

Is it Safe to Bring My Indoor Cat Outside?

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, weighs in on cats and the outdoors.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: Is it OK to take my indoor cat outside to a park?

A: As a rule, I do not recommend taking your indoor cat to a park or outdoor area outside of your home. With the nice summer weather, I know it is tempting to think your kitty would like to soak up some sun or frolic in the grass, but what seems pleasant to you potentially can be dangerous for your cat.

Fleas, ticks and other parasites often are present in parks and public gardens, just waiting to hitch a ride on your cat. There can be pet dogs, sometimes off their leashes. Some parks are home to raccoons and other wild creatures. Plus, the outside world can be noisy, and cats are frightened easily, particularly of unfamiliar sights and sounds. Sometimes when I am walking through Central Park in New York, I see people with cat carriers trying to coax their kitties out. More often than not, the cats are having a miserable time.

I know there are some indoor cats that might adjust to adventures outside the home, so if you really want to bring your indoor cat outside, your own backyard is best. Please make sure your cat is wearing a harness, leash and ID tag, and is current on shots. Make sure to supervise your cat outdoors. Some people enjoy walking outside with their cats in pet strollers encased in nylon mesh. I think this is pretty creative, but I am not sure what the cat thinks.

There is a reason why cats love home-sweet-home and small, cozy places like boxes, bags, or cat beds — they feel safe and secure. If you want to introduce a bit of nature into your cat's environment, purchase a small bird feeder with a suction cup that can attach to the outside of your cat's favorite window. Your cat will love watching the birds while safely channeling her inner tiger.

Jeanne's Tip of the Week:

Do not throw out old catnip toys. They can be rejuvenated by soaking in hot water for a few minutes. Squeeze the water out, and give the toy to your cat while it's still damp. Make sure it is warm or cool, but not hot. More tips

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