

Delta Air Lines Pet-in-Cabin Policy: What You Can Actually Bring

Short answer: Delta Air Lines accepts **small dogs, cats and household birds** in the passenger cabin, one kennel per traveller, in a soft-sided carrier that fits fully under the seat in front of you. The fee is charged **per kennel, each way** — \$150 on routes within and between the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and \$200 on most international routes, for tickets issued on or after 8 April 2025. Cabin space is capped per flight and cannot be booked online. In-cabin pets are also barred from Delta One, Delta Premium Select and flat-bed seats, and from several destinations including Hawaii. To check pet availability on a date, or add an animal to a booking, call **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)**.

Delta is one of the more permissive U.S. carriers on species — household birds are accepted domestically, which American Airlines and United do not allow. It is one of the more restrictive on where the animal can sit and where it can fly.

Which animals Delta accepts

Domestic flights within the contiguous United States: small dogs, cats and household birds.

International routes: dogs and cats only. Household birds are a domestic-only category, and the destination country's import rules govern everything regardless of what the airline permits.

Age requirements differ by direction of travel, and this catches people out:

- **Domestic travel:** at least 8 weeks old
- **Dogs entering the United States from abroad:** generally at least 6 months old
- **Cats entering the United States:** at least 16 weeks old
- **Dogs travelling to the European Union:** at least 15 weeks old

Those are not Delta's inventions — they follow U.S. Centers for Disease Control and EU import rules. An eight-week-old puppy that can fly Atlanta to Denver cannot fly Paris to Atlanta.

Delta does not publish a fixed combined weight limit for in-cabin pets. The operative test is behavioural and spatial: the animal must be able to **stand, sit, turn around and move** inside the closed kennel without pressing against the sides or top, and the kennel must fit fully under the seat. A heavy but compact cat may pass where a leggy, lightweight dog does not.

Emotional support animals are no longer recognised as service animals under U.S. Department of Transportation rules. On Delta they travel as ordinary pets and pay the standard fee. Fully trained service dogs travel free, under separate documentation requirements, and their kennels are treated as assistive devices exempt from baggage charges.

Kennel requirements

Delta **recommends** a soft-sided kennel with maximum dimensions of **18 x 11 x 11 inches** (roughly 46 x 28 x 28 cm), on the basis that this size fits most aircraft in the fleet. The word "recommends" is doing real work — Delta is explicit that under-seat space varies by aircraft, so this is a guideline rather than a guarantee.

Construction requirements:

- **Leak-proof** floor
- **Ventilated on at least three sides** for domestic travel
- **Ventilated on all four sides** for international travel
- Securely closed, with functioning zips
- Soft-sided is strongly preferred for the cabin

The three-versus-four-sides distinction is genuinely enforced on international departures. A carrier that has flown domestically a dozen times can be refused on a transatlantic flight because one panel is solid fabric rather than mesh. If you fly internationally with an animal, buy a four-sided-mesh carrier and stop worrying about it.

One kennel per passenger, one animal per kennel

The default is one pet in one carrier. Limited exceptions exist: two compatible puppies or kittens of the same breed and similar size, both between 8 weeks and 6 months of age, may share a single kennel and are charged as one pet. A mother travelling with an unweaned litter is also handled as an exception. Two adult animals may not share.

Fees

Fees apply **per kennel, each way**, and are collected at check-in rather than at booking.

Route	In-cabin fee, each way
United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands	\$150 USD/CAD
Most international routes	\$200 USD/CAD/EUR
Brazil	\$200 USD
Trained service dog	No charge

These rates apply to tickets issued on or after 8 April 2025, and represent a substantial increase — the domestic fee rose from \$95, and the Brazil fee from \$75. Currency depends on where the fee is collected; CAD applies departing Canada, EUR departing Europe.

Two mechanics to plan around:

Round trips cost double. The fee is per direction. A domestic round trip is \$300 in pet fees alone, on top of your airfare.

Long connections trigger a second charge. A domestic connection exceeding four hours, or an international connection exceeding twenty-four hours, is treated as a separate journey, with the fee collected again at the intermediate airport. A deliberately long layover is expensive when you are travelling with an animal.

Pet fees cannot be paid with SkyMiles, credit card travel credits or elite status benefits. They are a cash charge, separate from the ticket.

Where your pet cannot sit

This is the Delta-specific rule that surprises people, and it can invalidate a seat you have already paid for.

In-cabin pets are **not permitted** in:

- **Delta One** — the long-haul business cabin
- **Delta Premium Select**
- **Any flat-bed seat**
- **Bulkhead rows** — no seat in front means no under-seat storage
- **Exit rows**
- **Any seat without under-seat stowage**

Domestic First Class may accept pets on aircraft where the seats are recliners with genuine under-seat space, but not on flat-bed configurations. If you have booked a premium cabin and want to bring an animal, confirm the specific aircraft before you assume it works.

Capacity is also capped per cabin, roughly two pets in domestic First and four in the main cabin, allocated first come, first served. Those numbers vary by aircraft and configuration.

Routes where in-cabin pets are banned

Delta prohibits in-cabin pets on a defined list of routes, and the list is not intuitive.

- **Hawaii** — the state's rabies-quarantine programme has its own months-long documentation timeline
- **Australia**
- **The United Kingdom**
- **Barbados** and several other Caribbean destinations
- **Any nonstop flight scheduled at over eight hours**

That last one removes most long-haul transpacific and many transatlantic options from consideration entirely, regardless of destination rules.

For larger animals, Delta Cargo is the alternative, but the practical position has narrowed considerably: a network-wide embargo has restricted cargo pet shipments to active U.S. military and State Department Foreign Service personnel on qualifying orders. A civilian with a 70-pound dog generally cannot move that animal on Delta at all and needs a specialist pet-transport company.

Booking a pet on Delta

You cannot do this online. There is no checkbox in the booking flow. Pet space must be reserved by speaking to someone, and because capacity is capped and first come, first served, the timing matters more than the paperwork.

- 1 **Confirm the route allows cabin pets** and check the destination's import requirements independently.
- 2 **Book your own ticket.**
- 3 **Reserve the pet slot immediately afterwards** — same day, ideally same hour. Call **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)** with the record locator, the animal's species and approximate size, and your kennel dimensions.
- 4 **Check the seat assignment** against the restricted-seat list above. Move if you are in a bulkhead, exit row or flat-bed seat.
- 5 **Buy a compliant kennel** and measure it yourself. Manufacturer listings are frequently optimistic by an inch.
- 6 **Acclimatise the animal** over at least a week before departure.
- 7 **Arrive early.** Pet check-in happens at the counter, the fee is collected there, and gate agents may re-check that the carrier fits under the seat on your specific aircraft.

Health documentation

A health certificate issued within 10 days of travel is commonly required, and always for international itineraries. Delta also applies temperature restrictions — animals are generally accepted only when forecast ground temperatures at every airport on the itinerary fall within a safe band, roughly 20°F to 80°F. A July afternoon departure from Phoenix and a January morning out of Minneapolis are both problems.

Common problems

The kennel fits the published dimensions but not the aircraft. Regional jets operated by Delta Connection have tighter under-seat space than mainline Airbus and Boeing aircraft. Check the equipment type on every segment.

Booked Delta One with a dog. Not permitted. This is a full rebooking, not a seat swap.

Assumed the pet slot was confirmed because the ticket was. It is not. Get it in the reservation explicitly.

Long layover doubles the fee. Build connections under four hours domestically.

Three-sided ventilation on an international flight. Refused at check-in.

Destination paperwork not started early enough. Rabies titre tests, microchip records and import permits have lead times measured in weeks or months for some countries. Hawaii is the extreme case and cannot be shortcut.

Preparing your pet for the day

The policy tells you what is allowed. Preparation determines whether the flight is bearable for the animal.

Acclimatise the carrier weeks ahead. A carrier that appears the morning of travel is a source of stress. Leave it open at home with bedding and treats inside for several weeks so the animal already treats it as a familiar space.

Practise short trips. Car journeys in the carrier, building in length, teach the animal that being enclosed and moving is survivable and temporary.

Withhold food, not water. A light meal several hours before departure reduces the risk of nausea and accidents. Water should stay available up to departure.

Exercise beforehand. A long walk before leaving for the airport helps enormously with settling.

Line the carrier absorbently. Put in a puppy pad under the bedding and pack spares, plus wipes and a sealable bag. Accidents happen and there is nowhere convenient to deal with them at 35,000 feet.

Do not sedate without veterinary advice. Sedation at altitude carries genuine cardiovascular and respiratory risks, and many veterinarians advise against it for air travel. If your animal is severely anxious, discuss alternatives with your vet rather than reaching for a sedative.

Security screening. You will need to remove the animal from the carrier so the empty carrier can go through the X-ray, carrying the pet through the metal detector yourself. A harness and lead under the carrier make this far safer — this is the moment animals most commonly escape.

Onboard: what the flight is actually like

The carrier must stay stowed under the seat in front of you for the entire flight. The animal does not come out — not during cruise, not for comfort, not briefly. Cabin crew enforce this consistently.

Practical consequences:

- **You lose your under-seat space.** Your personal item has to fit elsewhere, and the carrier occupies the footwell for the duration.
- **You cannot sit in a bulkhead or exit row,** because there is no under-seat stowage or the row is restricted.
- **A window seat is usually the better choice,** giving you a wall on one side and less passing traffic against the carrier.

- **Reassure quietly.** A hand resting on the carrier does more than talking to the animal, which can excite it.

Cabin pressure changes affect animals as they affect people. There is little you can do about this beyond keeping the animal calm, but it is a reason many owners choose direct flights even at higher cost — fewer pressure cycles and no connection to navigate with an animal in tow.

Where to get help

Contact	Number	Best for
Travel reservations and support	1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)	Checking pet-slot availability, adding a pet to a booking, confirming a route allows cabin pets, moving out of a restricted seat
Delta Reservations	Published on delta.com	Direct account and ticket servicing
Delta Cargo	Published on delta.com	Animals too large for the cabin, subject to current eligibility limits
Destination consulate or agriculture ministry	Varies by country	Import permits, health certificates, quarantine rules

Frequently asked questions

How much does Delta charge for a pet in the cabin? \$150 each way within and between the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; \$200 each way on most international routes, including Brazil. Rates apply to tickets issued on or after 8 April 2025.

What size carrier does Delta allow? A soft-sided kennel up to roughly 18 x 11 x 11 inches is recommended, but it must fit fully under the seat on your specific aircraft.

Is there a weight limit for Delta cabin pets? Delta does not publish a fixed combined weight limit. The test is whether the animal fits comfortably and can stand and turn around inside the closed kennel.

Can I bring my dog in Delta One? No. Regular pets are not accepted in Delta One, Delta Premium Select or any flat-bed seat. Only trained service dogs, under separate rules.

Can I fly with a pet to Hawaii on Delta? Not in the cabin. Hawaii operates a rabies-quarantine programme with its own requirements.

Does Delta allow birds in the cabin? Household birds are accepted on domestic U.S. flights only, not on international routes.

Can I book my pet online? No. Pet space must be arranged by phone, and it is limited per flight.

Can two pets share one carrier? Only in limited cases — two compatible puppies or kittens aged 8 weeks to 6 months, or a mother with an unweaned litter. They are charged as one pet.

Is the pet fee refundable? It is non-refundable once flown. If a flight is cancelled outright, raise the pet charge separately during rebooking.

The takeaway

Delta works well for cabin pet travel on domestic routes with a genuinely small animal, and works poorly the moment the itinerary involves a premium cabin, a long-haul flight, Hawaii or a connection over four hours. The species list is broader than most competitors; the seating and route restrictions are tighter.

Three things decide the outcome: whether your route is on the permitted list, whether your seat has under-seat stowage, and whether you claimed one of the limited cabin slots early enough. All three are settled before departure day, not at the airport.

For a definitive answer on availability and route eligibility for a specific date, **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)** can check it and hold the pet slot in the reservation.