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Best Cat Carriers of 2024

By [Erica Puisis](#) | Reviewed by [Kayla Randolph](#) | Updated: Feb. 13, 2024 |

Best Cat Carriers Things To Consider When Buying How We Chose FAQ

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Whether you're traveling a short or long distance, a cat carrier is important for keeping your cat safe and secure. Whether for vacation travel or vet visits, a cat carrier is a safe and distraction-free way to transport your feline friend rather than letting your cat roam around your vehicle. A carrier prevents your cat from getting loose and can keep your pet contained while you're traveling by car or plane. Even if you rarely take your cat out of the house, it's a good idea to have an appropriately sized cat carrier on hand for emergencies.

Cat carriers come in a range of sizes to fit cats of all ages and weights. There are hard-sided pet kennels and soft-sided cat carriers plus backpack-style options. These are the best cat carriers for taking your cat on the go.

Our Top Picks

- Best Overall:** [Travel Cat "The Transpurrter" Ultimate Calming Convertible Cat Carrier »](#)
Jump to Review ↓
- Best Budget:** [Amazon Basics - Two-Door Top-Load Hard-Sided Pet Travel Carrier »](#)
Jump to Review ↓
- Best for Car Travel:** [Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed »](#)
Jump to Review ↓
- Best for Air Travel:** [Sherpa Original Deluxe Pet Carrier »](#)
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- Best for Large Cats:** [SportPet Cat Carrier »](#)
Jump to Review ↓
- Most Stylish:** [Sherpa Bubble Cat Carrier Backpack »](#)
Jump to Review ↓

Best Overall

Travel Cat "The Transpurrter" Ultimate Calming Convertible Cat Carr...

**PROS:**

- ✓ Top and side openings for easy access
- ✓ Mesh panel with roll-down cover
- ✓ Fits cats weighing up to 30 pounds
- ✗ not overly comfortable to use as a backpack carrier
- ✗ Interior space may be limited for large cats

[Buy From Amazon](#)

“The Transpurrter” Ultimate Calming Convertible Cat Carrier from Travel Cat ranks high on our list of the best cat carriers because it is lightweight, designed to be utilized in multiple ways, and secures cats up to 30 pounds inside. This soft-sided carrier is constructed of durable but lightweight fabric panels and weighs just 3.4 pounds. It has top and side zippered entry panels that give you multiple options for loading your cat inside or coaxing them out. Ventilation holes and mesh panels along the top and side of the carrier give your cat airflow and visibility, but you can also use the roll-down shade to cover the large mesh panel on the side if your pet does better with less visual stimulation.

Inside, the carrier is designed with kitty comfort in mind. A seamless bed insert with a washable mat cushions the bottom of the carrier but also easily slides out, which is handy for cleaning or bringing your nervous or fearful cat out of the carrier more easily. (While the removable bed brings benefits, it does reduce the interior space and makes the carrier less roomy for very large cats in the opinion of some reviewers.) And in the case of cats that are ready to spring from the carrier as soon as you open it up, a leash restraint keeps your kitty contained until it's safe for them to come out.

The convertible design means you can tote your cat around using the top carrying handle or opt to utilize the adjustable strap over the shoulder or across your body. Plus, if you plan to use this cat carrier for travel, there's a luggage sleeve for sliding the cat carrier over your suitcase handle, as well as a Velcro strap and buckles to secure a seat belt around the carrier in the car. Optional backpack straps give you the choice to use this model as a hands-free cat carrier, but don't count on carrying the carrier that way for long distances since the straps are unpadded and might become uncomfortable.

Specs**List Price:**

\$169.99

Weight Capacity:	30 lbs.
Material(s):	Mesh panels, fleece bed (fabric type not specified)
Portability Features:	Top handle, adjustable shoulder or crossbody strap, backpack straps, luggage sleeve

Best Budget

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Amazon Basics - Two-Door Top-Load Hard-Sided Pet Travel Carrier »



PROS:

- ✓ Affordable
- ✓ Sturdy construction with two-door design
- ✓ Holds cats up to 20 pounds
- ✓ Top door opens to the left or right

CONS:

- ✗ Concerns about durability of the top handle
- ✗ Assembly required

[Buy From Amazon](#)

You can't put a price on your pet's safety, but consider this hard-sided option from Amazon Basics if you're looking for an affordable cat carrier. The 23-inch, two-door version holds a pet that weighs up to 20 pounds, and the crate is secured with metal hardware along the perimeter to keep the top and bottom halves connected as you travel from home to the vet's office or on vacation. Of course, that means some assembly is required, and that's sometimes a frustration for buyers who might be more accustomed to ready-to-go, soft-sided carriers. But if you don't mind attaching about a half-dozen nuts and bolts, then you'll have a well-constructed carrier for your cat.

For cat owners who have struggled to convince their kitty to squeeze through the open door of a carrier, the fact that this carrier is equipped with a top door is a real plus. Pet parents consistently comment on how much easier it is to put their cat into the carrier using this door, which opens to the left or right.

The other aspects of this cat carrier are relatively basic. There are ventilation holes on three sides of the carrier, and the metal wire door uses a spring latch to keep your cat contained. There's a top carrying handle, but some reviewers point out that it feels less than sturdy when the carrier is loaded with a large cat, so you might need to support the bottom of this carrier when moving it from place to place.

Specs

List Price:	\$27.25
Weight Capacity:	20 lbs.
Material(s):	Plastic body, steel wire door
Portability Features:	Top handle

Best for Car Travel

Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed »



PROS:

CONS:

- ✓ 5 Star crash rating from Center for Pet Safety (CPS)
- ✓ Detachable dome converts the carrier into a cat bed
- ✓ Accessory add-ons available
- ✗ Limited to cats weighing 15 pounds or less
- ✗ Pricey

Buy From Amazon

One of the best cat carriers for car travel is this model from Sleepypod. Not only will it securely keep your cat contained with its zippered mesh dome and internal safety tether but it received a 5 Star crash testing rating when tested by the CPS. The company’s Pet Passenger Restraint System (PPRS) contributes to the safety of this cat carrier by ensuring that your cat will remain safely inside the carrier even during hard stops or a crash.

This durable nylon cat carrier is a big spend compared to other options, but it’s designed to be an inviting and cozy cat bed for travel and home use, too. The mesh dome detaches, giving your cat easy access to the plush interior of the carrier. It’s worth noting that the bed has a cozy cover that can be removed and machine-washed.

This Sleepypod cat carrier is available in a handful of colors to match your style, but keep in mind that it’s only recommended for use by cats up to 15 pounds. An adjustable padded shoulder strap means that you can sling this cat carrier over your shoulder as you carry your pet to the car, into the vet’s office, or to your travel destination.

Specs

List Price:	\$224.99
Weight Capacity:	15 lbs.
Material(s):	Ballistic nylon body, mesh, foam bed with plush cover
Portability Features:	Padded top handle, adjustable shoulder strap

Best for Air Travel

Sherpa Original Deluxe Pet Carrier »



PROS:

- ✓ Spring wire frame needed
- ✓ Top and side entrance
- ✓ Machine-washable

Buy From Amazon

Keep your cat secure in the cabin of an airplane with the Sherpa Original Deluxe Pet Carrier. This option is especially well suited to air travel because it has a spring wire frame that gives the carrier structure but allows the back of the carrier to compress under light pressure, which is helpful when sliding the carrier underneath an airplane seat. This carrier is available in three sizes: small, medium, and large. It's noteworthy that the small- and medium-size carriers are [guaranteed](#) to be approved for air travel on many major airlines.

This cat carrier is lightweight, weighing about 3 to 5 pounds (depending on the size), and it has a padded shoulder strap and a pair of carrying handles so you can carry the loaded carrier through airport terminals with ease. The mesh sides of this carrier allow for better visibility for your cat and give you the ability to keep an eye on your pet during travel.

Pet parents appreciate that you can load or unload your cat from the carrier using a side- or top-loading door. The top access is especially helpful for cats that resist entering or exiting the carrier since you can easily lower your cat into the bag or reach down and gently lift your kitty out. When considering this cat carrier for air travel, the biggest trade-off to its lightweight polyester construction is the fact that it may not be leakproof if your cat urinates inside it. That being said, the solid board that gives the floor of this carrier some stability is covered in a soft fleece liner that's removable and machine-washable.

Specs

List Price:	\$69.20 (S) to \$63.08 (L)
Weight Capacity:	8 lbs. (S) to 22 lbs. (L)
Material(s):	Polyester body, PVC plastic, PU plastic, iron metal, PP plastic, PE plastic, fleece liner
Portability Features:	Luggage strap, padded handles, padded shoulder strap

Best for Large Cats

Best For Large Cats

Buy From Amazon

SportPet Cat Carrier »

PROS:

- ✓ Roomy dimensions with a high weight limit
- ✓ Folds flat for storage
- ✓ Extra-wide door for easier loading and unloading

CONS:

- ✗ Top carrying handle only
- ✗ Must pay extra attention to firmly secure clips and tabs before use

[Buy From Amazon](#)

Large breeds of cats like Persian, Turkish Van, and Maine coon will need more room inside a cat carrier. As Rachel Salant, an animal behavior specialist with veterinarians.org, says, “the carrier needs to be large enough for your cat to be able to stand up and fully turn around while in it,” so you’ll definitely want to take into account the needs of your large cat as you pick out a carrier. The SportPet Cat Carrier fits the bill thanks to its spacious dimensions and high weight capacity – up to 35 pounds for the extra-large version.

Other features that stand out about this carrier include the extra-wide door that spans the front of the carrier, making it easier to put your cat inside. There are plenty of ventilation slats that give your kitty fresh air and a view out from the inside of the carrier. And if your cat has an accident, it won’t seep through the floor of this hard-sided carrier, and you can wipe the polypropylene surface clean.

In addition to providing plenty of headroom for tall cats (14.3 inches for the standard/small size and 17.25 inches for the extra-large version), the triangular design of the crate makes it well balanced and easy to carry close to your body. Just keep in mind that there’s only a top handle and no shoulder strap, which limits the ways that you can carry this model. The carrier folds flat to take up less storage space when not in use, but, when preparing to transport your cat, be sure that the inner tabs and latches are secured as indicated in the product manual. Pet parents emphasize the importance of doing so or else the carrier feels less than sturdy and your cat may escape.

Specs

List Price:	\$39.99 (Small) to \$61.99 (X-Large)
Weight Capacity:	25 lbs. (Small) to 35 lbs. (X-Large)
Material(s):	Polypropylene body
Portability Features:	Top handle, can collapse for storage

Most Stylish

Sherpa Bubble Cat Carrier Backpack »

PROS:

- ✓ Backpack-style carrier
- ✓ Visibility bubble can be swapped for plastic screen
- ✓ Accommodates cats up to 16 pounds

CONS:

- ✗ Zippers sometimes stick
- ✗ Some issues noted with attaching the visibility bubble

[Buy From Amazon](#)

This backpack-style cat carrier boasts both style and functionality. The rich brown faux leather exterior gives the Sherpa Bubble Cat Carrier Backpack a distinguished look, while the padded shoulder straps make the bag

more comfortable and convenient for hands-free carrying. (Although, a top handle is also built into the bag.) The dimensions make the bag suitable for cats up to 16 pounds, and you can load your feline friend from either side using the zippered doors. Just know that sometimes the zippers stick, even though this cat backpack is generally considered to be high quality and well constructed.

The most obvious feature of this stylish cat carrier is the bubble window. It gives your cat a view but can also be swapped out with the included plastic screen as well. (Just take your time when reattaching the bubble, as sometimes it doesn't sit properly.) There's additional ventilation on the front and sides of the bag to ensure that your cat receives plenty of fresh air. A fabric liner is added for coziness on the floor of this cat carrier, but it's removable and washable for cleaning convenience.

"The hands-free style makes it super convenient to use when traveling (especially if you live in the city and don't have a car). It's roomy enough for my 16-pound cat, and the bubble makes for an interesting conversation starter when you're on the bus and your cat looks like an astronaut."

“ – Nora Grimes, content services librarian for USN&WR

Specs

List Price:	\$79.99
Weight Capacity:	16 lbs.
Material(s):	Faux leather body, plastic bubble and screen
Portability Features:	Top handle, padded shoulder straps

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

The Bottom Line

Be sure to choose a cat carrier that is sized right for your cat and includes the features that'll make the carrier comfortable for you and your feline friend to use. We think that Travel Cat's "The Transpurter" Ultimate Calming Convertible Cat Carrier will check the most boxes for cat owners. It's large enough to fit cats up to 30 pounds, and it has multiple ways to load and unload your cat from the carrier. A removable, washable bed keeps your cat comfortable on the go, and multiple strap adjustments give you a variety of ways to transport the carrier.

Things To Consider When Buying Cat Carriers

Weight Capacity: Cat carriers have a weight capacity that indicates the maximum load the carrier is designed to safely hold. Most cat carriers have a weight capacity between 15 and 35 pounds, and some carriers come in multiple sizes with a different weight rating for each size. If you plan to transport multiple cats in a single carrier, be sure to factor in the combined weight of the animals to determine if the carrier can handle the load.

Ventilation: It's important to ensure that your cat remains comfortable and safe inside a cat carrier, and airflow is an essential part of the equation. For that reason, look to see what type of ventilation is built into the design of the cat carrier. Hard-sided carriers usually have ventilation slots or holes on the sides or top of the carrier. Soft-sided carriers might also have ventilation holes but often feature mesh panels, too. In addition to promoting circulation, ventilation features improve visibility for your cat. That can be calming for some cats, but it could be overstimulating for others, so some carriers include a flap or cover that reduces visibility by covering one or more mesh panels. However, additional ventilation holes should be present to keep sufficient air flowing into the carrier.

Portability: A cat carrier is typically utilized to ferry your cat from one place to another. One of the most important features that improves portability is the type of handle(s) available. Just about every carrier includes a top handle, which makes it easy to lift the carrier and hold it by your side, but some cat carriers also have a shoulder strap that gives you the option to carry your cat a longer distance without tiring out your arm. Backpack-style cat carriers are also popular because the design distributes the weight of the cat and carrier across your back while leaving your hands free for other things.

If you plan to transport your cat carrier in the car, look for a version that includes a mechanism for securing the seat belt around the carrier to prevent it from shifting or falling if your vehicle makes a sudden maneuver. For airplane travel, ensure that the carrier you choose meets the specific requirements of the airline you'll be traveling.

Storage: If you're not using the cat carrier, you might be interested in models that fold flat for storage. A collapsible cat carrier can save space and fit into a closet or on a shelf until you need it again. On the flip side, some cat owners find it beneficial to leave their cat carrier out at all times so that their cat becomes comfortable with the carrier. Salant offers this suggestion for familiarizing your cat with a new carrier: "Leave it out in your home with the door wide open and feed them in it at meal times so they walk into it by themselves. As they start to get confident with this, you can slowly close the door for very short periods of time while they are eating and start extending the time they are in it."

In terms of storage, consider whether or not the carrier you choose has features that make it suitable for stowing underneath an airplane seat if you fly with your cat. Some models have flexible frames that allow them to fit in the tight space underneath a plane seat.

Finally, don't forget to factor in storage for your cat's essentials like food, treats, and toys. Some cat carriers have one or more pockets where you can store these items for easy access as you travel and once you reach your destination.

Ease of Maintenance: You'll want to periodically clean your cat carrier to keep it fresh and hygienic for your pet and to remove any hair, dander, dirt, and debris. Salant says that hard-sided carriers can be easier to clean. Without soft materials to absorb liquids or odors, you can more easily wipe clean the solid bottom and sides of a hard-sided carrier. That's not to say that soft-sided carriers can't be cleaned, too. Many have a removable insert or liner that can be [machine-washed](#).

If you have a cat that's prone to having an accident or vomiting inside of a carrier, ease of cleaning should be a high priority as you compare your options for a new cat carrier.

How We Chose the Best Cat Carriers

At U.S. News 360 Reviews, we invest the time to research the best products for your pet's well-being and consult experts to determine the most important factors in your search. When it comes to picking the best cat carriers, we researched the most popular models available and consulted with an animal behavior specialist to find out the most essential features for a safe, comfortable cat carrier. We then selected the options that stand out for their comfort and convenience, often with a removable, washable bed or top- and side-opening doors to make it easier to get your cat in and out. We included hard-sided and soft-sided cat carriers in a range of sizes and with varying weight capacities so that you can find the right option for your cat.

WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

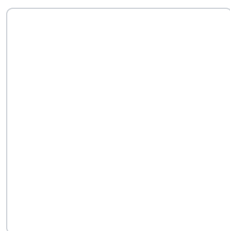
Our contributors and editors draw on their years of experience researching, testing, and reviewing products to recommend the best options. [Erica Puisis](#), the author of this article, has six years of product review experience, as well as a background working for a veterinary practice and an enthusiasm for learning about products that enhance animal well-being. In addition to U.S. News 360 Reviews, Erica has contributed to The Spruce Pets and Forbes Vetted.

For this article, Erica interviewed [Rachel Salant](#), an animal behavior specialist with [veterinarians.org](#). Salant explained how to acquaint a cat with a new carrier and what factors affect the safety and usability of the best cat carriers.

FAQ

How do I determine the appropriate size and type of cat carrier for my pet?	+
Can a cat carrier affect my cat's comfort and stress levels during travel?	+
What are the key considerations when choosing a cat carrier for various modes of transportation?	+

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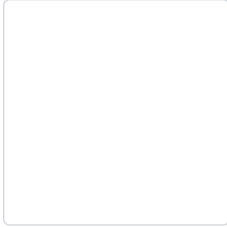


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Erica Puisis is a freelance writer and product reviewer with expertise covering the latest innovative products that consumers rely on every day. Although she has experience testing and researching a range of products, Puisis's areas of focus for U.S. News & World Report include cars and, for 360 Reviews, home goods and pet products.

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