

Holiday Ideas for Dogs

How you can involve your dog in the holidays.

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1. Include your dog in your holiday photo.
2. Include his signature on holiday cards with a paw stamp.
3. Take him caroling with you.
4. Hang and fill a stocking for your canine pal. Maria Goodavage of San Francisco does this every year for her Labrador Retriever, Jake.
5. Plainly wrap a gift for your pet (no ribbons or bows), and let him open it. Marni Bellavia of Sunrise, Fla., holds onto one end as Oliver, a Shih Tzu, and Dancer, a Shetland Sheepdog, paw it to death.
6. Is your dog a therapy dog? Visit a hospice or nursing home together. Last year, Bellavia did just that. Oliver wore a Santa hat, while Dancer sported reindeer ears.
7. Create a holiday tradition. Robyn Peters of Denver recites *Twas the Night Before Christmas* in Texas, Ya'll to her Cocker Spaniel, Heidi. The pup wears her reindeer antlers during the reading, adds Peters, publisher of *DogGone*, a national newsletter highlighting dog-friendly destinations.
8. Include your dog in holiday travels. Bellavia takes her whole gang two dogs, three cats, and two ferrets. They always travel with me, says Bellavia, education partnership coordinator for the Humane Society of Broward County in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
9. Make a place at the table for your dog. Peters prepares a special plate of doggie food for Heidi at Thanksgiving and Christmas.
10. Include your dog in your holiday party, but make guests aware of any important canine rules. Last year, Goodavage, author of *The Dog Lover's Companion to California* (Avalon Travel Publishing, 2002, \$21.95) asked guests at her Italian feast not to give food to her Labrador Retriever, Jake, thus discouraging begging on his part. The result? He was pretty good, Goodavage says.