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The Cat Care Compendium

How To Properly Train, Treat, And Love Your Feline Friend

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A. The Different Kinds Of Cats

There are more than a hundred different domestic cat breeds that are commonly recognized around the world today. The most widespread features that differ among breeds are a cat's coat, eye shape, body type, coat color, and how long their coat is (short, medium or long).

Some pedigreed cats have naturally occurring traits, but most domestic cats are bred specifically to bring out a certain feature, or are of a mixed breed that is unknown – which is what we call a housecat. Housecats have varying lengths of coat and normally come in a variety of colors such as black, tortoiseshell, ginger, and tabby.

Basic Cat Body Types

Cobby Cat

Stout, rotund bodies with short legs, round faces, long hair, and round eyes characterize cobby cats. Pedigreed longhaired breeds fall into this category.

Muscular Cat

Most shorthaired cats have burly, well-developed bodies with solid short legs, and are the most common of all of the cat body types.

Foreign Longhair Cat

A select number of breeds differ from the Cobby body type in that they have elongated bodies with slender legs, almond-shaped eyes and a medium coat. Some Asian breeds fall into this category, such as the Balinese.

Exotic Shorthair Cat

Elegant slim bodies, long slim legs, large pointed ears, slanting eyes, and short hair are all markers of an exotic shorthaired cat. The Egyptian Mau and Abyssinian both have this body type.

Types of Cat Eyes

Cats have one of three different kinds of eyes: round, almond, or slanted. Colors range greatly, although green and yellow/gold are the most common, with blue being the rarest.

Modern Cat Breeds

Here is a list of some of the more common cat breeds, along with a picture and a short description describing specific characteristics. If you would like more information on a specific breed, please contact a local breeder who specializes in the cat of choice for questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Abyssinian

Sometimes referred to as 'Abs' for short, Abyssinian cats resemble the noble animals depicted in ancient Egyptian art pieces. This breed has a very rich coat without markings anywhere except their faces, where normally they are quite dramatically colored. Abyssinians are normally coated in one of the following colors: ruddy, red, blue, and fawn. One of the most intelligent breed of cats, Abyssinians aren't the cuddliest, but are extremely loyal.



American Curl

The American Curl is a newer breed of cat which was discovered in 1981 when a unprompted genetic transformation created the curled back ears of their namesake. These fanciful felines are normally found sporting a rainbow-colored coat of either long or short hair.



American Shorthair

These cats are very friendly, affectionate, and love having other animals and children around. Well-known for their good health, humor, and longevity (15-18 year life span, on average), American Shorthairs can have coats ranging in a large number of combinations of silver, brown, cream, white, black, and gray. American shorthairs are generally low-maintenance animals other than the requirement they are combed several times a week to remove extra hair, since their coats are very thick and full.



Balinese

An offshoot of a Siamese, the Balinese cat is a long-hair originating in the 1940's that is considerably quieter than the notoriously chatty Siamese cat. Traditionally seen with a lilac, blue, seal, tortie, chocolate, or lynx coat, Balinese cats do not like being left alone for long periods of time. In this instance, two are definitely better than one.



Birman

A Birman cat is average sized (8-12 lbs. with females being a bit smaller) with a medium length coat that requires little grooming time. All Birman cats have blue eyes and are pointed (meaning their faces, ears, paws and tails are darker). Sociable, quiet, and balanced, Birman cats are still fairly rare in North America.

**Bombay**

The Bombay breed was created by breeder Nikki Horner, who was looking to create a 'miniature black panther' by crossing a Burmese with a solid black American Shorthair. Intelligent, active, and accepting of other animals in the home, a Bombay will frequently require being the main cat in the household. Note that Bombay cats hit their sexual maturity early, so spaying or neutering should be done as soon as possible.

**British Shorthair**

British Shorthair cats, also known as 'Teddy Bears' are the oldest British cat, originating in Roman times, where they were known for their physical strength and hunting skills. Loyal, affectionate and docile, these thick cats (both in coat and in stature) are favorites among animal trainers because of their relaxed nature and intelligence.



Burmese

A stocky cat, the Burmese are lively and playful. Burmese cats are also very tolerant animals, enjoy children and dogs, and will even allow travel if they are acclimatized to it at a young age. The only cats that are naturally brown, the Burmese are very muscle-dense, making them quite heavy in relation to their size.



Chartreux

Calm and faithful, the Chartreux are a French breed that was almost extinct by the turn of the 20th century. Now more common (after several years of breeding with the British and Persian Blues), the Chartreux is a medium-demand breed that requires frequent brushing and is known for following its owners around everywhere. Husky, strapping cats with small paws.



Cornish Rex

Extremely acrobatic, Cornish Rex's will leap and bound around your living space with the greatest of ease. Slender and athletic, this breed lacks the topcoat hair they require to stay warm, so they are affectionate and constantly looking for warm places to hide out. Cornish Rex's are minimal shedders, but cannot be brushed often because of their delicate hairs that break and lead to bald patches all over their body.



Cymric

The Cymric is a long-haired version of the Manx, and was named after Wales (in Gaelic). Some Cymric owners state their cat acts more like a dog than a feline, growling and fetching. Cymric's are solid cats, with short legs and a round build. Easily adaptable to almost any environment, they love shiny things and require frequent grooming.



Devon Rex

Similar to the Cornish Rex, the Devon Rex was discovered in Devon and this curly breed was given a name. Similar to the Cornish Rex, these cats also love heat, are loving and creative, and are known to be the 'monkeys' of all the cat breeds. Like in the picture, Devon Rexs seem always to be asking a question with their wide eyes and pixie-like ears.



Egyptian Mau

Thought to be the domesticated spotted deviation of the African Wild Cat, the Egyptian Mau was once considered a deity, protected by law and mummified upon death. Intensely loyal, the Egyptian Mau's green eyes will lighten as he ages. If they are well-socialized from an early age, this breed will prove an intelligent addition to any family.



Exotic Shorthair

A Persian cat, the Exotic Shorthair is similar in demeanor (calm, unassuming, and temperate) and look, other than the obvious difference in coat (Exotic Shorthairs have substantial, medium coats that rarely mat and need moderate combing). The same health issues that concern Persian cat owners should also concern Exotic Shorthair owners.



Himalayan

Known as Colorpoint Longhairs in Europe, the Himalayan cat is a descendant of the Persian and Siamese breeds. Their deep blue eyes are world-renowned; coupled with their sunny dispositions and gorgeous long hair they are the most popular of all pedigreed breeds.



Japanese Bobtail

A very rare breed, the Japanese Bobtail was named after its unusual tail and is often found in Japanese lore, legend, and myth. An active cat of medium size and extremely high intelligence, these cats can both be long or short haired, and come in many varied colors, although the calico is the most desirable in Japan.



Javanese

Part of the Siamese family, Javanese cats hold many of the same characteristics: chatty, inquisitive, active attention-getters. Because of this, those looking for an independent cat should look elsewhere. But if you have children or want a cat that is an active part of the family, these medium-bodied, medium-haired felines are a joy to have around.



Korat

Sometimes shy around strangers, the Korat is one of the oldest natural cat breeds, originating from the province of Thailand that they are named after. Similar to Russian Blues, Korats are stockier animals, with heart-shaped heads and a broad expanse across the eyes, which is unique to their breed. Frequent grooming is required, and loud noises are said to scare these felines.



Maine Coon

Maine Coons are widely known as the first show cat in America (1878). Extremely large cats (ranging from 9-12 pounds in females and up to 20 pounds in males) with long fur that is shorter along the shoulders, the Maine Coon is a slow-maturing cat, sometimes taking up to five years to develop fully. Vocal and sociable, these cats are good additions to the family with many other members, both animal and human.



Norwegian Forest Cat

Also known as a Wegie, these cats shed unusually high amounts in the Spring, but normally do not require high maintenance (grooming, on average, once or twice a week). Mellow, pleasant and amiable, Norwegian Forest Cats are known to thrive in busy households. Averaging in size from 8-10lbs, these felines have very thick coats.



Ocicat

Although they look exotic, the Ocicat is a highly devoted, trainable animal that is low-maintenance, active and sociable. The breed was named because of its resemblance to the ocelot when a genetic surprise occurred while trying to create a Aby-point Siamese. Normally ivory with golden spots, these cats are substantial and powerfully built with shiny, short coats.



Persian

It may take a bit for a Persian cat to feel comfortable in your home, but once they do, they are normally a very sweet, gentle addition to the family. With short, heavily-boned legs that support their broad bodies, Persians are very responsive and high maintenance felines who require daily grooming and eye wipes because of their tear ducts.



Ragdoll

Laid back, slow to mature, and quite large (up to 20 pounds in males), Ragdolls are beautiful, long haired cats, with few jumping tendencies and almost musical purrs. Gentle, with little scratching, these animals are perfect for families with younger children or other animals. The largest breed in the world, it is also one of the most popular. Their bushy tails and long hair do require grooming.

**Russian Blue**

One of the most desirable short haired cats, the Russian Blue supposedly was a companion to Russian seamen, since their thick coats are able to withstand the harsh winters of the former U.S.S.R. Quiet, affectionate, and somewhat shy, the Russian Blue is blue with downy-soft silver-tipped guard hairs. There are also Russian White and Russian Blacks, whose colors represent their namesakes.



Selkirk Rex

The Selkirk Rex is one of the newest natural breeds. It is differentiated from most other breeds with its curly long hair (which can become ringlets if left to grow long enough). Not for the shy owner, these cats draw attention from all over the place from people who want to pet their unusual fur and curly whiskers. Available in both short and long haired versions, the Selkirk Rex is a strong, healthy cat that tolerates a large, noisy household well.



Siberian

Known as the 'hypo-allergenic' cats, Siberian cat fur isn't normally an allergen like most felines' fur. Easily trained and very dog-like in demeanor, these cats are very adaptable and love other animals in the home. With minimal shedding and grooming, these cats are a joy for the low-maintenance owner. Fit and virtually disease-free.



Somali

Also referred to as long haired Abyssinians, the Somali cat is named after Somalia, where they are thought to have originated. A medium-sized cat with medium-length soft fur, their interesting coloring is often compared to a fox. Somalis love being in the middle of the action and are prone to activity and jumping around, and therefore are happier around another cat with similar traits.



Tonkinese

Also known as a Tonk, the Tonkinese are lively, probing, explorers that are easily bored, sometimes leading to shredded furniture and damaged household goods. Warm, friendly, bright, and companionable, these cats cannot be left without human interaction for any length of time. The Tonkinese was originally produced when a chocolate brown point Siamese was bred with a brown Burmese cat.



Turkish Angora

Once thought extinct, the Turkish Angora is a natural breed held in high regard in Turkey. Quick in all ways (wits, activity, learning, temper) the Turkish Angora are well-trained, cuddly animals that enjoy doing acrobatic jumps and stunts. Like other blue-eyed cats, some are deaf and require monitoring.



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