

## Travelling with our four-legged friends

Tourist facilities accepting pets are more and more numerous: there are about 2,647 hotels and 680 farm holidays in Italy accepting dogs, besides many beaches and restaurants.

By **car** (section 169 sub-section 6 of the Road Traffic Code), by **train**, by **boat**, by **plane**: our four-legged friends can travel with us everywhere. Just inquire beforehand about airlines' regulations for pets transportation and check which trains accept them and arrange their accommodation (in Italy and in the foreign country where our pets will accompany us).

It is the same when travelling by sea. The various companies adopt different systems to allow animals to board. Also in this case it is better to contact shipping lines beforehand in order to find out about regulations on pets transportation.

Don't forget to bring with you their **health card** and **dog registry record**. The pet health card contains indications on the vaccinations administered besides other information (its name, sex, breed, tattoo, owners' address).

### Taking your pet abroad

Cats and dogs need preventive treatments before going abroad, besides common vaccinations and specific treatments against internal and external parasites to be administered every year. Some countries (Sweden, the UK, Malta) require a "**blood test**": a blood sample is taken for rabies testing. This test must be taken at fixed times and specific intervals.

Regulation 998/2003 of the European Parliament and Council of 26 May 2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals.

**Microchip**: Starting from January 1, 2005 all cats and dogs born after that date must be fitted with a subcutaneous microchip.

**Passport**: Starting from October 1, 2004 all pets must have a passport. To get a passport, your cat, dog or ferret need to:

be fitted with a microchip be registered at the pets registry of local health units (ASL) be vaccinated against rabies.

Passport can be requested 21 days after the animal pet has received vaccination against rabies and does not expire.

Remember that abandoning a cat or a dog is an offence under the Italian criminal code (section 1, sub-section 3 Law 189/2004): "Whoever abandons a pet or an animal having acquired the habit of captivity shall be punished with **arrest** up to one year or with a fine from **1,000 to 10,000 euros**".