

United Airlines In-Cabin Pet Policy: A Step-by-Step Guide for Traveling with Your Cat or Dog

Traveling with your small dog or cat on a United Airlines flight requires planning call us on **1-888-429-4105** and adherence to specific rules, as pets must fly in the cabin with you.¹ This comprehensive guide outlines the process, fees, and requirements for a smooth journey with your furry friend.

1. Eligibility & Restrictions (What You Need to Know First)

Before booking, confirm your pet and travel plans meet United's core requirements.³

Permitted Animals

- **Only small dogs and cats** are allowed to travel as in-cabin pets.⁴
- **Emotional Support Animals (ESAs)** and **Therapy Animals** are considered pets and must follow the standard pet policy (including fees and carrier requirements).⁵
- **Trained Service Dogs** are exempt from the pet fee and carrier restrictions but have separate requirements.⁶

Age Requirements

- **Domestic Flights (within the U.S.):** Pets must be at least **2 months old**.⁷
- **International Flights:** Pets must be at least **4 months old**.⁸

Pet Limits

- You may travel with up to **two pets** in the cabin.⁹
- **One pet is allowed per carrier**.¹⁰
- **If traveling with two pets, you must purchase an adjacent second seat** to accommodate both carriers.¹¹
- The total number of pets is limited per flight, varying by aircraft type (e.g., up to 2 in premium cabins, up to 4 in Economy on some planes).¹² **Book early** to secure a spot.¹³

Prohibited Destinations

- United prohibits in-cabin pet travel to, from, or through certain locations. **Always check United's official website for the current, complete list** before booking. Examples of typically restricted areas include: Australia, Barbados, Brazil, Guam (return flights), Hawaii, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand, and others.¹⁴
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2. Booking Your Pet's Ticket

Adding a pet to your flight reservation can be done online for domestic travel or by phone for international travel.¹⁵

Cost & Fees

- **Standard Pet Fee: \$150 USD** each way per pet.¹⁶
- **Stopover Fee:** An **additional \$150** applies for layovers that are:¹⁷
 - More than **4 hours** for flights within the U.S.¹⁸
 - More than **24 hours** for international flights.¹⁹
- *Note: This fee is for tickets purchased on or after April 26, 2024.²⁰ Tickets purchased before this date have a \$125 fee.*

How to Add a Pet to Your Reservation

Scenario	Booking Method	Key Information
New Trip (Domestic)	United.com	Select " Travel with a pet " as a traveler during the online booking process.
Existing Trip (Domestic)	United.com	Go to " My Trips " on the website to add your pet.
International Flights	Phone Call	1888-429-4105
Two Pets	Online or Phone	Book two adjacent seats (one for you, one for the second pet) and then add the pets to the reservation.

3. Pet Carrier Requirements (Must-Fit Rules)

Your pet's carrier is the most critical item and must fit completely under the seat in front of you for the entire flight.²¹

Maximum Carrier Dimensions

Carrier Type	Maximum Dimensions (Length x Width x Height)	Important Notes
Soft-Sided	18" L x 11" W x 11" H (46 x 28 x 28 cm)	Flexible sides are allowed to compress slightly. Must be made of water-repellant material.

Carrier Type	Maximum Dimensions (Length x Width x Height)	Important Notes
Hard-Sided	17.5" L x 12" W x 9" H (44 x 30 x 22 cm)	No flexibility is permitted; carrier must meet the dimensions.

Special Note on Boeing 737 MAX Aircraft:

- The under-seat height on **Boeing 737 MAX 9** aircraft is only **10 inches**.²² If your itinerary includes this plane, ensure your soft-sided carrier can compress to 10 inches or less.²³

General Carrier Rules

- The carrier must be **leak-proof** and have **adequate ventilation**.²⁴
- The pet must be able to remain inside the carrier at all times while in the airport and on the plane (except at the security checkpoint and pet relief areas).²⁵
- The pet must be able to **comfortably sit, turn around, and lie down** in a natural position.
- Your pet carrier **counts as your one carry-on bag** (you are still permitted one personal item).²⁶

4. Required Documentation (Especially for International Travel)

Always check the specific requirements for your destination country, as they are often very strict.

International Travel Documentation

For all international travel, to and from the United States, you will need:

- Rabies Certificate:** The vaccination must be completed at least **28 days before travel**.²⁷
- Health Certificate:** Issued by a licensed veterinarian.
- Dog Information:** The certificate should include your name/contact info, and the pet's breed, sex, age, color, markings, and a list of recent vaccines with dates/expiration dates.²⁸

Flying into the U.S. with a Dog

- New U.S. requirements are in effect, including a **new required form** for dogs entering the U.S. from an international destination. Consult the CDC and United Airlines for the latest official details.
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5. Day of Travel and Seating Rules

Ensure a smooth check-in and boarding experience by following these final steps.

Check-In Process

1. **Arrive Early:** Plan to be at the airport ticket counter **at least 2 hours** before your scheduled departure.²⁹
2. **Airport Check-In Only:** You **cannot check in via the United app** when traveling with a pet. You must check in at the ticket counter.³⁰
3. **Pay the Fee:** The pet fee is typically paid at the check-in counter, where the agent will verify your pet and carrier.³¹
4. **Receive Pet Tag:** An agent will provide a special tag for your pet's carrier as proof of payment and reservation.³²
5. **Security Screening:** You will be required to take your pet **out of the carrier** to walk through the security checkpoint.³³ The empty carrier goes through the X-ray machine.
6. **Or For More Information Call us on 1-888-429-4105**

Seat Restrictions

You **cannot** sit in the following seats when traveling with an in-cabin pet:

- Emergency exit rows.³⁴
- United Premium Plus seats.
- Bulkhead seats (front row of a cabin) due to no under-seat storage.³⁵

Cabin/Aircraft Type	Recommended Seat	Reason
Economy (Most Planes)	Window or Aisle Seat	Center seats on some aircraft (e.g., Boeing 737-800) cannot fit a pet carrier.
Premium Cabins	Varies by aircraft	Consult with a United agent upon check-in.

***Disclaimer:** This content is compiled from United Airlines' official policies and is for informational purposes. Airline rules can change. **Always verify all pet policies, fees, and documentation requirements directly with United Airlines (1888-429-4105) and the destination country's government before booking your flight. ***