

Taking a dog or cat in and out of countries: the key points

The rules that matter most when flying a pet from the UK, in plain English. Full detail for each country, with the official source for every rule, is on petfriendlyflights.co.uk/pet-travel-rules/.

Rules change. Always check the official source for your route before you travel. These key points were checked on 20 October 2026.

How the rules work

- Pets (dogs, cats, ferrets) must normally travel with their owner. A person the owner authorises in writing can bring the pet if they travel within 5 days before or after the owner (GB and EU rules).
- Almost every route needs: a microchip first, then a rabies vaccination, a wait of at least 21 full days, an official vet's certificate, and (dogs, to some countries) a tapeworm treatment.
- 22 April 2026: new EU rules started. People living in England, Scotland or Wales can no longer use an EU pet passport to enter the EU. They need a GB-issued animal health certificate (AHC) for each trip. From 1 October 2026 only the new AHC template is allowed.
- Coming back into Great Britain, the document depends on where the pet is returning from: EU and other 'Part 1' listed countries, 'Part 2' listed countries (such as the USA, UAE, Canada) or 'not listed' countries (such as Turkey).
- On a private charter into Great Britain, the carrier and the arrival airport must both appear on APHA's approved list. This is the main reason the charter team needs early notice.
- Lists and rules change often. The GB approved-routes publication logged about 40 updates between January and 9 October 2026, roughly 20 of them since June.
- Always confirm with the official source before you travel. Nothing on this site replaces the destination country's own rules or your vet's advice.

Leaving Great Britain for the EU

1. Microchip first (before, or at the same time as, the rabies vaccination).
 2. Rabies vaccination at 12 weeks or older, then wait at least 21 full days.
 3. See an official vet (OV) for the AHC. Take proof of microchip date and vaccination history. Ask for the AHC when you book the vaccination.
 4. Travel within 10 days of the AHC being issued (day 1 is the issue date).
 5. Dogs to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Norway or Northern Ireland: tapeworm treatment 24-120 hours before entry.
 6. Arrive at a travellers' point of entry (a designated airport or port) and show the AHC, microchip and rabies proof.
- No rabies blood test is needed: the EU lists the UK (Great Britain) among the countries exempt from the titration test.
 - AHC validity: 10 days for entry; 6 months for onward travel in the EU and 6 months for re-entry to Great Britain (extended from 4 months on 22 April 2026), as long as rabies cover stays valid.
 - People who live in England, Scotland or Wales cannot use a pet passport to enter the EU, even one issued in the EU.
 - The vet gives you a declaration to sign confirming you will not sell or rehome the pet while abroad.

Which document?

- EU pet passport: accepted into Great Britain from the EU and some other 'Part 1' countries. Since 22 April 2026, EU pet passports can only be issued to owners whose main home is in the EU. GB residents should no longer use EU pet passports to enter the EU, but can still use them for the return to Great Britain.
- GB pet passport: only accepted if issued before 1 January 2021, and only from the EU.
- Animal health certificate (AHC): issued in Great Britain by an official vet for each trip from GB to the EU. Valid 10 days for entry into the EU (day 1 = issue date), 6 months for onward travel in the EU and 6 months for re-entry to Great Britain, if rabies cover stays valid. Up to 5 pets can go on one AHC. From 1 October 2026 the new AHC template must be used. Vets can get the current template from the [Improve International](#) website.
- GB pet health certificate: used for entering or returning to Great Britain from 'Part 2' listed or unlisted countries. Signed by an official vet, valid for entry within 10 days of issue, and not usable the other way round.
- Northern Ireland pet travel document (PTD): free, valid for as long as you own the pet. For GB-to-Northern-Ireland trips only. It stops being usable if you travel onward to the EU.

Dogs: tapeworm treatment before arriving in Great Britain

A vet must treat the dog 24 hours to 5 days (120 hours) before it enters Great Britain, every time. Cats and ferrets do not need it.

- Window: no less than 24 hours and no more than 120 hours before arrival. Example: treated at 1pm Monday means you can arrive after 1pm Tuesday and not later than 1pm Saturday.
- Product: approved in the country where it is given, containing praziquantel or an equivalent proven against *Echinococcus multilocularis*.
- Record in the 'Echinococcus treatment' section: product name and manufacturer, date and time, vet's stamp and signature.
- No treatment needed if coming directly from Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta or Norway.

Arriving in Great Britain on a private charter

GOV.UK says pets normally have to travel as cargo on a plane - unless you are flying on a chartered private plane. APHA keeps a separate charter list showing which charter carriers may bring pets into which UK airports.

- GOV.UK: pets have to travel as cargo on a plane unless you are flying on a chartered private plane (or travelling with a guide or assistance dog).
- GOV.UK: you can only use carriers and routes approved by APHA to bring a pet to England or Scotland. The same page says there are no approved routes to Wales.
- No approved route is needed from the UK countries, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland.
- The approved air list has a separate charter section. It describes these carriers as transporting pets 'in the carriage of the plane', whereas the commercial airlines section says pets go in the hold. Each charter carrier is listed against specific UK airports, so the carrier AND the arrival airport must both be on the list.

The USA

For a UK-based dog the main US requirement is an online CDC Dog Import Form. Cats need no federal rabies paperwork. Dogs that have been in a CDC 'high-risk' country (UAE and Turkey are on the list) in the last 6 months face much tougher rules.

The UAE

Yes, a dog or cat can go to the UAE, but it needs an import permit and a UK export health certificate, and several breeds are banned. The UK is on the UAE's low-risk list, so no blood test is needed.

More than five pets

- Great Britain: you cannot bring more than 5 pets unless you are attending or training for a competition, show or sporting event. Every pet must be over 6 months old, meet the normal pet travel rules, and you need written proof of registration plus a declaration.
- Otherwise more than 5 pets (or a pet arriving more than 5 days before or after you, or any sale or rehoming) falls under the Balai rules - a commercial route with extra requirements.

Travelling with your pet? Tell us the route, the date and your pet's breed and weight, and we plan the rest.

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Rules for travelling with pets are set by governments and change at short notice. This guide was checked on 20 October 2026 and is an outline, not legal or veterinary advice. Charter-A confirms the rules in force for your specific route and dates when you book; always check the official source.

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