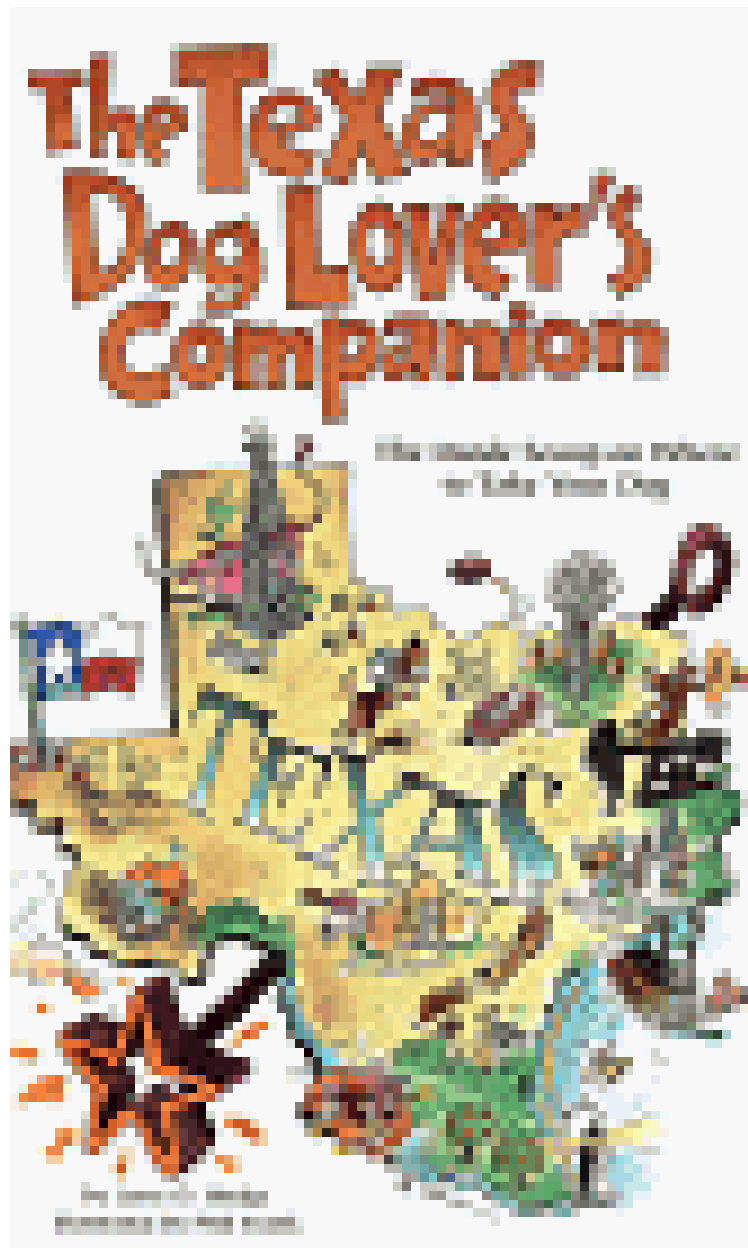


(Free and download) The Texas Dog Lover's Companion

## The Texas Dog Lover's Companion

*Larry D. Hodge*

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#3662607 in Books Avalon Travel Pub 1998-08-20 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x 5.25 x 1.251,  
#File Name: 1573540455620 pages | File size: 62.Mb

**Larry D. Hodge : The Texas Dog Lover's Companion** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Texas Dog Lover's Companion:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a great book for Dog Lovers By James P. If you want to travel

Texas with your dog, this is the book for you. Even if you don't plan on traveling, it is great information on the places near you that are pet friendly. We highly recommend it. I use for most of my purchases and update my reviews if anything changes with the products. I do this so other users can get a real feel for the life of the product. You can look at my review which will be close to my purchase date and tell how the product is doing as time passes. I am not associated with any company and all opinions are my very own.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The best thing to happen to Texas dogs since Alpo By A Customer The carpet in the back of my sport utility vehicle is still full of coarse, reddish hair, and I'm in no hurry to clean it out. That's where Rosie, our six-year-old Golden Retriever, used to ride. We took her to parks and beaches when we could, which in retrospect was not anywhere near often enough. Rosie was part of our family. She was our first "child" and later, Deputy Mom and Big Sister to our daughter Hallie. Like all good dogs, for her the term "unconditional love" was redundant. Last summer, as Hallie played in our front yard, someone driving a blue pickup truck ran over Rosie when she ran out in the street. The person who did it--Hallie says it was a man (only in the sense of his gender)--kept driving. Rosie was left writhing on the pavement with a broken back. Using a blanket, Linda and I got her into my truck and rushed her to an emergency veterinary clinic. After looking at an X-ray, the vet said there was nothing we could do for her but put her down. So, with the wisdom that only sad hindsight brings, if you have a beloved family pet, do things with it as frequently as you can, while you can. And buy a copy of a book funny enough to dry the tears from my eyes when I think about Rosie and the kind of person who would hit a 75-pound dog and not stop, while a little girl watched: "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion" by Larry D. Hodge (Foghorn Press, 656 pages, \$20.95). The book is the first-ever Texas travel guide for people with dogs. It lists places where dogs are welcome, rating them on a scale of a fireplug (suitable only for "dewatering" your dog) to one to four paws, depending on the dog-friendliness factor. A good book offers more than its title suggests, and "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion" is a good book. What makes it good is that Hodge has personalized it, crafting it as something of a Texas-only version of "Travels with Charlie." Unlike John Steinbeck, whose faithful canine companion was Charlie, Hodge traveled with two dogs, Sport and Samantha. Hodge could have written a simple, to-the-point guidebook, but his Steinbeck-like opus is full of observation and insight into Texas as well as the human and canine condition. Writing about a park in Houston, for instance, he mentions that he went to a nearby branch library to re-read a passage from the classic novel, "Old Yeller," by the late Mason writer Fred Gipson. Hodge and his two dogs put 25,000 miles on his sport utility vehicle (Hodge says his Sport appreciates the fact that Detroit bestowed her name on a whole vehicular genre) in researching "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion." Following a 20-page, philosophy-filled introductory overview on traveling with dogs (and in which Sport and Samantha are brought on stage), Hodge covers the state region by region. He and his co-researchers sniffed their way across the state, checking parks, places to eat and sleep and even places where you can take your pet shopping. Hodge found most of Texas pretty accommodating when it comes to dogs, but it's clear that he didn't mind leaving Lubbock in his rearview mirror. "Unfortunately, for dogs there are few positives," Hodge writes of Lubbock. "Dogs must be leashed everywhere, and we could find few places that actually welcomed them. For dogs, anyway, Lubbock seems destined to remain a stop on the way to someplace better." One "someplace better," he wrote, is Amarillo. Hodge likes its climate and friendliness -- to people and their pooches. Hodge's guidebook is a sometimes funny and always entertaining and useful travel reference even if you aren't traveling with Rover. If a hotel, eating place or park won't accept dogs, who would want to go there anyway? As Hodge writes, "Texas is going to the dogs. And it's about time." Hodge's book is a delightful salute to Texas and to dogs, from Old Yeller to Sport, Samantha and -- in sentiment, to Rosie. "It's the land that brings out what's inside us," Hodge quotes one savvy Big Bend resident as saying about her corner of Texas. "There's a beauty and clarity I believe you find only in open spaces." And, Hodge adds, "in the eyes of a dog."

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. For those who like dogs and Texas sites. By A Customer Dogs, Larry D. Hodge has concluded, are like American Express Cards. "Some people won't leave home without them," says the Mason free-lance writer. That's the idea behind Hodge's new book, "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion" (Foghorn Press, \$20.95). Hodge has "the inside scoop on where to take your dog" in the Lone Star State. It's the seventh "Dog Lover's Companion" volume from the California publisher. Hodge, who writes about travel and the outdoors for a number of Texas publications, including the San Antonio Express-News, says a guide for dog lovers didn't initially set his tail to wagging. He writes in the book's introduction: "Traveling dogs are a common sight in Texas ... What's the big deal? In Texas we just tell the dog to get in the back of the truck with the kids." Editors at Foghorn Press pressed him. They wanted listings of Rover-friendly restaurants, festivals, hotels and motels. They wanted to know where pet owners can walk a dog without a leash. Hodge approaches the subject matter with humor and humility. To conduct research, Hodge traveled mostly with Sport, a Rhodesian Ridgeback/handsome stranger mix, and sometimes with Samantha, an Australian blue heeler mix. The author, who confesses to sneaking both dogs into a Corpus Christi motel that doesn't allow pets ("We spent the entire time keeping them quiet"), was "surprised at how many motels openly welcome dogs." At more than 600 pages, "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion" is well-researched. You can bet Hodge did his homework, ranking park areas by a system of paws - four paws being the, er, cat's meow. The lowest rating is a fire hydrant, or as Hodge writes, "That means the park is just worth a squat." Two parks in San Antonio got 3/2 paws - Martin Luther King Park and Southside Lions Park. The latter "is as good as it gets for a dog in Texas," Hodge

says. Another South Texas favorite is Dwight D. Eisenhower Park. "It has great walking trails and great views of the San Antonio skyline," Hodge says. The biggest surprise in researching the book was "how many closet dog people are out there who keep a dog at their place of business all day ... everything from book stores to dress shops to restaurants to motels. "The minute I said something about doing a guide book for dogs they would turn and get real friendly," Hodge says. In all, the book lists more than 400 places to chow down, hundreds of places to stay the night and nearly 500 parks, beaches, forests and wildlife areas, as well as doggy do's and don'ts, safety tips, rules of dining etiquette and hints on avoiding pooper- scooper faux "paws." Plus, "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion" is illustrated with delightful cartoons by Phil Frank.

This book describes the best places in Texas to visit with your four-footed friend. It covers nearly 500 parks and hundreds of dog-friendly motels, restaurants, and events. There's also a section on doggy dos and don'ts, travel tips, and hints on rooming with Rover. Author Larry D. Hodge and his canine assistants, Sport and Samantha, traveled 25,000 miles to seek out the best places to hie to with your hound. Each park is rated on a one- to four-paw scale, and complete descriptions are included for things to do in the park. Campgrounds are also described in detail. The thing that sets this book apart is that each park in the book was personally visited by the author, so if it's in the book, you know it is a fun, safe place to take your dog. The book is organized around nine major cities and covers counties within about a two-hour drive.

"Texas Parks and Wildlife" Contributing Editor Larry D. Hodge is going to the dogs literally! His new book, "The Texas Dog Lover's Companion," shares Texas from the perspectives of his canine buddies, Sport and Samantha. Hodge sets the tone by opening his tome with an affectionate tribute to "Bobby, Sonny, and Bullet who wait on the other side for the little boy they loved." Organized by regions and counties, the book is cleverly keyed with paw-print, footprint, running dog and fire hydrant symbols for at-a-glance reference and offers an encyclopedic selection of outdoor adventures to share with your pooch. Hodge dispenses sage traveling and feeding advice, as well as tips on motels, restaurants and other attractions that will neither bust your wallet nor turn away your four-legged pal. -- Texas Parks and Wildlife" magazine, November 1998

From the Author

Carefree traveling with a dog in Texas requires either luck, careful planning, or a copy of this book. Only about three percent of the land in Texas is publicly owned, severely limiting the opportunities for outdoor recreation with a four-footed companion. And while many hotels and motels welcome dogs, the concept of people eating out in the company of a dog seems barely to have penetrated most of the state. That's why this book can be invaluable to you. I've included hundreds of dog-friendly parks, motels, restaurants, festivals, and tourist attractions throughout the state. Never again should you and your pooch have to spend a weekend at home memorizing wallpaper patterns. You can climb mountains, ride trains and surreys, get married in the middle of a public road, or gaze at the outer limits of the universe. The sky is no longer the limit. Like most dogs, Sport and Samantha don't seem to care where they go, just as long as they go. The moment I step out the door and head for the car, they adopt that pleading look that says, "Utter those two little words I'm longing to hear: Kennel up!" Then the battle for the coveted front passenger seat is on. Possession changes mile by mile until finally it's time for a nap. Every gas stop requires scrubbing nose and paw marks off the inside of the windshield to restore visibility. Samantha came to live with us first. She's half Australian blue heeler and half wedunno, but she's all appetite. We raised her from a tiny puppy, and apparently something about being the only dog at the trough during her formative years set her appestat permanently on "glutton." If there is anything she will not eat, we have not found it. This includes plastic shower curtains. The grounds around our house look like an artillery duel was fought here because of her avid pursuit of gophers. We tried putting her on a diet once; shortly thereafter we began to find (to put it delicately) digestively processed bird parts in the yard. Solving the mystery was alimentary. Samantha was stalking, flushing, catching, and eating meadowlarks. All that time spent chasing tennis balls served her well. She gained weight until we took her off the diet. Sport is as sweet and well-mannered as Samantha is hyperactive and insecure. Sport moved in while I was on an extended trip to the Big Bend. During one of my periodic calls home to get the sugar report, Sally mentioned there was something we needed to talk about. I don't know about you, but when I'm 500 miles from home and having a good time, I don't ask a lot of questions about statements like that. Nothing more was said, and I forgot about it until I was driving down the lane to our house. There bounding toward me was a huge black hound that, I swore, could put both front feet on a giraffe's chest and lick it in the mouth. Close behind her sped Sally, assuring me before I even got out of the car that Sport was there just on a trial basis. You don't need me to tell you how that turned out. Sport is half Rhodesian ridgeback and half handsome stranger. While she stands thigh-high to an elephant, she is also the calmest, nicest dog I've ever been around. How nice is she? So nice that her head is not swelling even as she reads this. She is the ideal dog to have played the role of First Professional Traveling Dog of Texas. Other than one unauthorized encounter with a loaf of fresh-baked gingerbread, I don't think Sport has ever been guilty of a single crime. Well, there is that one large stain on our best rug, but its authorship is questionable, and Sally and I do sleep rather soundly sometimes. Raccoons are Sport's passion, a fact that you will be reminded of many times as you read this book. Samantha lives to eat; Sport lives to chase raccoons up trees and bark at them all night. When

we visit parks together, Samantha heads straight for the garbage cans, and Sport heads straight for any trees, brush, or water. In between, holding onto both leashes, is me, feeling like a medieval miscreant being racked. Most Texas dogs probably fall somewhere between Sport and Samantha, too. You'll probably recognize your own pooch in some of the adventures my dogs and I shared while researching this book. But if your dog has never charmed a class of third-graders on a field trip, rolled on a dead fish on the beach, or publicly humiliated you by depositing a steaming pile of used dog food on a downtown sidewalk, just wait. Your time will come.

About the Author  
Larry D. Hodge was born in Elgin, Texas; he now lives in Mason. He has been a free-lance writer for the last 15 years. He is a frequent contributor to Texas Highways magazine and is a contributing editor to Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. He is the author of other guidebooks, including Backroads of Texas (Gulf Publishing Co.), What's Fun in Texas (Republic of Texas Press, in press), and The Official Guidebook to Texas Wildlife Management Areas (Texas Parks and Wildlife Press and The University of Texas Press, in press).