

And the pets come too! The answer for owners wanting to bring their COVID puppies with them for Christmas

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This Christmas, many new dog owners will face a dilemma. If they are planning to stay with family or friends for the festive period, will they be able to take their pups with them or will they have to leave them in kennels?

According to the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, a total of 3.2 million households in the UK have acquired a pet since the start of the pandemic. That means the country now has 17 million pet-owning homes.

Last Christmas when severe travel restrictions were in place, many people had Christmas at home so didn't have to worry about what to do with their newly acquired pets but, this year, with many desperate to get away to meet up with family and friends, they will have to find out whether they are able to take their dogs and other animals with them or will they have to fork out for pet boarding fees.

The good news for pet owners is that many short term and holiday rental properties welcome pets to stay, which means they will be able to spend as much of Christmas with their family and friends as they like without worrying about missing their pets or the costs of boarding. In fact, 'pet-friendly' is such a popular choice that it is one of the key features promoted by Sykes Holiday Cottages. It reported that bookings for its pet-friendly properties rose by 40% this summer compared to 2019.

And research from Mintel's Holiday Rental Property UK 2021 report showed that 17% of potential holiday rental property guests said the ability to take pets with them is important, rising to nearly a quarter (23%) for those who planned to take a domestic holiday in a rental property in 2021.

Merilee Karr, Chair of the STAA and CEO of UnderTheDoormat, said, "The huge increase in pet ownership since the first lockdown started in March 2020 means some owners are facing a real conundrum. Where they usually go and stay in the homes of their family or friends for Christmas, their pets might not be welcome. But, if they rent a property close by for Christmas, they will be able to enjoy the best of both worlds by taking their pets with them. With a week's boarding at a reputable kennel averaging around £150, they can use the money they will be saving to put towards the perfect holiday home.

"Short term and holiday rentals are renowned for providing guests with a 'home from home' experience and with many now allowing pets it means that families can truly get that experience complete with their pet!"

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Notes to editors

The UK Short Term Accommodation Association (STAA) was founded in March 2017 to support the development of short-term accommodation in the UK, ensure greater co-operation in tackling common industry challenges and seize shared opportunities. It seeks to work with all stakeholders towards a stable and supportive regulatory environment that promotes the UK as a global leader in the provision of short-term

accommodation.

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