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TRAVEL Q&A
Home-Hunting in Wales

By Andrea Sachs
Washington Post Staff Writer
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Q. I plan to spend six months in Wales. Any suggestions on home rentals or swaps?

Chris Murray, Washington

A. To rent or house-swap in Wales, you'll have to make some tough decisions: coast or countryside, historic or contemporary, castle or cottage. "Wales is a great place for a home exchange because it's off the beaten track," says Ed Kushins, president of HomeExchange.com...

Before selecting a property, pick a location. For cliffs and beaches, Alexandra Marr, a spokesman for Visit Wales (800-462-2748, http://www.travelwales.org), recommends the Pembrokeshire area on the southwestern coast...

Visit Wales's Web site features self-catering companies vetted by the tourism office. In addition, Marr said the Wales office will spot-check the property for travelers who are uncertain about a particular rental.

For a home exchange, you'll need a pleasant pad to swap, plus you must make a match with a Welsh homeowner. Fortunately, Kushins says Washington is a "prime destination spot," and he recommends sending up to 10 inquiries to see if anyone bites...

For Wales, the site currently has about 20 properties, including a two-bedroom near Snowdonia National Park whose owners are interested in visiting the States in 2007. Also check HomeLink International (http://www.uk.homelinkint.org)...

We wish to travel to Germany with our 29-pound dog. Which airlines will transport him?

Gisela Matney, Orlando

Dogs owners can fly internationally with their pets, and such Germany-bound carriers as Lufthansa and United allow pets onboard -- with restrictions.

At 29 pounds, your dog is too large to fit in a carrier under your seat; the maximum weight on Lufthansa, for example, is 17.6 pounds (including carrier). Unfortunately, your dog will have to go in the cargo hold, which is air-conditioned and pressurized but is not always an ideal way for a pet to travel...

The airline considers "checked" pets additional baggage, so you'll pay extra. Prices vary and may be calculated according to weight, size and/or destination. Also, be aware that some airlines do not allow short-nose dogs to fly during hot months.

For your pet's comfort and safety, Kim Salerno, founder of TripsWithPets.com (http://www.tripswithpets.com), says to buy a crate large enough for your dog to lie down, stand up and turn around. She says to affix an ID to the crate, including your final destination contact information, and to clip your pet's nails so they don't catch on the crate. Also, fly nonstop.

To enter Germany with your dog, you will need up-to-date vaccination and rabies records. According to European Union regulations, incoming pets must be "identified by a clearly visible tattoo or by a transponder and be accompanied by a document proving there is an effective vaccination protection against rabies." For rules, contact the Germany Embassy, 202-298-4000, http://www.germany.info/relaunch/index.html.

UNITED.COM advertisement featuring a stylized airplane illustration and a list of sample sale fares: Chicago to Hong Kong \$369, Los Angeles to London \$179, Washington, D.C. to San Francisco \$169. Includes a 'Book now' button and a disclaimer: '* Each way fares based on roundtrip purchase. Add'l taxes/fees apply.'

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Is there an overnight ferry from the Amalfi Coast to Sicily, Italy?

David McAuley, McLean

Ferries ply the waters between Salerno, on the southern end of the Amalfi Coast, and Sicily, at the foot of Italy's boot, throughout the year -- though expect more departures during peak season. The trip takes at least nine hours, and on Grimaldi Ferries, visitors have a choice of accommodations, all of which include private shower and air conditioning. Prices start at \$40 for a pullman seat, \$86 for a double inside cabin and \$132 for an outside suite.

Info: <http://www.grimaldi-ferries.com/>. For a list of companies cruising this route, plus other booking information, see Ferriesonline.com (<http://www.ferriesonline.com/>).

Send queries by e-mail (travelqa@washpost.com) or U.S. mail (Travel Q&A, Washington Post Travel Section, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071). Please include your name and town.

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