

Not All Restaurants Allow Dogs – But It’s Now Legal in This State

The days of Fido being left at home or stuck in the car while you dine out are officially gone - as long as you live in this state, where it became legal in January. But learn about these caveats before heading out to your favorite restaurant. Bon appétit, Fido!

Analysis by [Dr. Karen Shaw Becker](#)

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Effective January 1 of this year, dogs across the state of California are legally allowed to dine with their humans in restaurants with outdoor seating
- The new state law does not override local regulations or the discretion of individual proprietors that may prohibit dogs from restaurants
- For establishments that do permit canine patrons, certain rules apply, including providing a separate entrance to outdoor dining areas so that pets do not have to walk through the restaurant
- Dogs brought to restaurants must be leashed, well-behaved, and on the ground vs. the furniture

Editor’s Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published April 09, 2015.

Bone-appétit, Cali dogs! The days of being left at home or stuck in the car while your humans dine out are now officially behind you.

Effective January 1st, it became legal for California’s canine population to accompany their owners at restaurants with outdoor seating. Some public health departments in the state have allowed dogs on patios for years, but the practice was officially illegal until this year.

Individual Counties, Cities and Restaurant Owners Have Final Say

Before you clip on your pup’s leash and head out to your favorite eatery, make sure the proprietor is amenable to accommodating your pet. The new bill allows restaurant owners to admit or prohibit dogs at their discretion.¹ And while the law applies to all restaurants with outdoor seating in the state, individual cities and counties can still pass local regulations that prohibit the practice.

Establishments that do allow dogs must have a separate entrance to the patio or outdoor area so pets aren’t required to walk through the restaurant to get there. Dogs should also be leashed, well-behaved, and they must stay off the furniture.

Restaurant employees can’t pet dogs, and if they do come in physical contact with a four-legged patron, they must sanitize their hands. Pets aren’t allowed in the food prep area.

David Wiesner, who owns the Siena Bistro in Willow Glen, California has been allowing dogs on his outdoor patio on Thursday nights for years. “A lot of people think of dogs as members of their family,” Wiesner says. “So now, if the pets are well-behaved, there's no reason they can't bring them along — as long as they stay out on the patio.”²

What if I'm Not in California?

If you're not a Californian or just want to know more about other locations where your dog is welcome, there are a number of resources available to help you find pet-friendly accommodations no matter where you are. Some of these include:

- **[PetFriendlyTravel.com](#)**
- **[Bring Fido](#)**
- **[GoPetFriendly.com](#)**
- **[PetsWelcome.com](#)**
- Take Your Pet
- **[DogTrekker](#)**
- Pet Hotels of America
- **[Pet Friendly Travel on Facebook](#)**
- Pet-Friendly Outdoor Activities & Travel on Pinterest

Additional resources:

- The American Automobile Association (AAA) publishes the **[AAA PetBook](#)**, which includes detailed listings of over 13,000 hotels and 800 campgrounds that welcome pets, plus lists of pet-friendly national recreation areas and attractions, and dog parks.
- National Geographic's The Dog Lover's Guide to Travel features hundreds of dog-friendly locations, from doggy daycare centers to canine cruises. Special features include walks you can enjoy with your dog, and information from locals on how to best enjoy the area with your canine companion. The guide also includes info on pet-friendly hotels, restaurants, beaches, parks, dog runs, and dog-friendly attractions.

Sources and References

[DogChannel.com](#)

¹ [California Legislative Information](#)

² [San Jose Mercury News, August 22, 2014](#)
