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# Best Dog Crates for Car Travel of 2024

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Taking your pup on a road trip can be a fun experience but only if you have one of the safest dog crates for car travel. Even if you're not traveling cross-country, a crash-tested carrier is one of the most important purchases to keep them safe for long-haul car trips and even a quick jaunt to the vet.

We selected crates and carriers that are crash-tested and certified by the Center for Pet Safety (CPS), a nonprofit that evaluates the safety of pet travel products. To aid in our selection, we also enlisted the guidance of a dog trainer who helped inform us about the importance of pet safety when traveling in a vehicle. Our list of the best dog crates for car travel has something to make every dog's next road trip a success.

## Our Top Picks

**Best Overall:** [Gunner G1 Kennel](#) »

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**Best Budget:** [Sleepypod Atom](#) »

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**Best for Puppies:** [Sleepypod Mini](#) »

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**Best for Small Breeds:** [Away The Pet Carrier](#) »

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**Best for Large Breeds:** [Lucky Duck Lucky Kennel](#) »

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**Best for Small Cars:** [Paravel Cabana Pet Carrier](#) »

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**Best for SUVs:** [Cabela's GunDog Intermediate Dog Kennel](#) »

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### Best Overall

**Gunner G1 Kennel** »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Double-walled
- ✓ Available in four sizes
- ✓ Proven to protect pets in serious accidents

**CONS:**

- ✗ Tie-down straps sold separately
- ✗ Not chew-proof
- ✗ Heavy

[Buy From Gunner](#)

When traveling with your pet, keeping them safe in the car is the biggest priority. While there are plenty of travel crates on the market, the most effective are crash-tested and certified by CPS. This nonprofit evaluates the safety claims of pet travel products. Passing crash tests is no small feat, and only a handful of products receive the CPS's seal of approval. One of those products is the Gunner G1 Kennel.

Available in four sizes – though the large size hasn't been tested and certified by CPS – for puppies to large breeds, the Gunner G1 Kennel has a double-walled design to keep pets safe in an accident. Its double walls also have the added benefit of providing temperature regulation, keeping your pup cool even in hot weather. The crate has built-in pins for tie-down straps to secure the crate in a vehicle, although customers must purchase the straps separately.

Crash-test certification is an excellent feature and something pet parents should prioritize when searching for a travel crate. However, it does come at a cost. The Gunner G1 Kennel is on the higher end of travel crates and one of the most expensive options. Aside from its cost, some users take issue with the crate's weight, which ranges from 27 pounds for the small kennel to 72 pounds for the large kennel. Sturdiness and durability are important in a travel crate, so we don't necessarily consider this to be a con. However, a heavy crate can be an inconvenience.

## Specs

**List Price:** \$550 (Small in gunmetal or tan) to \$975 (Large in mossy oak bottomland tan or mossy oak bottomland gunmetal)

**Sizes:** Small, Medium, Intermediate, Large

**Dimensions:** 24.5 in. L x 18.625 in. W x 19 in. H (Small) to 40.25 in. L x 28 in. W x 33.25 in. H (Large)

**Weight:** 27 lbs. (Small) to 72 lbs. (Large)

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### Best Budget

## Sleepypod Atom »



#### PROS:

- ✓ More affordable option
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Features top and side entries
- ✓ Available in six colors

#### CONS:

- ✗ Not as much ventilation
- ✗ Only suitable for pets up to 12 pounds

[Buy From Amazon](#)

A budget dog crate for car travel is hard to come by, especially if you're looking for a crash-tested and certified model, but the Sleepypod Atom is one of the safest options that doesn't cost a few hundred dollars. This carrier features comfortable bedding for your pet to relax in, is suitable for the back seat of a car, and fits under the seats of most airplanes. The Atom also sports top and side entry points to make getting in and out a breeze for your pet. Plus, like all Sleepypod carriers, the Atom is available in various colors.

A downside of this crate is that it isn't suitable for larger pets. With a weight limit of 12 pounds, only toy breeds

can take advantage of this carrier. However, that doesn't mean you can't find a great car restraint for larger pets with a smaller budget. Sleepypod also makes one of the best car [seat belts](#) to keep large dogs safe and comfortable in a vehicle.

## Specs

List Price:	\$139.99
Sizes:	One size
Dimensions:	17 in. L x 18.5 in. W x 10 in. H
Weight:	3.2 lbs.

Best for Puppies

### Sleepypod Mini »

#### PROS:

- ✓ Suitable for puppies and kittens up to 7 pounds
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Doubles as a bed
- ✓ Can fit under airplane seat
- ✓ Available in nine colors

#### CONS:

- ✗ Some users had sizing issues
- ✗ Zipper that connects cover to bed can be flimsy

[Buy From Amazon](#)

The correct size of travel crate is essential for keeping your pet safe during transit, says Nicole Ellis, a professional dog trainer and pet lifestyle expert for rover.com. When traveling, a dog should touch three of the four walls of the crate or carrier to minimize the chance of movement during a collision. Getting a tiny crate that fits a puppy properly can be challenging, but the Sleepypod Mini is ideal for pint-sized pups with a weight capacity of 7 pounds. Beyond being crash-tested and certified by the CPS, this carrier can be used [with cats](#) and allows you to carry your furry friend with you on an airplane. (However, always check individual airline recommendations before flying with your pet.)

Regardless of how you're traveling, this carrier will keep your pet cozy, comfortable, and safe. The included bed can be used as your pup's primary sleeping place when not jet-setting around the world, which may help acclimate your puppy to being contained in a small carrier during travel times.

While the Sleepypod Mini suits most teacup pups, some users struggled to get the correct fit, as Sleepypod also makes the Mobile Pet Bed, a medium-sized equivalent of the Mini. We recommend measuring before purchasing to ensure you get the right fit for your four-legged friend.

### Specs

List Price:	\$179.99 (Mini) to \$224.99 (Mobile)
Sizes:	Mini, Mobile
Dimensions:	13 in. L x 13 in. W x 11 in. H
Weight:	3 lbs. (Mobile) to 3.3 lbs. (Mini)

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#### Best for Small Breeds

**Away The Pet Carrier »**

**PROS:**

- ✓ Compact but safe for smaller pups
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Clip to secure your pet within carrier
- ✓ Airline-approved
- ✓ Removable bedding

**CONS:**

- ✗ Only suitable for pets up to 18 pounds
- ✗ Not as soft as some soft-sided carriers

Buy From Away

Small breeds can be easier to travel with because they don't take up as much space, but the travel is only simple if you have the right gear. The Pet Carrier by luggage brand Away is the ideal soft-sided crate for transporting small dogs in a car. Its features include top and side entry points for your animal, removable bedding for comfort, a retractable mesh privacy screen, and a collar clip to keep your pup from springing out of the carrier when opened. It also has a firm bottom, which stops the carrier from folding during transit – a feature Ellis says is important to prevent your dog from sliding around in the crate.

Car travel is a breeze with this carrier: Just secure it to your vehicle's back seat via a belt around the headrest. Traveling by air with your pet? This carrier can sit snugly on top of your [luggage](#), securing to the handle of any Away suitcase via a trolley sleeve. (For travelers who do take their pups on planes, note that while the material is soft, some users found it wasn't flexible enough to fit under every airline seat.) The downside of this carrier is that it's only suitable for small breeds weighing less than 18 pounds, so medium and large pets are out of luck.

### Specs

<b>List Price:</b>	\$225 to \$260 (personalized)
<b>Sizes:</b>	One size
<b>Dimensions:</b>	18.75 in. L x 10.8 in. W x 10.75 in. H
<b>Weight:</b>	4.3 lbs. (with shoulder straps)

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**Best for Large Breeds**

**Lucky Duck Lucky Kennel »**

**PROS:**

- ✓ Suitable for pets up to 110 pounds (large size)
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Drainage holes for easy cleanup
- ✓ Lightweight

**CONS:**

- ✗ Tie-down straps sold separately
- ✗ Bed pad sold separately

[Buy From Amazon](#)

Finding a dog crate for car travel that suits big breeds can be tough, but Lucky Duck makes one of our favorite kennels ideal for medium to large dogs. With a capacity to hold pups as big as 110 pounds, the large version of the Lucky Kennel can keep up with large dogs without weighing you down. Unlike most crash-tested travel crates, this kennel is lightweight at only 45 pounds, making it much more accessible to lift in and out of a vehicle. Another nice feature is its drainage and ventilation holes. The drainage holes are excellent to have in the event of a potty accident, as any liquid in the kennel is directed to the drainage holes via the slightly pitched floor of the [crate](#).

The drain holes are a nice plus, but they make it difficult to place a bed within the crate. As such, Lucky Dog offers its own bed to fit inside – a nice-to-have feature to ensure your pup’s comfort during travel. However, if you want to purchase the bed pad for your dog, you’ll have to do so separately. Lucky Dog also requires the separate purchase of ratchet straps – a type of restraint that keeps the crate tied down to a vehicle – instead of providing them with the kennel. Remember this when purchasing this crate because Lucky Dog kennels are only crash-tested and certified by the CPS in combination with these tie-down straps.

**Specs**

**List Price:** \$549.99 (Medium) to \$699.99 (Large)

**Sizes:** Medium, Intermediate, Large

**Dimensions:** 26 in. L x 18.75 in. W x 20 in. H (Medium) to 38 in. L x 24 in. W x 29 in. H (Large)

**Weight:** 27 lbs. (Medium) to 45 lbs. (Large)

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Best for Small Cars

### Paravel Cabana Pet Carrier »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Smaller footprint than most carriers
- ✓ Folds flat for easy storage
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Made from recycled materials

**CONS:**

- ✗ Only fits pets up to 20 pounds
- ✗ Some users found shoulder strap held up poorly

[Buy From Paravel](#)

The best dog carriers for small cars won't take up too much space in the back seat of a vehicle, and the Paravel Cabana Pet Carrier fits the bill. At just 11 inches long, this soft-sided carrier can easily fit within the back seat of any small car. It's also less than 1 foot high, easily letting you see over the top of the carrier. However, the small footprint won't squeeze your pet.

The Cabana Pet Carrier is more than 20 inches wide, which makes it easily able to hold pups up to 20 pounds. Another handy space-saving element of this carrier is its ability to fold completely flat so that when your pet isn't in the vehicle with you, the back seat can be reclaimed for passengers or cargo.

While this crash-tested and certified carrier is a safe, space-saving option for small cars, a few users found it wasn't the best option as a shoulder bag, as the shoulder strap broke for some buyers.

### Specs



<b>List Price:</b>	\$190 to \$265 (hand-painted emoji personalization)
<b>Sizes:</b>	One size
<b>Dimensions:</b>	11 in. L x 20.5 in. W x 11 in. H
<b>Weight:</b>	4.4 lbs.
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**Best for SUVs**

**Cabela's GunDog Intermediate Dog Kennel »**

**PROS:**

- ✓ Tie-down strap kit and safety bar included
- ✓ Crash-tested and certified by CPS
- ✓ Nonslip rubber feet

**CONS:**

- ✗ Only one size
- ✗ No included crate pad

[Buy From Cabela's](#)

When using a crash-tested crate in a large vehicle such as an SUV, it's important to tie it down using straps or bolts to ensure the kennel doesn't shift during transit. However, most crate manufacturers don't include these tie-down straps with the purchase of a kennel, and these can often pack on an additional hundred dollars to an already expensive purchase. The Cabela's GunDog Intermediate Dog Kennel is an excellent option for those who want the tie-down straps included to keep their pup safe in the back seat or trunk of an extra-large vehicle. The included tie-down strap kit can secure this crash-tested crate to most large cars, and the rubber feet offer additional nonslip reinforcement for more stability.

The kennel allows users to choose on which side they want the door to open – a handy feature to ensure ease

of use. The downside of this crate is that it's only available in one size, leaving few options for dogs between a medium and large size. It also comes as is, meaning no crate pad or [bedding](#) is included for your pup.

## Specs

<b>List Price:</b>	\$349.99
<b>Sizes:</b>	One size
<b>Dimensions:</b>	32 in. D x 22 in. W x 24.5 in. H
<b>Weight:</b>	30 lbs.

[EXPAND LIST](#) ▾

## The Bottom Line

Choosing the best dog crate for car travel is a weighty decision, and you should always keep your pet's safety top of mind. The good news is there are many excellent crates and carriers available that are crash-tested and certified, providing your pup with a safe and comfortable place during a road trip. [Buy From Cabela's »](#)

Our best overall pick is the Gunner G1 Kennel, which has some of the best features we've seen on a travel crate. Its double-walled design reinforces the kennel's safety while keeping your dog cool on hot days. It also has one of the most diverse size ranges available for crash-tested crates, making it suitable for small pups and large breeds alike.

## Things To Consider When Buying Dog Crates for Car Travel

**Safety Certifications:** The best dog crates for car travel are crash-tested by the CPS. The pet industry has few regulations for travel products, and some brands may make unjustified safety claims. Even with products certified by the CPS, remember that certifications vary, and a product may not be approved for use with dogs weighing more than a certain amount or without additions such as tie-down straps.

**Size and Weight Capacity:** Choosing the correct size kennel is vital for keeping your dog safe during travel, whether traveling with your pet in a car or on a plane. There's no one-size-fits-all crate, so remember to measure your pet and follow the measurement and weight guidelines provided by the manufacturer to achieve a good fit.

Ellis says that while we might have an instinct to buy a bigger crate to give our pups more space to lounge, it's important to hold off on this impulse. "[O]ur dogs should be snug. So when thinking of a [crash-tested crate], our dog should really be touching three of the four walls [when they] lay down," she says. Ellis also encourages pet parents to avoid extra space within a crate because that's where the dog will move during a collision.

**Material:** Each dog kennel is constructed differently, but there are some materials to look for when considering dog crates for travel. Ellis likes soft-sided carriers with a firm bottom that ensures a pet stays stable during transport. She also says that ballistic nylon – a material that's resistant to water and chew damage – is great.

Hard crates tend to be made of materials like rubber or rotomolded walls. Rotomolding is a type of plastic construction, and its benefits include being durable and thick enough to withstand excessive force, such as the type that would be exerted in a car accident.

While crash-tested crates vary in material, Ellis notes that one material pet parents should avoid is wire, specifically in wire-style crates. These crates are acceptable for at-home use but not for travel. Ellis says a wire crate may break into small pieces and impale your pet in the event of a collision.

**Vehicle Compatibility:** Most crash-tested crates suitable for car travel can be used in any vehicle. However, measure the back seat of your car to ensure that the crate will fit. Some crates intended for larger dogs may not fit in the back seat as easily as smaller soft-sided carriers. These crates may instead be used in the trunk of a vehicle, although they usually require tie-down straps to keep them in place. Ellis says it's important to check your specific vehicle's attachment points if you opt for a crate that requires latching in that way.

It's also vital to remember that while a crate may sit in a vehicle's back seat, trunk, or bed, it should never be placed in the front seat. Ellis says regardless of what crate or carrier your pup is in, your dog can still be injured by an airbag if traveling in the front seat of a car.

## How We Chose the Best Dog Crates for Car Travel

At U.S. News 360 Reviews, our editors and contributing writers evaluate products based on research, expert guidance, and our own experience as professional product reviewers. Our contributing writer consulted the CPS's list of crash-tested and certified dog crates and carriers to find the best options for dogs big and small. We also consulted [Nicole Ellis](#), a certified professional dog trainer and pet lifestyle expert with rover.com to understand how to keep pets safe during car travel.

### WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

[Sophia Carlisle](#), the author of this piece, has covered pet products for Business Insider as a fellow and, prior to that, fostered dogs and cats for years. She has tested dozens of dog products with her rescue pit mix Lyla, including harnesses, food, and leashes. For U.S. News 360 Reviews, Sophia has covered some of the best products for pups, such as the [best dog harnesses](#) and [slow feeder dog bowls](#).

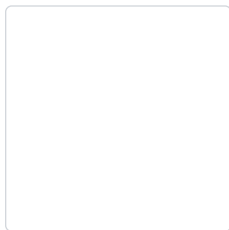
### FAQ

What safety features should I look for in a dog crate for car travel? **+**

What safety certifications should a dog crate for car travel have? **+**

How do I determine the right size of a dog crate for car travel for my pet? **+**

### About Our Team

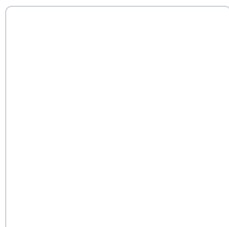


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Sophia Carlisle is a freelance journalist who specializes in pets and lifestyle topics. She previously worked for Business Insider as an editorial fellow, where she covered pet products, deal days, and home goods.

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