

[sound of the cat growling, hissing]

Her name was Cinnamon. She was a 1.5 year old cat at the Winnipeg Siamese Rescue shelter—Western Canada's only no-kill animal shelter devoted specifically to the breed.

Siamese cats are... particular. Opinionated, intelligent, talkative, and deeply loyal, they are a very popular family cat. Also unique to the breed is how they bond. While most cats bond with their environment, Siamese form strong bonds with a single person.

It was the perfect choice for a recently divorced woman, moi, happy to limit her new found domestic freedom to a singular feline room mate—and Cinnamon was purrrfect.

(snarl.)

It was weeks before she trusted me. I couldn't come near her without her hissing, growling or attacking me, and could only pet the corner of her head with a long paint brush. I trusted, however, that it was just a matter of time and patience. I no longer need a paintbrush to scratch her head, but to this day if she is hungry and I pass her, she swipes at Achilles.

Many folks bring dogs along for adventures, but it is rare to see adventure cats. I honestly have never seen one in person. Nevertheless, I felt that a siamese would likely make a great adventure companion due to their unique characteristic of bonding with their human.

And I was right. Together we have made two road trips to Vancouver Island, flown to Florida, and drove our way down to Arizona and California and back again. Since 2022 when she came to live with me, we have travelled 31,000 km together.

This summer we are setting out on our biggest adventure yet—this summer we cross the Atlantic Ocean via Paris to live in England for four months—but how exactly do you travel from Canada to the UK with a cat? Is it even legal? What all do you need to consider?

In this episode of Go Girl I am telling you the plan for how HRH Queen Guinevere Cinnamon Cupcake and I will make our way from our tiny cabin, across the Atlantic, land in Paris and head North to Dieppe to catch a ferry to England. The road has already had twists and turns, and we haven't even left! International travel can be a challenge—throw a cat in mix and it becomes an extra special ball of stress!

Intro

This is Go-Girl —a podcast devoted to documenting the adventure era of my life—my go-girl era. At 40 years old, I live happily solo with my Siamese cat, Queen Guinevere and together we are setting out to live a semi nomadic life. I spent most of my adulthood trying to be settle down, but now I am ready to run and I am not slowing down for folks to catch up—You can tie me up, but

not down because life is meant to be a wild and precious adventure, and this girl is finally ready to go.

If you are listening to this episode on Sunday July 13th, this is the day I depart with HRH on our first transatlantic adventure. I am not usually an anxious person, however planning this has certainly strained my natural stress tolerance. This episode will be a little shorter given my time constraints, but what I wanted to do was outline my plan before I had tried it out.

I had entered into the task with eyes wide open. It used to be you had to quarantine an animal for 6 months if you wanted to go to Britain. They have now relaxed the regulations, however, that doesn't mean it's easy to navigate.

Initially my research led me to understand that I could only fly into Heathrow—no problem. I tried to call the airline to add a cat, but their system wouldn't let me book a cat. I then learned later that Air Canada was the only airline allowed to bring pets into the country, but my flights were booked with West Jet. That was the first stress spike.

Fortunately I found a link on the Air Canada to booking the cat her own ticket as cargo—and while I couldn't book it myself, I could punch in the details for a quote, and it would only cost \$150. That seemed easy. I would just find a friend who could drop her off.

I left it until sometime in March when I decided I should probably get it all taken care of. That's when I learned that it was only possible to book pet cargo tickets through a certified agent. There was a list of them, and I chose one for Western Canada, based in Calgary. I booked a phone appointment to go through the details and a week later they got back to me with a quote.

"Now this is going to come with a price tag" she tried to warn me.

She began listening each expense.

For the flight ticket that will be 1500...

Paperwork

Something else

For a grand total of 4200. And that was one way.

It was going to cost me 8400 to take my cat across the atlantic and back?? I am a cat person and deeply love her, but there was no way that was in my cards.

I think she could hear my hesitation.

She explained that the British Isles were a rabies free country, whereas Canada was only a rabies restricted. This makes intuitive sense. Britain is an island. It is possible to eradicate rabies in ways that are just not possible on a continent

I think she could hear my hesitancy.

“The only loop hole is going through Paris and taking a ferry” she noted. But that would still be \$3000 each way.

I thanked her for the information and said I would be in touch if I was going to pursue.

This was stress spike number 2.

When the initial shock subsided my usual delusional belief in my own capacity took over.

I would simply have to figure out the paper work myself.

It is at this point I am abandoning the script, and going to bullet point through this information.

Two disclaimers: If you are using this for information that's great, but do your own research. Policy changes all the time. What is relevant now, may not be relevant in a week or a year. This is the information I have gotten from the government websites, but they can change.

Which leads me to #2: The following is theory only. I have yet to test it. This is the regulation as I understand it. I will have an update.

Going from Canada to EU

- Microchip
 - Your pet needs to be micro chipped.
 - By an approved microchip.
- Rabies
 - Has to have updated rabies vaccine
 - AFTER the microchip
- Health Certificate
 - EU pets can get passports but no Canadian system
 - Need a health certificate
 - Completed by vets
 - In the language of the country.
 - Not every vet: Transcona
 - Shout out Pet Vet and transcona.
 - Stamped by government

- Exporting this pet. You have an agricultural product.
 - Can only book this after you book your vet appointment
 - Has to be within 5 days. I fly on Sunday, arrive on Monday. Government is not open on weekends. Keep this in mind.
- Dogs need a parasite treatment.
- Airlines
 - You cannot just book a pet with your ticket
 - Call
 - Charge
 - Limited pet seats available.
 - Carriers are trouble.
 - West Jet has the smallest pet carrier sizes.
 - Online stories of people turned away.
 - Sit up, turn around, be at ease.
- Entering the UK.
 - France is the first hurdle. Next is the UK.
 - Can only bring a pet with you via Ferry
 - There is an official list of Ferries
 - Le Pet Express
 - There were two ferries that allowed for walk on tickets with a pet.
 - One was only dog friendly.
 - So there was exactly one ferry at one port that I could enter Great Britain with my cat. Dieppe-Newhaven via the DFDS ferries.
 - Cannot do this online. Must make an expensive international call. Hot nordic accent.
- Managing pet anxiety
 - Little kitty trust.
 - Prescription for Gabapenton.
 - Strategies
 - Cover the kennel
 - Talk to her
 - Book hotels along the way. Omg.
- Coming back to Canada
 - Looks easier due to rabies
 - Do the logistics in reverse order.

Magical section of the podcast. Card of the week Ace of Swords.

Outro

That's it for this week! You can find images, links and a transcript for each episode and more on my website, www.alexandrarossworks.com/gogirl

Information on the music in this podcast can be found in the description. If you like what I am doing and want to support me click the link to “Buy me a pint” which leads to my Patreon site.

Next week join me here to explore everything I know about boats—which isn’t much. I have scraped together enough information to form an idea of what I am getting into, while I also know I have no idea really. I am Jon Snow and I know nothing.

Thanks for listening and happy adventuring!

Description

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