

Taking Your Pet Out Of Egypt

By Gail Taylor

Advice and latest information for all pet owners – you don't have to leave them behind. Nobody could have realistically anticipated the people's revolution of January 2011 or the ensuing effects it was to have on the expat communities in Egypt. Many expats left in the first weeks of the revolution, some later due to the developing political atmosphere and economic crisis and many will be leaving over the coming summer months and not returning due to contracts ending or terminating early. Many expats residing here adopted cats or dogs long-term from local animal charity organizations or simply rescued one of the millions of Egypt's unfortunate street cats and dogs.

Often owners are faced with the painful decision to leave the adopted animals because they will not be returning to Egypt. Perhaps unaware that it might be possible to take them back to their own country, many owners try to rehome their pets in Egypt and in some cases finding no alternative are forced to abandon them to the streets they came from. The problem in these cases is that because they were domesticated at an early age the abandoned animal is unable to cope with conditions on the street and is unlikely to survive.

This article is an attempt to reduce the suffering of these animals and to provide owners with an outline of the various possibilities and procedures involved in taking their pets back to their own countries with them and what to do in the event they have to leave them behind.

INTERNATIONAL IMPORT/EXPORT REGULATIONS

Millions of people successfully travel internationally with their pets each year. It does however require careful planning. There are exact procedures and additional documentation is required, but if you



follow some simple steps it's not difficult. It just takes time, the amount varying according to the importing country's regulations.

Listed briefly below are step by step procedures for taking your pet into all member states of the European Union, these steps are now also valid for the UK.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TRAVELLERS TO THE UK

Previously it was not viable to take rabies-susceptible animals, such as cats and dogs, direct from Egypt to the UK because of the strict six months quarantine period. However on 1st January 2012 the laws were changed bringing procedures into line with the European Union.

For all other countries you can find information online. Pets on the Go website has an international database of over 100 countries, their importation requirements, and links to the appropriate consular agency www.petsonthego.com/resourcesintl.html

Do however check with the Embassy of the country you are travelling to. They have all of the information that you need on pet importation and are generally very helpful.

PET IMMIGRATION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION (INCLUDING UK)

Entry into all Member States:

1. Have your pet micro-chipped. Before any of the other procedures for pet travel are carried out your pet must be fitted with a microchip so it can be properly identified.



2. Have your pet vaccinated. After the microchip has been fitted your pet must be vaccinated against rabies. There is no exemption to this requirement, even if your pet has a current rabies vaccination. Rabies boosters must be kept up to date.



3. Arrange a blood test. Your pet must be blood tested at least 30 days after vaccination and three months before travelling to make sure the vaccine has given it a satisfactory level of protection against rabies. The three-month waiting period will not apply if your pet was



vaccinated and blood tested in the EU and issued with a EU pet passport before it went to Egypt.

4. Get pet travel documentation. You will need to obtain an official third country veterinary certificate.

5. For Finland, Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom only: Tapeworm treatment for dogs. All pet dogs (including assistance dogs) must be treated for tapeworm not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours (1-5 days) before its scheduled arrival time.

6. Arrange for your animal to travel with an approved transport company on an authorized route. Your pet must enter the EU with an approved transport company on an authorized route. Pets must travel as cargo.

Please note Sweden has its own requirements and you should contact your Embassy for information.

You can make all the arrangements yourself but alternatively you can enlist one of the local animal charities to help and they can take care of all the procedures and arrangements for you.

EMRO (Egyptian Mau Rescue Organization) offers a complete service for shipping cats internationally and can take care of all preparations and also arrange a flight for you. Their contact

information is printed at the end of this article along with other local charities.

ESMA (Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals) and ESAF (Egyptian Society of Animal Friends) who can help with arrangements for cats and dogs. ESMA has a Facebook page with all details and also the cost of each procedure; or you could use an agency.

Check out the website for Pet handlers/shippers www.ipata.org where you will find lists of all pet handlers and shippers by country.

AIRLINE PET POLICIES

The next step is to arrange transportation of your pet and most international visitors arrive by air. Therefore, it is important to contact the air carrier that you will be using and ask questions and discuss any concerns you may have. Please keep in mind that the International Airline Transportation Association (IATA) governs international air transportation and that it is important to choose a member airline in order to help ensure a safer trip for your pet. Besides making sure your pet is physically fit to fly, be aware that transport regulations vary from airline to airline, and you should always prepare well in advance for booking information and policies. It's also wise to double-check the information a few days prior to your departure date to be sure you have the latest information.

MESSAGE TO ALL EXPATS LEAVING EGYPT

If you have any old but reasonable bedding, towels, rugs, carpets, furniture etc. you want to dispose of please don't throw them in the garbage. Donate them to one of the animal charities. Also needed are cleaning supplies such as mops, buckets, detergent etc, office stationery, animal baskets or bowls, animal treats and toys.

There are a lot of horror stories on the internet concerning airlines and their mishandling causing animal deaths; however, most international airlines now have strict regulations concerning shipping live animals.

EMRO recommends Lufthansa or KLM and they have used both these airlines on a regular basis to ship cats to the USA, Canada and Europe without any problems.

The Pet Travel Center website lists the pet policies for all major international airlines though it is advisable to personally check with the airline what their regulations are: http://www.pettravelcenter.com/page_items/itemList/49

Pet owners can also help prepare their pets to travel and there are many websites, besides the airline sites, that also give advice and tips on how to help your beloved Fido or Felix arrive at their destination safely with the least amount of stress possible.

TRAVEL OPTIONS



Regarding the flight there are various options you can take. You may wish to take your pet on board as checked in baggage and in this case they will travel in an airline approved container that will fit under a seat on the airplane, with a container for food, one for water, and one for litter.

Some airlines restrict the maximum number of animals allowed in the cabin, so check with your intended airline regarding their requirements if you are planning to carry your pet on board.

You may prefer to have your pet travel in the cargo section. If your pet is too large to fit under the seat, it is an animal other than a dog or cat, or if it is a very long flight, the airline may transport your pet in the cargo section of the aircraft according to its

regulations. This section of the cargo has the same temperature and pressure as the passenger cabin.

There is another option available which is useful for those who wish to take their pet to their home country but need to travel before their pet is ready to travel. In this case the animal can be transported as unaccompanied cargo at a later date. If your pet is flying unaccompanied the preparation of the animal is the same as when it flies with you, but you will need a Health Certificate from a vet to say that the animal is healthy and fit to fly. An agent or one of the animal charities can take care of all the arrangements for you and board your pet until ready to travel. Another consideration in this option is that you will require the services of a broker due to the laws in Egypt that only allow someone with a brokers license to enter the cargo area of the airport. This does add a bit to the overall cost but the charities usually have a broker who can provide this service at a reasonable price.

On April 10 this year EMRO sent as unaccompanied cargo the first cats ever to travel direct from Egypt to the UK under the new revised laws. Mother cat Puss originally from Alexandria and two of her kittens Nina and Monster were boarded at EMRO headquarters in Cairo while the necessary tests and documentation were completed. They were delivered directly to their new owner Charlotte Holloway who lives in St Albans, 22 miles north of London without having to endure six months quarantine. A broker appointed by EMRO arranged their flight on British Airways who beat all the other airlines on price. EMRO



hopes they will be the first of many Egyptian Mau cats adopted by UK citizens.

EMERGENCY OPTION

There is just one more scenario that should be mentioned and that is where pet owners cannot take their pet with them when they leave Egypt. A new loving home may be found for them, but maybe not. For reasons stated at the beginning of this article putting the animal back on the street alone is not an option to be considered, so with this in mind the **CSA is taking details now of volunteers who would be prepared to act as a temporary foster parent to these unfortunate cats and dogs until a better solution is found for them or maybe a place is available at one of the animal shelters.** If you feel you would like to help out please register your details at the CSA reception desk, thank you. To all pet owners who find themselves unable to find a solution for their pet, please don't abandon them, contact the CSA reception who will try and put you in touch with someone who will take care of your pet till a suitable arrangement can be made.

Gail Taylor is a voluntary writer for The Egyptian Mau Rescue Organization (EMRO) and other animal charities in Egypt. For more information about EMRO visit www.emaurescue.org. If you are interested in fostering or adopting an animal please register your interest with EMRO via info@emaurescue.org.

Contact details for other animal charities who can assist with shipping your pet:

Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals (ESMA)

www.esmaegypt.org

Email: mona@esmaegypt.org

Calling from within Egypt:

012 218 8823

Calling from outside Egypt:

+2 012 218 8823

Within the U.S., contact Kristen Stilt at 847-769-8979

The Egyptian Society of Animal Friends (ESAF)

www.esaf.info

Tel: +2 02 33817681

Email: info@esaf.info

www.facebook.com/esaf.egypt