

# A dog's life

Julie and Jason Buckley travel around Europe and north Africa with their King Charles Cavalier Spaniel, Charlie. Here they share their tips and experiences of motorhoming with a four-legged friend.

Taormina, Sicily

**O**ne of the main reasons we chose a motorhome was so we could take our dog, Charlie, with us everywhere we went. Since making that decision we've had three motorhomes, travelled to over 35 countries on two continents, and Charlie's been with us throughout.

## Before setting off - The Pet Passport

If you're thinking of touring outside the UK, then you'll need an EU Pet Passport for each dog you plan to travel with. With these you can get back into the UK without placing your beloved pooch in quarantine. You need the passport before you leave the UK, and your local vet will be able to issue them for you, though they can take a few

weeks to arrange. Some countries have additional entry requirements, such as worming treatments – chat to your vet or check online about these, as well as for any other risk factors local to the countries you'll be visiting.

## What (not) to take with you

Whilst we pack most of the things Charlie uses at home on a day-to-day basis, as well as his documentation and a well-stocked First Aid kit, here's a list of the things we know we can get on the road:

- Dog food – this is available everywhere, although you're unlikely to find UK brands.
- Booster jabs – we've got Charlie's done by vets abroad without any issues.
- Collars or Spot on treatments which protect against ticks, fleas and sand flies.
- Dog poo bags – in some countries the authorities provide these for free in dispensers on the street. In others you can buy >>



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them in shops. Stock up prior to going to Morocco however, as there were none to be found here!

- Items such as leads, harnesses, toys, name tags, coats etc.

### Using vets abroad

We can't comment on surgical ability, but for basic procedures the surgeries we've used in several countries have been great. It's usually easy enough to find vets using Google, or asking around. The vets very often speak English, but having Google Translate on your phone is handy as a last resort. We've rarely made an appointment – just turning up often seems to be completely acceptable – but we do book ahead for the worming treatment before re-entry to the UK.

### Driving with a dog

Charlie's pretty easy going when we're driving. We keep the journeys short, between 30 minutes and three hours, and if he's showing any signs of wanting out, we stop for him. Most folks pop their dogs into cages

or harnesses for travel, as it is compulsory in the UK for dogs to be suitably restrained while in a vehicle so they don't distract the driver. We place a guard between the cab and main living area, so he can't get under the driver's seat, and he's been fine over the years like that.

### Risks to be aware of

The main ones we've come across are:

- **Leishmaniasis** – this is a disease carried by sand flies. Tick and flea treatment sold in the UK doesn't usually provide protection against it. We use Scalibor collars while abroad, which we buy once we're over there. If you don't want to use a collar, Advantix is a spot on treatment that also protects against it.

- **Rat poison** – this could happen anywhere of course, but it happened to Charlie on a motorhome campsite in Sicily. Fortunately we saw him eat it, made him sick with salt water and got him to a vet quickly, and he suffered no ill effects.

- **Heat** – We try to be further north in summer, but sometimes get it wrong. In those cases we don't leave Charlie in the van on his own, we seek shade and pop a >>



Sahara Erg Chebbi, Morocco

**“If you're thinking of touring outside the UK, then you'll need an EU Pet Passport for each dog you plan to travel with.”**



Mount Etna

**“We’ve had three motorhomes, travelled to over 35 countries on two continents, and Charlie’s been with us throughout.”**

wet towel on him to keep him cool. Friends used a Transcool unit, which was very effective when we had a go with it.

**The fun stuff**

Travelling with a dog is a heart-warming, endearing and fun experience. He’s an endless source of hilarity and loyalty, and acts as a fantastic ice breaker. What’s the journey been like for him? I honestly have no idea, but

he’s spent years almost 24 hours a day with the two of us, which I imagine he liked. I like to think he’s enjoyed having his paws in the Sahara, on the pumice lava fields on Etna, wet in the Arctic sea, and cold in the ice of the high Alps. He’s managed to get his jaws on all kinds of food too, from sardines and octopus to snails and chicken feet. I like to think he enjoys the wandering as much as we enjoy having him with us.

*The full blog post can be found at [www.ourtour.co.uk](http://www.ourtour.co.uk).*

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