

Chapter 5:

Boondocking With Pets



Part of the appeal of boondocking with pets is that it generally offers fewer constraints than traditional campgrounds. Many boondocking locations on public lands allow pets to be off-leash if they can be controlled under voice command and are generally well trained.

Pet Safety

If you're not confident your pets will stay with you or obey commands, you should keep them leashed while boondocking for their own safety in the wild. You should also always be aware and on alert for predators in the area, or animals that your pet may chase after, like squirrels or rabbits.

Only leave a pet in a hard-sided RV, not a soft-sided rig—bears and other predators can tear a soft-sided RV, like a pop-up trailer, and injure your pet.

Temperature

If you're boondocking, you're probably not running your air conditioner, so don't leave your pets inside during high temperatures. Consider getting a temperature monitor with an app (if you have cell phone service).

Finding a Pet Friendly Camping Spot

When searching for boondocking spots, use the Campendium app or website to filter for "Pets OK." You can also read reviews to see what other campers say about the location in regards to pet rules and safety.

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Pet Waste

When boondocking, you typically don't have access to dumpsters, so it's important to have a plan for your pet's waste. One way to do this is to bag the waste (including cat litter) and set it outside your rig, then pack it out when you're ready to leave.

As a last resort, and with proper precautions, you can also bury your pet's waste in the wilderness as long as it's away from water sources. According to Leave No Trace, "Pet waste can be bagged and packed out, or in backcountry environments, can be deposited in a 6- to 8-inch deep hole at least 200 feet (70 big steps) away from any water sources." While wildlife waste can provide nutrients to soil because of what they eat, the excess nutrients in dog waste can actually harm the ecosystem and water supply.

In the next chapter, we'll talk about boondocking safety.

