

Break the Monotony

Fight boredom with these top treats.

Arden Moore

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Dogs don't stay bored for long. Left alone in the house for eight hours or more, they are bound to find something to chew on. Unfortunately, their choices could be your new shoes or the television remote.

But you can intervene and protect your valuables by limiting access to dog-proofed areas inside your home. At the same time, you can curb boredom in your home-alone dog by providing plenty of healthy edibles while you're gone. The key is to select treats that satisfy a dog's got-to-chew tendencies, provide a tempting taste, and keep a dog busy in a non-destructive way, says Susan Greenbaum, a professional dog trainer who operates Barking Hills Country Club, a canine training center in Milford, N.J.

Dog treats come in a variety of shapes, tastes, and sizes. You may need to try several to identify the few that make your dog drool with delight.

Consider these choices to dish out to your dog before you leave:

Edible Snack Bones: These edible bones come in a variety of flavors, including hot dog and bacon-cheeseburger, and in different sizes to please a Great Dane down to a petite Pomeranian. The key is that these bones do not contain any plastic. Each bone takes a half hour to two hours or longer to devour, depending on the chewing voracity of your dog.

Dental Chews: Several manufacturers make treats that serve as dental aids to remove surface tartar and fight doggie breath. Some come in the form of snack treats and others are shaped like a thick, small toothbrush, doubling as a chew toy and a dental aid.

Rubber Toys That Hide Treats: Stuff the insides of these rubber, chewable toys with your dog's favorite treat. Your dog will happily spend hours trying to nose and lick out every last bit.

Flavored Ice Cubes: Fill an ice cube tray with water and chicken bouillon and freeze overnight. Then serve these frozen pupsicles to your dog.

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