretty easy as Thor gets fed in it every morning and evening. If you are purchasing one specifically for the journey start getting him or her used to it right away by feeding them in it, giving treats, etc. Get a nice soft liner as well so your pal will be comfortable. Another good idea is to have a base layer on the crate floor of something absorbent, just in case. Yes, the pee thing...I'll address that later. Also get your dog used to the dish you'll be attaching to the door of the crate. A good chew toy is a great idea for the journey...helps while away the hours, you know.

One other thing about the crate is to make sure you get a sturdy one with a solid locking mechanism on the door. The last thing you want is to have that door pop open while your dog is being loaded on a plane. You get the picture, I'm sure...spend the dollars for a good crate!

Another thing is that many countries require the use of a muzzle when using public transit like buses, trains, subways, etc. Get one that fits comfortably, use lots of treats as reinforcement so that your pal won't think it is all bad. We use a basket type like most used in the EU. Thor doesn't like it but tolerates it. He has learned that it is only worn while we're on the transport and has adjusted well.

You also will want to bring plastic poop bags to clean up after your pal while out on the streets or wherever when you get there. This is the law in most cities in Europe and you can end up with some pretty stiff fines. In the end it is just plain good manners to do the right thing.

Make sure to bring a collapsible water dish for your pal. This is useful when you are out on the trail or city for those thirsty moments. You can use it as a food/water dish at your apartment or hotel as well.

If you can, try a short domestic flight with your buddy, just to see what the reaction is. We did not do this, but it is an idea worth entertaining if you have the time and the means.

I also did a wild experiment and subjected Thor to some online videos of jets taking off and landing at high volume. I'm not sure if it was effective, but it did acquaint him somewhat with the sounds.

Another great thing to do is take your dog to the airport before you go. Get him or her used to the sights and sounds so it will not be such a surprise when you actually go to fly. Some airports you may not be able to do this unless your dog is in a carrier, some turn a blind eye to dogs on leashes. I know at our airport in Denver they kind of turn a blind eye. Check at your local airport to see what their rules are.

Before we get to flying day let's talk about public transport in the EU and what is required for your dog.

Chapter 7

Trains, Subways, and Buses

Again, for this I will use what I learned in Switzerland, Austria, and Italy. Other EU countries should be similar, but you should always check to be sure. Most train operators have websites that will state their rules for dogs. Likewise for most bus companies.

SBB trains in Switzerland will charge you a half price 2nd class ticket for your dog. That is unless it is very small (around 12 inches at the shoulder) and in a carrier, then he goes free of charge. ÖBB (Austria) is the same thing although they do not specify how small a dog is free. Trenitalia (Italy) is also close to the same rules. In all cases your dog cannot occupy an empty seat; sit on your lap yes, other than that on the floor by your feet. ÖBB says that the dog must have a muzzle, but they are pretty lax about that. Have one in your bag just in case you get an officious conductor.

Be advised that currently the Eurostar train does not accept dogs. All I can say is they are missing out on a lot of revenue. Also remember what I mentioned previously regarding trains and buses in Spain and Portugal.

Buses in Austria and Italy will require that your dog wear a muzzle while onboard. Some buses—like the Swiss Postbus—will require a half-price ticket for your buddy unless he is very small and in a carrier. In Venice on the Vaporetto water taxis same thing, half-price ticket and muzzle. Check either online at the particular operator's website or via email for their policies.

As far as the U-Bahn (subway), the trams, or S-Bahn (inter-city rail) in Austria, you will need to purchase a half-price ticket and make your buddy wear the plastic basket.

So that is an overview for you. I think you will find as I did that most countries are pretty cool about taking your dog on any public transit as long as you play by the rules. As I've said before, Thor learned really quickly that the old muzzle went on for the duration of the ride and then came off upon exiting. On our last trip he was pretty ho-hum about the whole thing.



Thor on the Vaporetto in Venice, August 2013

Chapter 8

Flight Day!

Alright! The night before departure has arrived, you've got all your paperwork, micro-chip, vaccination, and you have called and verified with the airline that they are expecting your dog with you. Good! Keep all that original paperwork with you, not in your luggage. I wear a travel vest and keep Thor's papers in a nice secure pocket so if anyone wants to see them I don't have to dig around. Put the copies of the paperwork in your luggage as a backup.

You've also got a chew toy for the crate or for the carrier, right? If your buddy is going in-cabin make sure you have some clean up gear with you, like plastic bags, absorbent pads, and some clean up paper towels, just in case. Thor was great in the crate and didn't mess it at all. When he made his first trip in the carrier he was fine until we got to Frankfurt airport. We just got off our flight from the USA and were going to catch our connecting flight to Zurich when, boom, he pooped right in the middle of the airport. We luckily had all the stuff with us to clean up quickly and continue on. It can happen, is only natural, so be prepared and don't stress.

Depending on what time your flight leaves here are a few things to do: If your flight is in the morning feed your buddy early the night before. In the morning maybe just a few nibbles, but not a full meal. Give very little water...you want to avoid the urination thing on the flight. Get up super early and try and give your buddy as much ball or whatever exercise you can to get him as tired as you can. If your dog is exercised—even if it is just a little—it will help with any jitters while flying, especially on the initial take-off. If your flight is later in the day go ahead with a full breakfast and water, but cut the water about 4 hours prior to leaving. Play and exercise with your pal as much as possible while you have the time. Remember, a tired dog will sleep through most if not all of a flight...well, at least a majority will.

Medicating your dog is something you will need to talk to your vet about. Personally, I use an herbal substance called Rescue Remedy and I only use it if needed. The last time I flew with Thor he needed a few drops on the first leg of the flight, but was totally cool on the last leg and slept the whole way to Zurich.

Plan on getting to the airport at least two hours or more before your flight. You want to make sure there are no problems. Showing up late can give you an excellent chance you will have some major headaches and possibly miss your flight altogether.

When you arrive at the airport go to your airline's check-in line. Some, like United, have a person who will usually direct you over to a special check-in desk. With Lufthansa we just went to the check-in counter where they inspected Thor's paperwork (and ours) and then directed us to another counter where we paid for Thor's travel. When Thor made his first journey in the crate, Lufthansa was great. The agent told us to leave his crate with her and take him out for a final relief break before checking him in. That was very nice and considerate.

When we returned with Thor we put him back into the crate and a handler loaded it onto a cart which—with us in tow—was wheeled over to a special TSA inspection room. The agents there had us remove Thor and then did an inspection of the crate, all the while admiring Thor. When we put him back one of the agents used a zip tie on the crate's door to further ensure its not popping open. Then the moment of farewell came (yes you will have emotions, it's your pal after all) and Thor was wheeled away to be loaded on the plane. Believe me it is tough not knowing what will happen, but keep your thoughts positive...it will be okay.

When Thor went in a carrier for in-cabin, the drill was much the same. We went to the Lufthansa check-in counter did the paperwork thing, went to the special counter to pay for Thor, and then took him outside for a relief break before heading over to go through airport security.

When you go through security you will need to remove—in addition to the usual personal stuff on you—your pal's collar and leash and then remove him from the carrier. Put all of that gear on the conveyor, just like your stuff, to go through the x-ray. You will then carry your buddy through the detector with you. Odds are they will also give you a hand swab for explosives, this has been the case for me the last two trips...no worries. Be ready for the TSA staff to give many admiring remarks about your dog. On the other side collect your stuff, get your pal dressed and make your way to the gate. As I said before, some airports will allow you to keep your dog on a leash and walk him in the airport, some won't. When you get to Europe, it should not be a worry. We have been in Frankfurt, Schwechat (Vienna), Venice, and Zurich airports with Thor trotting along on his leash and no one saying a word.

Okay, so for in-cabin you are now at the gate and ready to board. Try and get in as early as you can for seating. This will give you more time to get you, your, stuff, and your buddy in the carrier settled in. This is where I give Thor a few drops of Rescue Remedy if I feel he might need it. It has been my experience that you do not have to stuff the carrier all the way under the seat in front, but you will have to get it at least halfway under. Later, after takeoff and the seatbelt sign turning off you can bring it out more. That does not mean on your lap, much as you may want to. Open the front a little bit so you can give your pal a nice reassuring scratch.

If your dog is going in the hold ask the flight attendant to please inform you when your buddy is loaded. Lufthansa was great about that and also let us know that the captain had adjusted the temperature for Thor. That was a nice and reassuring touch for nervous parents like us.

Takeoff approaches now and this is usually where Thor gets the most nervous, what with the thrumming of the engines building up for the big leap. The acceleration and eventual lift when you leave the ground is where I hear a little whimper now and then, although on his last flight from Newark to Zurich he was fine. I think by then he knew what to expect so he was not as concerned like his first flight. Reach down and give some nice scratches to let your pal know you are there.

So now you are on your way. Settle in and try to relax and apply scratches when needed. Ask your flight attendant for a cup of ice and give your pal some small pieces. When a meal comes give a tiny bit to him or her, not too much, though, just enough for a taste. Thor usually sleeps through most of the flight and always holds his water and...you know what I mean. If your dog seems like he has to go take him and some absorbent pads to the WC and see what happens. Clean up after your buddy if he does let loose in there.

Before you know it landing time will be upon you and time to disembark the plane. Now the adventure begins.

Chapter 9

Arrival

So now you are off the plane. If you are catching a connecting flight, go through passport control and find your next gate. If you have a LOT of time between flight (like 2 hours or more) you could consider going out through security and giving your pal some relief. I only do this if my flight connection is in the USA and I have a ton of time. Getting back into the terminal through security can take a huge amount of time and you don't want to miss your next flight.

If you arrive in Europe with an in-cabin dog and have a connecting flight, I highly recommend you do not try and exit the terminal...stay put and clean up after your dog if needed, then catch your next flight. The number one reason is that you will be carrying the USDA paperwork for the particular country that is your final destination, not the first arrival airport. If you go out you might have to go through customs and if they check those papers and they are for, say Austria, and you are in France, you could have problems.

Now if you have flown directly to your arrival airport, no worries, get your bags and—if your dog has flown in the hold—your pal. If your buddy is in a crate, leash him and take him out of the crate when you claim him...freedom!! If he is in-cabin, leash him and let him out of that carrier when you get out of the plane, he will really appreciate it.

You will then proceed to the customs lane that is usually marked in red for something to declare. This is where you might have to show your USDA paperwork and have your buddy's chip scanned. This goes for those who have come on a connecting flight as well, same drill.

I'll tell you that on Thor's first trip to Vienna, we claimed him in his crate along with our bags and took the red lane, but nobody was there. Off we went with no worries and nobody chasing us down demanding his papers. On his second trip when we landed in Zurich we took the red lane, but nobody cared about Thor's paperwork, they just admired him...again off we went. The last time we flew into Zurich they did want to inspect his paperwork and scan for the chip. Be prepared!

Okay you've cleared customs, now get outside and find a place for your pal to get some business done! Don't be surprised if he doesn't cooperate right away, after all this is new and hopefully very exciting for him. On Thor's first trip we walked him around the airport in Vienna and he didn't do a thing except look up at us very happily with lots of smiles. We took a cab to our apartment and tried again with some green space in the neighborhood...still no go. When our landlady took us up to our apartment we all were standing in the kitchen talking, I looked down to see a grinning Thor letting loose a small pond. It suddenly got quiet as all eyes took in what was going on, but our landlady quickly gave a big laugh and said she understood. Whew!

The second trip, Thor was used to what was happening and took care of business in a green area at Zurich airport. That was nice because we had to catch a train to Austria pretty soon after arriving at Zurich. Either way, when you get through customs find a place for your pal before attending to other things.

Chapter 10

The Adventures Begin!

Well, you made it and hopefully all went well. Now you are going to be either boarding some form of public transit, taxi, or a rental car. If it is public transit I have given you the basics of what to probably expect. Hopefully you have done your homework on your particular destination so you are all prepared. Taxis may insist that your buddy not sit on the seats and must ride in their carrier: no big deal, you will soon be out in the streets or in some beautiful countryside. Be excited and give your pal lots of love!

So, now you are in Europe...yeehaw!! Make sure you have those poop bags at hand, because you do not want to be labeled as an inconsiderate tourist. Big cities and towns usually have bag stations and plenty of receptacles to make deposits in. Even in and around the small village of Lech am Arlberg they have bag stations in case you have run out. Lots of villages also have cows grazing in fields right around town and—in the case of Lech and a few other places—they do have signage asking you to clean up if your pal has pooped in the greenery. Be respectful and considerate, that's the way to behave even if it appears the locals aren't as thoughtful.

In your first couple of nights it is good to keep in mind that your buddy will be a little jet-lagged and not adjusted to the local time—just like you. Be prepared to be awakened in the middle of the night or very early in the morning by your pal, who will be wanting to go out and read the local papers while leaving a few messages of his own. I remember Thor on his first trip waking me up very early before sunrise in a very cold Vienna at Christmastime. Of course the spot he picked as his favorite place for doing his business was about three or four blocks away from our apartment! Ah well, I enjoyed it, cold and all, as it gave me the opportunity to see the city waking up. On all of our subsequent trips Thor has waited at least until the sun came up before asking to go out, which gets us up early enough to really get in a great day's worth of exploration. So look upon your pal as a cute alarm clock who will get you rolling out for new adventures each morning.

Remember that when your journey comes to an end that the same things apply when returning to the USA. You will do the same routine with feeding and water that you did when departing the USA. Try to get your furry friend as much exercise as possible before departing so he'll be a bit shagged for the trip. Get to the airport at least two hours early and have all of the USDA paperwork with you. Sometimes the airline will want to fax it ahead to US Customs, sometimes not, but be ready. One thing is for sure, when you go through USA Customs they will want to see those original documents for your dog. Have them ready and be prepared for them to admire your pal as well.

So there you have it. My short version of the basics I think you'll need to know to get you going. I'm sure there are a lot of other things that you will experience when you make your journey and I would love to hear from you for any helpful input or tips that you may have found. I will try to post them on Thor's website which I will list at the end of this book, along with an email address. I am really excited for you to be taking the plunge and going on such great adventures with your dog. I really hope you will have as much fun as we have had with Thor! Have great and safe travels out there!

Checklist

- Micro-chipping and vaccinations, in that order
- USDA Paperwork and rabies certificate plus copies of all.
- Airline compliant crate (with water dish affixed) or in-cabin carrier.
- Muzzle and collapsible water dish.
- Verifying with the airline that they have your pet listed on all legs of your flight.
- Leash, harness, toys, clean-up bags, and absorbent pads.

Links

- [USDA/APHIS](#)
- [Thor's Website](#) (my email is on this site) Which has many tips for places to stay
- [Lufthansa](#) pet policy
- [United Airlines](#) pet policy
- [Delta Airlines](#) pet policy
- [Austrian Airlines](#) pet policy
- [Air France](#) pet policy
- [American Airlines](#) pet policy
- [Swiss Rail](#) pet policy
- [Austrian Rail](#) (ÖBB) pet policy
- [Trenitalia](#) pet policy
- [SNCF](#) pet policy

About the Author



Alex Starke lives with his wife, Anne, and five Jack Russell terriers in Colorado. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon with a degree in Medieval Studies and a minor in Early Modern European History. When not writing and taking dictation from Thor he is either traveling with Anne and Thor or is helping develop websites for Anne's graphic design business. Most afternoons you will find him in the family's backyard, doing his duty and flinging the sacred orb for Thor, Daisy, Pippin, Lily and our recently rescued Jack, Mckenzie.