

Fun for pets in the surf. — Ti Gong



Canine carnival as pets enjoy long Thai holiday with owners

Hu Min and Ding Yining

When some 20 dogs departed Pudong International Airport last week, they quickly captured people's attention.

They boarded a flight with their owners to Bangkok and Pattaya in Thailand.

The chartered tourist flight, the first of its kind in China, took off from Pudong airport last Thursday, carrying some 30 Shanghai tourists with their pets. It arrived at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi airport at 11:30pm.

These 20 special "passengers" are now enjoying a long vacation lasting nine days with their owners.

They can run freely in tropical jungles, roll and play around on sandy beaches and even sink their teeth into Thai delicacies at night markets.

The hotels included in the tour are all pet-friendly with amusements and bathing facilities for pets and various dog food.

"I am super excited," said a pet owner surnamed Liu. "I think my

dog would be lonely at home and I wanted to take it for a relaxing journey."

Another tourist surnamed Zhou added: "I have never traveled abroad since four years ago after I raised a pet. I only drove my pet to Guangdong Province from Shanghai and it was a delight."

"I have carried a very big suitcase stuffed with items for the pet," she said. "I am really expecting to travel and enjoy the sea and sunset view abroad together."

A tourist surnamed Zhang added: "I have taken my pet for rabies antibody and blood tests in advance and he had insect repellent a week prior to the trip."

The package costs about 24,000 yuan (US\$3,311) in total, which includes inbound and outbound inspection and quarantine fees of pet which is 9,000 yuan per pet, and charges of group tour and round-trip economy class air ticket per person. The organizer iBabyGO, a pet service platform, said it plans to launch more such tours, with both domestic and foreign destinations involved.

With the outbound travel market gaining momentum and a steady increase of pets in China, pet-friendly travel demand has emerged, triggering the birth of such programs, with this one jointly hosted by Boehringer Ingelheim and iBabyGO.

Pets need to have identification, vaccination, and health certificates and undergo quarantine inspection before the trip. Owners need to pay close attention to the safety and health conditions of their pets during outdoor journey and avoid parasitic infestation.

Boehringer Ingelheim provided de-worming support and its health experts gave tips to pet owners before the trip.

"Pay attention to water intake in a humid environment," said Chen Nianzi, an animal health expert. "We have prepared health tips and observed pets' health conditions before the journey."

A pet owner surnamed Miao added: "I think Shanghai leads the nation in pet-friendly environment. My pet sat alongside me on board, a big relief."

Dogs enjoy a long vacation lasting nine days with their owners. — Ti Gong

