

FAMILY

The 15 Best Dog Car Seats Because They're Travel Game-Changers

KEEP RUFF RIDERS SAFE



By Sarah Ashley • Published Mar 4, 2024

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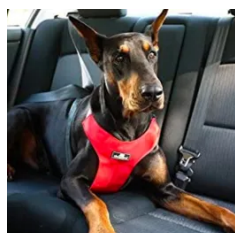
Flying on an airplane these days can be pricey and stressful—let alone with a dog in tow. Plus, if you’re the proud owner of a large breed, you know car rides are sometimes the only way to bring your pet along for the, well, ride. This is why many pet owners prefer road trips to flights. For long road trips with pets, car seats are game changers. They make everyone safer which means more fun for the whole family (even if family is just you and Bridger). Here are some of the best dog car seats you can buy, whether you need a crate for a large breed, a pet carrier for dogs that like to roam or something for anxious pups. Time to get packing!

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The Best Dog Car Seats at a Glance

1



Best Harness Overall

Sleepypod Clickit Sport Harness

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FROM \$94 AT AMAZON

2



Best Budget Harness

Kurgo Tru-fit Smart Harness

[read more](#)

FROM \$30 AT AMAZON

3



Best Crate Overall

Gunner G1 Kennel

[read more](#)

\$550 AT GUNNER

4



Best Crate for Large Breeds

Rock Creek Stationary Aluminum Dog Crate

[read more](#)

FROM \$875 \$744 AT ROCK CREEK CRATES

5



Best Crate for Small Breeds

PetSafe Happy Ride Collapsible Dog Travel Crate

[read more](#)

\$150 AT AMAZON

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Meet the Experts

- [Dr. Linda Simon](#), is a veterinarian at [Senior Tail Waggers](#) and has a decade of experience as a vet. She specializes in veterinary surgery and senior animals.
- [Nicole Ellis](#) is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer and Pet Lifestyle Expert with Rover. She has more than 15 years of experience training all types of animals and wrote [Working Like A Dog](#), a book all about the lives of professional canines.

How We Chose the Best Dog Car Seats

When selecting the best car seats for canines, we first consulted to experts in the field to get their advice for what to look for in these products. After taking their professional advice into consideration, we then pored over hundreds of user reviews, asked around to our own dog-owner editors and looked at editor- and reader-preferred retailers to compile our list. We also made sure to include a range of budgets and specific needs in our roundup (a larger dog breed needs a different type of car seat compared to a smaller breed, for example). The end result is a comprehensive list of dog car seats for every type of four-legged traveler.

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AMAZON

BEST HARNESS OVERALL

1. Sleepypod Clickit Sport Harness

WHAT WE LIKE

- variety of sizes and colors
- CPS-approved
- crash-tested
- versatile

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- expensive
- may not be suitable for large-chested breeds

Sleepypod makes tons of travel accessories for jet setting pets. This harness is one of the few that has received the CPS seal of approval (for dogs up to 75 pounds). Its design (which was crash-tested in the same way child safety restraints are) distributes force to three different areas throughout the padded harness so your dog doesn't feel one harsh point of impact. Oh, and the straps are made with seatbelt-grade material. The harness is designed to be used in the rear passenger seat of a vehicle—and it doubles as a harness for regular walks.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** depends on size purchased; comes in S, M, L, XL
- **Weight Limit:** 18 to 90 pounds
- **Material:** nylon, neoprene padding

FROM \$94 AT AMAZON



CHEWY

BEST BUDGET HARNESS

2. Kurgo Tru-fit Smart Harness

WHAT WE LIKE

- variety of sizes and colors
- crash-tested
- versatile
- durable

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- some reviewers say the carabiners and harness are heavy

Some dogs don't need—or want—a cushy seat. They just want to be clipped in like their humans! While this harness hasn't earned CPS certification, it has been crash tested (for dogs up to 75 pounds) using the U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards meant for children. Clip it to the seatbelt in your car and simply unclip when you arrive at your destination. You can also clip your leash to it for pit stops and it saves space in jam-packed vehicles. Be sure to purchase the size (it comes in XS to XL) best-suited for your pup. Kurgo products come with a lifetime warranty, so don't worry about this harness' longevity.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** depends on size purchased; comes in XS, S, M, L, XL
- **Weight Limit:** up to 75 pounds
- **Material:** polyester, nylon, synthetic fabric

FROM \$30 AT AMAZON



GUNNER/FACEBOOK

BEST CRATE OVERALL

3. Gunner G1 Kennel

WHAT WE LIKE

- 5-Star Crash Test Certified
- temperature regulated
- virtually indestructible

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- expensive
- bulky
- heavy

Get ready for a doozy of a crate. This thing is five-star crash tested and even has images of crashes on their site in which dogs' lives were saved by this crate! It comes in four sizes (and nine colors) and suits just about any sized dog. The double-wall rotomolded sides offer twice the protection of traditional crates, and then some (they literally test these things by tossing them off cliffs). It comes with straps to secure in the trunk or back of a pick-up and the ventilated windows are designed to repel rain and snow. Add a soft cushy bed to the crate if you like, or keep as is with a handy drainage system for accidents or mud. The crates are also CPS-certified for travel.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** large measures 40.25" L x 28" W x 33.25" H
- **Weight Limit:** none
- **Material:** double-walled rotomolded plastic, steel supports, polyethylene

\$550 AT GUNNER



ROCK CREEK CRATES

BEST CRATE FOR LARGE BREEDS

4. Rock Creek Stationary Aluminum Dog Crate

WHAT WE LIKE

- CPS-certified
- lighter in weight
- non-slip feet
- customizable

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- expensive

Here's another crate with a stellar CPS certification and crash-test record. These are lighter in weight and less bulky than the Gunner G1 Kennel, though definitely pricier (Rock Creek does offer payment plans!). Manufactured with aircraft-grade aluminum and stainless steel, these things have a 10-year guarantee. The frames are welded internally, ensuring a strong structure. Anxious dogs may appreciate the ventilation slots begin halfway up the side of the crate, offering some additional privacy. These crates also have non-slip feet and can be custom painted in a variety of colors. Be sure to check out [Rock Creek's sizing page](#) to ensure you buy the crate designed to fit your pup. Finally, if necessary, you can customize which way the door of this crate opens.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** large measures 48" L x 32.25" W x 35" H (four sizes available)
- **Weight Limit:** unavailable
- **Material:** aluminum, stainless steel

FROM ~~\$875~~ **\$744** AT ROCK CREEK CRATES



AMAZON

BEST CRATE FOR SMALL BREEDS

5. PetSafe Happy Ride Collapsible Dog Travel Crate

WHAT WE LIKE

- easy to transport (collapsible)
- secures with buckle in car
- washable pad

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested
- may not fit smaller cars

As the winner of the 2022 Pet Innovation Award for Crate Product of the Year, this collapsible soft-sided crate is a game-changer for small breeds who love to wander. Letting your pup move about is a dangerous distraction! This crate with mesh sides keeps small breeds secure while making sure they have ventilation and can see what's going on around them. It buckles directly into the back seat using car seat belts and folds down when not in use.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 27" L x 19" W x 28" H
- **Weight Limit:** 60 pounds
- **Material:** aluminum frame, fleece interior, mesh siding

[\\$150 AT AMAZON](#)



AMAZON

BEST SELLER ON AMAZON

6. BurgeonNest Dog Car Seat

WHAT WE LIKE

- comfortable
- machine-washable
- safety leash
- rave reviews

WHAT WE DON'T

- not crash-tested

The BurgeonNest is Amazon's best-selling dog car seat. It comes in three colors and is really more like a bed than anything. The plush cushion is removable and washable, in case your pup has an accident. The car seat's nylon straps keep it secured to your vehicle's seats and a safety leash clips to your pup to keep them in place. Nearly 6,000 five-star reviews on Amazon rave about this seat. The only drawback is that it's not suitable for medium or large breeds.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 21.65" L x 19.68" W x 13.78" H
- **Weight Limit:** 25 pounds
- **Material:** oxford fabric, nylon, rubber, plush cushion

\$40 AT AMAZON



AMAZON

BEST FOR PASSENGER SEATS OR CAPTAIN'S CHAIRS

7. Swihelp Pet Car Booster Seat

WHAT WE LIKE

- folds up for easy storage
- straps connect to car seat
- safety leash

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested

This is another popular booster seat on Amazon. Ideal for small pups, it collapses for easy storage, yet provides sturdy support during your drive with PVC pipes inserted into the rim during set-up. It's also waterproof and very easy to clean. One note: The images on Amazon show it attached to the front passenger seat. This isn't a very safe space for your dog. However, this booster seat also works well on captains seats in vans and SUVs. Always be sure the seat is installed securely and your dog is connected to the safety leash.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 15.75" L x 13.39" W x 17.32" H
- **Weight Limit:** 13 pounds
- **Material:** high-quality waterproof 600D oxford fabric, nylon belt, antirust D-ring, PVC, mesh net

FROM \$17 AT AMAZON



AMAZON

BEST FOR SMALL DOGS WHO LOVE WINDOWS

8. Petsafe Happy Ride Deluxe Booster Seat For Dogs

WHAT WE LIKE

- budget-friendly
- option to secure harness to a safety tether
- allows dogs to see out windows

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- only suitable for small breeds
- not crash-tested

Yes, dogs love sticking their heads out windows. Yes, it's cute! No, it's not safe. But, if your pup really wants to see out the window and is too short to reach, this booster seat is the perfect perch. There are three sizes available for dogs up to 25 pounds. It's got more than 10,000 five-star reviews, including one user who said this booster seat kept her dog secure during a high-speed crash. (Be sure to follow instructions to ensure a secure installation.)

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** XL measures 20" L x 14" W x 10" H (three sizes available)
- **Weight Limit:** 25 pounds
- **Material:** polyester exterior, fleece lining

FROM \$30 AT AMAZON



CHEWY

BEST FOR DOGS WHO LIKE TO ROAM

9. K&H Pet Products Travel Safety Pet Carrier

WHAT WE LIKE

- prevents distraction
- can soothe puppy anxiety

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested
- large only holds dogs up to 40 pounds

Letting your dog roam around the car is a great way to get distracted and make mistakes while driving. Please don't do this. Instead, invest in a dog car seat that completely envelops your pup without suffocating him or cutting him off from the group. This carrier has three entry points, mesh walls and a plush pad for maximum comfort. It's collapsible too, which means easy storage if you're on a road trip and need to stash it upon arrival. Install by clipping straps around the headrest and securing with a seatbelt.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** Large measures 29.5" L x 22" W x 25.5" H
- **Weight Limit:** 40 pounds
- **Material:** mesh, synthetic fabric

\$51 AT CHEWY



DIGGS

BEST CARRIER TO CAR SEAT

10. Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier

WHAT WE LIKE

- CPS-certified, sleek look
- escape-proof locking mechanism
- airline-friendly

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- Only works for very small breeds

Though the Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier and the Pet Carrier by Away (listed below) are very similar, this one ranks higher on our list because it has an easy waste removal door in case your pup has to go potty on a lengthy trip. The carrier comes with one pee pad and you can purchase more as needed. Plus, it comes in four different colors. With a CPS certification, this carrier can be secured with a seatbelt and carrier straps. Use the locking mechanism for dogs known for escaping their carriers!

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 20" L x 10.8" W x 11.5" H
- **Weight Limit:** 18 pounds
- **Material:** unavailable

\$195 AT DIGGS



AWAY

BEST RUNNER-UP CARRIER

11. The Pet Carrier By Away

WHAT WE LIKE

- interior and exterior pockets
- airline-friendly
- CPS-certified
- safety collar clip

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- expensive
- only two colorways

Now, if you're driving to the airport and need something to work double duty, this carrier is here for you. With multiple pockets for storage and a water-resistant lining, it is CPS certified and meets Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements when it comes to carrying on your pup (though it's always best to check your specific airline for guidelines). You can clip your dog in by her harness or collar as well. Mesh panels let your dog breathe easy and privacy screens can be rolled down if crowds cause anxiety. Hook the long strap around a headrest and slide a seatbelt through two latches on the front to secure in your vehicle.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 18.7" L x 10.8" W x 10.75" H
- **Weight Limit:** 18 pounds
- **Material:** nylon, leather

FROM \$225 AT AWAY



CHEWY

BEST BUDGET CARRIER TO CAR SEAT

12. Pet Gear Signature Dog & Cat Car Seat & Carrier Bag

WHAT WE LIKE

- machine washable pad
- easy to install and remove
- harness tether included

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested

When you know you'll be making frequent stops or you just want a multi-purpose piece of equipment, this car seat will be your best friend (after your dog). Seamlessly buckle it into the backseat and unbuckle when you arrive at your destination. It also contains an interior line you can secure to your pup's harness for added safety, which we love. Oh yeah, it's got a pouch to store treats in, too.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 19" L x 12.5" W x 12" H
- **Weight Limit:** 20 pounds
- **Material:** mesh, synthetic fabric

\$31 AT CHEWY



AMAZON

BEST FOR ANXIOUS DOGS

13. Snoozer Luxury Lookout Pet Car Seat

WHAT WE LIKE

- removable and washable cover
- eases carsickness

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested
- not for large breeds

Do car rides make your pup anxious? Give him something cushy to lay on! Lined with lamb's wool and cushioned with firm, CertiPUR-US foam, this booster works well to lull your dog to sleep or give him a stellar view of the outside world. This might also be a good option for dogs who get motion sickness. Treating a car ride like naptime could improve their experience. A seat belt hooks into this booster to keep it sturdy and there's a tether clip to keep your pup in their chair.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** Small measures 17" L x 15" W x 19" H
- **Weight Limit:** 18 pounds (small), 25 pounds (medium), 34 pounds (large)
- **Material:** nylon exterior, fleece lining, CertiPUR-US foam

\$97 AT AMAZON (SIZE SMALL)

FROM \$137 AT CHEWY (SIZES MEDIUM AND LARGE)



AMAZON

BEST TRAVEL BED SEAT

14. LeSure Sherpa Dog Booster Seat

WHAT WE LIKE

- machine washable cover
- double duty as bed and car seat
- safety leash

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not crash-tested

Does your toy breed require a little extra... luxury? Then the LeSure Sherpa Dog Booster Seat is the seat for you. This memory foam-filled seat has four connection points to secure in your vehicle and a safety leash to prevent small dogs from roaming around the car. The cover is removable for washing and is super soft for comfort. The waterproof bottom also makes this an ideal seat for outdoor excursions (like picnics in the park that your dog wants to join).

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** 23" L x 23" W x 13" H
- **Weight Limit:** 25 pounds
- **Material:** chopped memory foam, cotton, metal buckles

FROM \$54 AT AMAZON



DIGGS

BEST FOR ROAD TRIPS

15. Diggs Enventur Travel Kennel

WHAT WE LIKE

- easy assembly and storage
- military-grade materials
- free from phthalates and heavy metals

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE

- not yet crash-tested or CPS certified
- additional cost for extra safety accessories

Talk about a revolutionary design! Diggs, which makes a CPS-certified carrier, has developed a strong, puncture-proof inflatable travel kennel. With the Diggs Pump, this thing inflates in one minute and is super lightweight. Secure the kennel with tie-downs for optimal safety. The small size has passed bench seat crash safety tests; Diggs says the medium and large sizes are still going through testing. Ventilated windows keep your pup cool and breathing well. The travel bundle, which includes the kennel, the pump and the tie-downs is on sale right now for just over \$400.

FAST FACTS

- **Dimensions:** Medium measures 34" L x 22.5" W x 27" H (also comes in S and L)
- **Weight Limit:** up to 80 pounds
- **Material:** military-grade materials

\$500 AT DIGGS

What to Consider When Buying a Dog Car Seat

Dog car seats are the answer to your concerns about safe doggy driving practices! Equipment designed to keep canines from flying around in the event of an accident or sudden stop is a wise investment. When buying a dog car seat, you'll come across three primary styles: harnesses, seats and crates. Harnesses go on your dog, your dog goes in seats and crates.

- **Safety:** Dr. Simon says, "When purchasing a harness or car seat, opt for one that's been safety tested and approved." Ellis agrees, encouraging pet parents to look for products that have been third-party tested. "It's an unregulated industry and anyone can say their product is crash-tested, yet many of these products actually fail third party crash testing," Ellis says. Be wary of car seats that only provide safety leashes or tethers. Look for sturdier options, many of which will be crates with straps securing them to your vehicle. "Look for a seat that fixes securely to the car and doesn't wobble too much," Dr. Simon says. [The Center for Pet Safety](#) says products tend to fall into one of two categories: distraction prevention or crash protection. Both are good, but crash protection is ideal. CPS encourages pet parents to look for their official safety seal on products. Harnesses, crates and seats must go through a rigorous testing process to receive this CPS certification and the organization posts crash-testing videos on their site for transparency.
- **Your dog's size and weight:** "For larger dogs and those who dislike staying in car seats, [harnesses] can be a better option, as they allow the dog to feel freer while still restricting their movement," says Dr. Simon. There are some harnesses ill-suited for breeds with large chest cavities like Greyhounds or Borzois, so be sure to double check all warnings and labels. "Dogs over 18 pounds should be in a crash-tested harness or crate, while dogs under 18 pounds should be in a crash-tested carrier that buckles in using your car's seat belt," advises Ellis.
- **Frequency of use:** Are daily car trips in your dog's future or is a car ride a very special, rare treat? A harness you can slide a seatbelt through is a quick option, whereas buckling a crate or seat in (perhaps after installing a waterproof seat cover) might take about 15 minutes. Decide what you'll realistically be able to do every time your dog gets into the car.
- **Materials:** Ideally, your dog's car seat will be easy to clean. Though your pup may not have many accidents, paws get muddy, drool is common and hair goes everywhere. If you can't wipe it down or toss it in the wash, we say hard pass.

Frequently Asked Questions

- + **Do I need a dog car seat?**
- + **Is it legal to have a dog in the front seat?**
- + **How can I make my dog more comfortable in the car?**

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Sarah Ashley is a Chicago-based freelance journalist. She has covered pets for PureWow for six years and tackles everything from dog training tips to the best litter boxes. Her...

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