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# Jeremy's World: Heavy Petting

By **Jeremy Clark** on February, 26 2018 | Jeremy's World



Willful cats and drooling dogs are only two of the challenges posed by pets in modern airline cabins

I read in the press in China that Hainan Airlines is considering allowing people to bring their pets on board with them in the passenger cabin, rather than stowing them away in a comfortable box in the hold where frankly, on some airlines, they're likely to get more space and better food than we humans up top. Travelling to the International Flight Services Association event in Long Beach, California last year, I was on a flight to Pheonix and a woman in other aisle sat with a small dog on her lap the entire flight. The mutt was well behaved, didn't poop or bark or drool but nonetheless, I am not sure I would have wanted it next to me.

I believe in the U.S. this has been allowed for a while whilst in Europe and Asia it is not. I wonder if relaxing these "pets below only" policy may have some problems down the line. I mean whilst we humans are of a similar size - well most of us anyway - pets are not. They range in size from "free sample" to "small horse" so how do you regulate this without discriminating?

Already there are problems of discrimination against large people when passengers make a fuss about people overflowing the already miniscule seats in some economy cabins, so what happens if your pet is on the larger size? Are passengers going to take it personally if their pet is discriminated

against for being too big?

And what about the catering? Is it permitted to feed an animal in flight? And what if it drools? Most passengers can be relied upon to keep control of their bodily fluids for the duration of a flight but once Fido catches a waft of the beef tacos coming from the First Class cabin, he's going to be dripping goo like a melting candle.

And what about cats? I would happily have kitty on my lap for any length of flight except that cats, being a lot smarter than either humans or dogs, have a mind of their own and they decide who they are going to honour with their presence and for how long.

And what about armadillos? They can be pets too so where does it end?

I think this whole pets-in-the-cabin policy requires some careful review. I understand some people actually book a separate seat for their pet, which at least allows for space to put it.

Does that entitle the animal to the food? Do they get some sort of Special Meal? It might be worth ordering for yourself in some cases.

No, on balance I think pets need to be stored in a safe, warm and comfortable environment with their own food and plenty to occupy them somewhere away from the rest of the passengers. Whilst we're at it, there are some kids we could probably apply the same rules to.

Do you have a pets-on-planes experience? I'd like to hear from you.