

Cat Carriers

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, has advice on the best carriers, as well as ways to get your cat accustomed to it.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: I need to buy a new cat carrier. Any suggestions?

A: There are all kinds of considerations when purchasing a carrier, whether it's for air travel, extended road trips, or short trips to the vet. In this column I am only going to discuss short trips, which is what we mainly use our carriers for — but stay tuned for a column on air travel with your cat.

Carriers come in all sizes and shapes but I have found that cats are more likely to go into one that is large enough for them to stand up and turn around in. Some have doors on the top, some in the front and some have both. I prefer the door on the top. It is easier to put your cat in and take him out. This is especially true at the vets, where dragging him out, or worse, dumping him on the exam table can be very stressful. Whatever you choose, make sure it has good ventilation and a secure door and latch. You don't want him getting out unexpectedly.

Putting a cat into a carrier can be quite an adventure, especially if the carrier only comes out occasionally to take him somewhere he doesn't want to go. Try getting him used to it by leaving it out in a quiet, tucked-away place. Put a favorite blanket, pillow or bedding inside along with catnip and a few favorite toys and treats. This will make the carrier appear more like a fun hangout.

In fact one of my carriers so inviting that my cat, Bandit, enjoyed sleeping in it. There he was snoozing away when I had to take his brother Roscoe to the vet. I had to lure Bandit out with a trail of treats. Roscoe then went in willingly and, of course, he got a treat as well. If you can't leave the carrier out all the time, try a few days a week but make sure it has all the fun things I mentioned in it. As always I welcome your comments and stories.