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WHAT TO BUY

# The Best Cat Carrier For Road Trips Is Crash Test Certified



By [STEVEN ASARCH](#) | Published on 03/06/24

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The Spruce Pets / Sarah Elder

Cats can be difficult traveling partners, though there are [ways to prepare them for a road trip](#).

The right cat carrier can make a car trip with your cat easier too.

The best cat carrier for car travel should be comfortable, secure, and safe. To find the best cat carrier for car travel, we tested more than 40 highly-rated and bestselling pet carriers in real-world conditions.

“Carriers should be sturdy with multiple ways to access the cat,” Dr. Elizabeth Czerwonky, a veterinarian at the VCA Cat Hospital of Chicago, told The Spruce Pets. “When not in use for transport, we recommend keeping the carrier or carrier bottom half in the environment as another resting space.”

Some cat carriers include seat

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belt attachment points or boast proven crash test certifications from non-profit organizations like the [Center for Pet Safety](#), including our favorite cat carrier for the car, the Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed.

## Our Top Picks

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**Best Overall:** [Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed at Amazon \(\\$220\)](#)

↓ [Jump to Review](#)

**Best Budget:** [Petseek Extra Large Cat Carrier at Amazon \(\\$70\)](#)

↓ [Jump to Review](#)

**Best for Short Trips:** [Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier at Amazon \(\\$186\)](#)

↓ [Jump to Review](#)

**Best for Multiple Cats:** [One for Pets Portable Pet Kennel at Amazon \(\\$170\)](#)

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# Best Overall

## [Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed](#)

Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed

Amazon

[VIEW ON AMAZON](#) **\$220**

[VIEW ON WALMART](#) **\$230**

[VIEW ON BAXTERBOO.COM](#)

## What We Like

- Certified by the Center for Pet Safety
- Crash replacement program with proof of accident
- Machine washable bedding
- Includes safety tether
- Padded carry handles

## What We Don't Like

- Limited ventilation
- Cumbersome carrying shape

The Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed combines proven car safety with a design that maximizes your cat's comfort. The carrier uses a round cat bed as its base, with the intention that you would leave it out for your cat's regular use. Then, when it's time to get in the car for your next veterinary trip, your cat already feels safe and secure in

their carrier. The top part of the Sleepypod is a mesh dome that zippers onto the rim of the bed. From there, easy-grip zipper pulls can be used to open this dome down the middle for access to your cat.

It's a combination that works well, though it may prove less useful if your cat already has a beloved cat bed. But even if they don't develop a familiarity with the Sleepypod's bottom half, this is still one of the best options for car travel thanks to its safe design. The Sleepypod has been crash tested according to the same standards used for child safety seats (you can even [watch their crash testing on YouTube](#)). It is also one of only a handful of car carriers approved by the non-profit Center for Pet Safety, which conducts independent testing. [Use the safety tether](#) to secure your cat inside of the Sleepypod, buckle them in with the seatbelt straps, and your cat is about as secure as they can be

in the car.

The carrier itself has a ballistic nylon exterior, with ripstop mesh—so it can hold up to years of use—and the interior has a water-repellent liner, confining an accident to the carrier and its removeable, machine washable plush bedding. There's also optional accessories, like the heating pad that slides into a pocket beneath the bed, or the mesh lining for more summertime breathability.

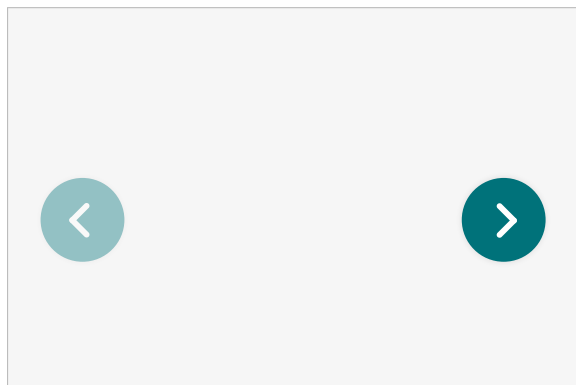
The Sleepypod does have a few downsides as a consequence of its design. Because the bottom half of the carrier is a pet bed, visibility and ventilation is limited to the dome top. Its round shape also makes it awkward to carry, though the Sleepypod compensates somewhat with its padded carry handle and shoulder strap.

The Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed is available in 11 different colors

and is suitable for pets under 15 pounds. For cats 7 pounds or under, there is also the [Sleepypod Mini](#).

**Dimensions:** 17-inch diameter, 13.5 inches tall | **Weight:** 4.5 pounds |

**Colors:** Arctic white, glacier silver, sky blue, robin egg blue, blossom pink, strawberry red, dark chocolate, jet black, first blush, olive green, charcoal gray | **Materials:** Polyester, ballistic nylon, ripstop mesh



The Spruce Pets / Sarah Elder

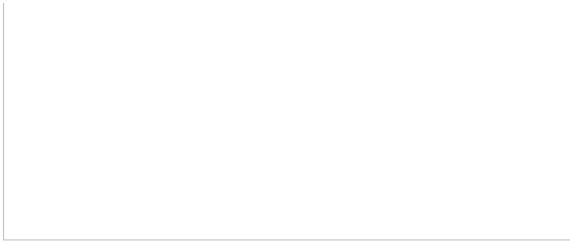


## Best Budget

### [Petseek Extra Large Cat Carrier](#)

Petseek Extra Large Cat Carrier





Amazon

[VIEW ON AMAZON](#)

**\$70**

### What We Like

- Folds down for storage
- Three entrances
- Built-in seatbelt loop
- Mesh panels can be rolled up for free access
- Fleece pet bed liner is machine washable

### What We Don't Like

- Hasn't been crash tested or safety certified
- Large size can make it unwieldy to carry

Our [favorite soft-sided carrier](#),  
the Petseek Extra Large Cat

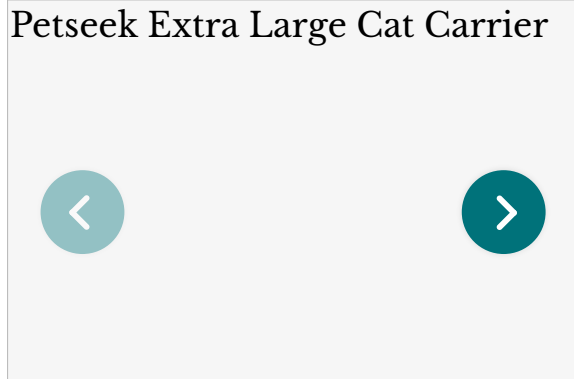
Carrier is an all-around great carrier, though it lacks the car safety bonafides of the Sleepypod. As the name suggests, this is a very roomy carrier, with a rigid steel frame and a 55-pound weight limit. Our tester used the carrier with two large cats and said, “This is my favorite cat carrier by far.” It’s even collapsible for easy storage.

In addition to the safety tether inside of the carrier, the Petseek has seatbelt loops which allow you to secure a seatbelt across the “waist” of the carrier, belting it securely in place on your back seat.

The Petseek cat carrier has three doors, with access from the front, top, or side. The mesh screen side panels can be rolled up, allowing you to leave the carrier open and accessible to your cat. The fleece liner inside is removable and can be machined washed.

**Dimensions:** 24 x 16.5 x 16 inches |

**Weight:** 6.37 pounds | **Colors:** Blue, gray, green | **Materials:** Polyester, nylon mesh, steel frame

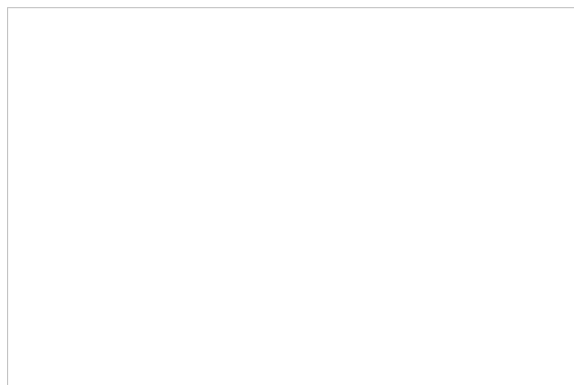


The Spruce Pets / Dylan Thompson



## Best for Short Trips

### Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier



Amazon

[VIEW ON AMAZON](#) **\$186**

[VIEW ON WALMART](#) **\$195**

[VIEW ON DIGGS.PET](#)

### What We Like

- Can be taken aboard most airplanes
- Top and side access
- Crash tested rated by the Center for Pet Safety
- Includes collar tether clip

### What We Don't Like

- Designed for air travel, so it's not very spacious

The Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier is a premium soft-sided carrier designed for easy airline travel, with features like a trolley sleeve for luggage attachment and multiple pockets for carrying

accessories. The Diggs carrier has multiple points of access, including a dual-zipper top panel that includes an easy-to-use lock. Its removable dog bed even comes with specially tailored pee pads for cleaning up after any accidents.

It's also an excellent car travel option, especially for short trips. The Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier passed crash testing with high marks: a 5-star rating from the Center for Pet Safety (the Sleepypod Mobile received the same score).

The Diggs Passenger Travel Carrier is available in three colors.

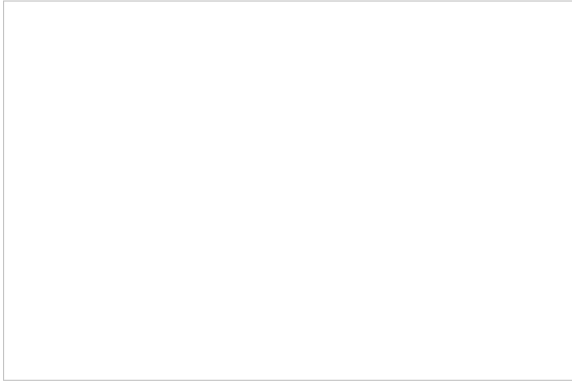
**Dimensions:** 20 x 10.8 x 11.5 inches |

**Weight:** 4.5 pounds | **Colors:** Navy, blush, gray | **Materials:** Polyester

## Best for Multiple Cats

## One for Pets Portable

# Pet Kennel



Amazon

[VIEW ON AMAZON](#) **\$170**

[VIEW ON CHEWY](#)

## What We Like

- Divider between can be removed for one extra-large space
- Folds down into included carrying case
- Carriers can be used separately
- Comes with stakes for securing to ground

## What We Don't Like

- Unstructured bottom sags under pet's weight
- No safety certifications

The One for Pets Portable 2-in-1 lets you transport two (or more) cats while keeping them separate. The dual carriers can be used separately or together, and each has zippable door panels on the front and sides. You can even unzip the

dividers between carriers and use the two in combination to form one large interior space.

The zippered mesh doors have velcro attachments points on top, so you can roll them up and leave the portable kennel open and accessible. The double carrier even comes with plastic pegs that you can use to stake the whole assemblage down to the ground on outdoor outings.

However, as our tester noted, the unstructured and saggy bottom on the One for Pets carriers is awkward to carry (and cats will dislike the unsteady footing while you're carrying them in it), making this much more appropriate for dedicated car travel. The included seat belt loops lets you affix this carry to a backseat and provide lots of room to your cats while traveling.

**Dimensions:** 39 x 20 x 20 inches  
(both compartments zipped together)

| **Weight:** 7.55 pounds | **Colors:**



Black, gray | **Materials:** Polyester, nylon mesh



## Final Verdict

Our favorite cat carrier for car trips is the [Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed](#), which uses a unique design to help your cat feel as comfortable as possible while traveling. It's also passed extensive crash testing and has earned the highest possible score from the Center for Pet Safety. While it hasn't been thoroughly tested for safety like our favorite, we also like the more budget-friendly [Petseek Extra Large Cat Carrier](#), which has seat belt loops so that you can buckle this steel-framed carrier into your backseat.

## How We Tested

We have tested dozens of pet carriers in real-world conditions, including a large-scale test of 30 different cat carriers at once. We've also tested airline-approved pet

carriers, backpack carriers, and other cat-friendly transport solutions, ultimately drawing on a product pool of nearly 50 popular carriers that have undergone rigorous testing.

Our real-world tests begin with experts, who help us identify veterinary needs, safety requirements, and those attributes that are best for a pet's wellbeing. Using these expert interviews, our research team then creates a testing methodology that outlines observations to make, qualities to assess, and stress tests to conduct. This methodology is provided to a pool of trained testers, who each test a product in real-world conditions with their cat or cats.

After several weeks of testing, our volunteer cats have their owners fill out a comprehensive evaluation of the product, scoring and evaluating each cat carrier's performance, portability, and build quality.

# Buckling Up Your Cat for Travel

Most pet carriers need to be secured, especially if they'll be placed in the backseat alone. According to Dr. Czerwonky, cats should never be let out of their carrier or left in the car alone, since they could cause themselves harm. Look for carriers with specialized straps for securing the waist belt of a standard car seatbelt across the side of the carrier. Some carriers also advise threading the diagonal shoulder strap through the top straps on the carrier, while others use instruct users to loop the carrier's shoulder strap behind the headrest for additional security.

## Ventilation

Most pet carriers come with multiple holes of ventilation on the sides or top of carriers. It's important when traveling not to completely block them off

since that air flow is crucial for comfort and safety. On car rides, especially longer ones, cats need to feel safe and taken care of, or else neither of you will have a good travel experience.

## FAQ

### **Should I put a sheet or blanket over my cat's carrier while in the car?**

“We recommend a towel or light blanket over the carrier to prevent overstimulation by

the surroundings,” Dr. Czerwonky told The Spruce Pets.

### **How do I keep my cat calm in a cat carrier?**

There are other methods for [preparing your cat for car travel](#), but the best way to calm your cat for travel is to acclimate them in advance. Make sure to

keep your cat carrier out, either all the time or for several days ahead of travel. This way, your cat can explore the carrier's interior and get used to it outside of stressful travel conditions.

Also, check out our roundup of [the best calming aids for cats](#).

## Why Trust The Spruce Pets

This article was written by Steven Asarch, a freelance writer and product expert for The Spruce Pets. A devout cat dad of two, he understands how to take care of felines in enclosed spaces (like an apartment) for long periods. In his search for the best car carriers, Steven prioritized practicality, durability, and safety.

Steven has also researched the [best treadmills](#), [specialized cat foods](#), [litter box furniture](#), and even [the best Tamagotchi](#).

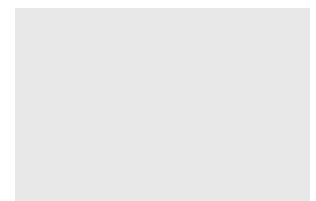
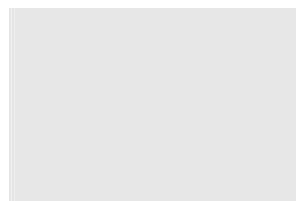
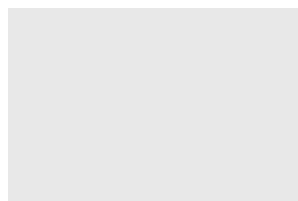
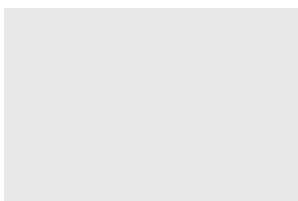
To get the best understanding of what makes a great cat carrier for travel, he spoke with Dr. [Elizabeth Czerwonky](#), a veterinarian at the VCA Cat Hospital of Chicago.

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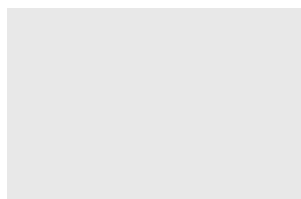
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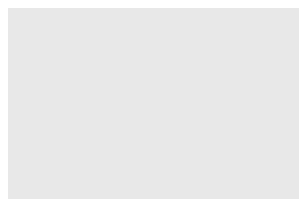
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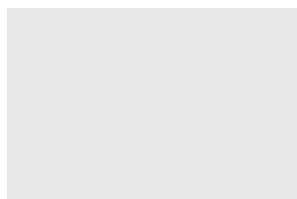
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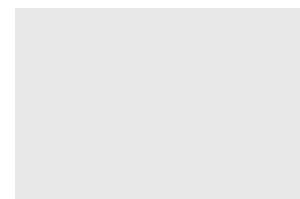
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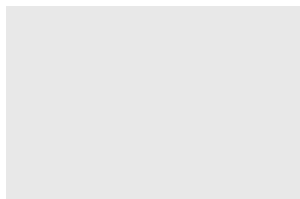
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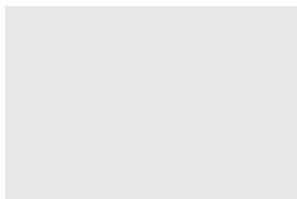
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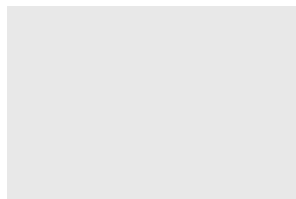
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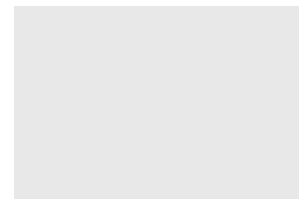
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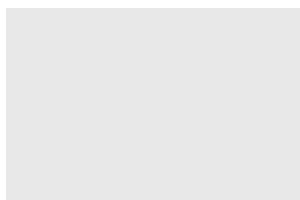
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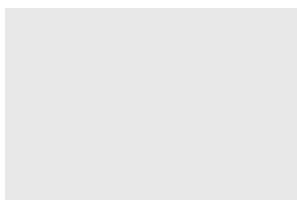
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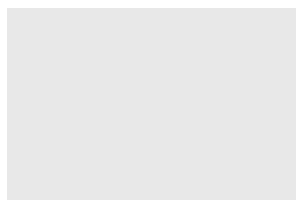
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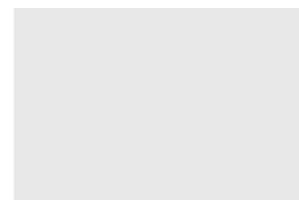
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