

## **But... How did cats end up curling up next to us on the couch?**

Modern life is closely tied to our soft-pawed, fluffy companions, making it almost unimaginable to think of our existence without their meows demanding attention and adoration. But it wasn't always like this. So, where and when did it all begin? At what point did felines become what we now know as the domestic cat?

To answer that, we need to go back to the first human settlements in the Middle East. The oldest remains of domestic cats date back to around 7500 BC in southern Cyprus, where it is believed that early agricultural settlements in nearby areas attracted the African wildcat (*Felis silvestris lybica*), due to the presence of rodents feeding on the crops. The early inhabitants quickly realized the advantages of this situation: if they attracted cats, the cats would eat the mice, which would lead to better and more abundant harvests.

The bond between cat and human grew alongside the expansion of humankind across the planet, eventually leading to the diversification of what we now know as the beloved and revered domestic cat (*Felis silvestris catus*).

We invite you to learn more about the cat breeds that exist around the world. So you keep growing your love and knowledge of these amazing little furballs.

## **Main Characteristics of Cats**

(All information was sourced from TICA – The International Cat Association)



### **Turkish Van**

**History:** An ancient breed originated, as its name suggests, from eastern Turkey. Also known as the "swimming cat," it was discovered near Lake Van.

**Traits:** With a unique, semi-long, water-resistant coat, this breed may enjoy swimming. They are mostly white with a colored pattern on the head and tail. They are relatively rare.

**Personality:** Typically active and agile. They are also excellent jumpers and climbers.



### **Toyger**

**History:** Bred to mirror tigers, their ancestors include a short-haired domestic cat and a Bengal. Recognized as a breed by TICA in 1993.

**Traits:** Their coat resembles tigers of the wild, which is unique among domestic cats. They have long, deep bodies, large bones, and high shoulders, making them very muscular.

**Personality:** Friendly and outgoing. Highly intelligent, they adapt to leash walking better than most breeds.



### **Somali**

**History:** The long-haired cousin of the Abyssinian, it is one of the oldest cat breeds. In fiction, it was once known as the cat of the Blue Nile. It is named after Somalia, which borders Ethiopia, formerly Abyssinia.

**Traits:** Semi-long, soft, fine coat; large, almond-shaped eyes. They come in various colors: red, cinnamon, blue, lilac, chocolate, and fawn.

**Personality:** Loyal and affectionate yet independent. Very curious and energetic, they enjoy high places where they can observe their surroundings.



### **Russian Blue**

**History:** Originating from the Russian port of *Arkhangelsk* on the White Sea near the Arctic Circle, hence they were also known as "Archangel cats." It is said they were a breed favored by Russian nobility.

**Traits:** Short, bright blue, dense coat with silvery tips. Emerald green eyes.

**Personality:** Very calm, playful, and affectionate—ideal for children. Extremely observant, they seek attention and tenderness, and are quite talkative.



### Scottish Fold

**History:** The first cat of this breed was a Scottish female discovered in 1961, and all Scottish Folds today descend from her—her name was Susie.

**Traits:** Their folded ears are their most distinctive feature, lying flat against the head due to a spontaneous mutation. They also have large, round eyes and a sturdy body.

**Personality:** They enjoy company and are very curious. Intelligent and fond of being carried.



### Khao Manee

**History:** Originally from Thailand, the name means “White Gem.” It’s not very well known in the West and is mentioned in the Thai poem collection *Tamra Maew*.

**Traits:** While they’re known for their striking odd-colored eyes—one blue, one yellowish-green (they can also have eyes of the same color.) Their coat is short, sleek, and bright white.

**Personality:** Playful, loyal, and people-loving. They enjoy cuddling with their owners but are also very curious and love to play.



### Selkirk Rex

**History:** This breed was developed from a litter born in 1987 to a feral cat in Montana. The first kitten with unusual features, such as curly whiskers and wavy fur, was named *Miss DePesto*.

**Traits:** Also known as the “cat in sheep’s clothing” due to its dense, curly coat. Selkirk Rex cats can have either long or short hair and come in a wide variety of colors.

**Personality:** They can enjoy going for walks on a leash and are known for being very relaxed, gentle, and patient. However, they also love to play and can be quite mischievous.





### **Sphynx**

**History:** They have been bred since 1966, when a hairless kitten was born in a litter in Ontario. They are called "Sphynx" due to their resemblance to the ancient Egyptian sculpture.

**Traits:** They appear hairless, with a variety of patterns and colors. Their skin is covered with a fine fuzz that gives them a suede-like texture. They should have hair on the nose, and some may also have hair on the ears, paws, and tail.

**Personality:** Intelligent and affectionate, they love being around their owners and cuddling under blankets or sheets. They are usually very friendly.



### **Siamese**

**History:** One of the oldest cat breeds, although their exact origins are unclear. It is widely believed they come from the East, as they are mentioned in the *Ayudha* manuscripts from the capital of Siam, which is present-day Thailand.

**Traits:** They are long, slender, and muscular, with distinctly slanted, almond-shaped eyes that give them an elegant, oriental look. Their features are angular, and they have large, triangular ears.

**Personality:** Very social and talkative, they enjoy companionship and demand attention. Active and curious, they get along well with children and love warm places.



### **Thai**

**History:** Known in Thailand as *Wichienmaat* and in other parts of the world as the "Old-Style Siamese." They were brought to Europe by the British, who first saw them in Thailand. Around the 1950s, they began to diverge from the modern Siamese breed.

**Traits:** They have short to medium-length coats. Their most distinctive feature is the shape of the head, with a long, flat forehead and a narrow, pointed muzzle.

**Personality:** Talkative and social. Intelligent and friendly with children, they often follow their owners around and enjoy being part of daily life.





### **Savannah**

**History:** A hybrid between a domestic cat and an African serval, known as an F1 (first-generation hybrid). It was officially recognized as a breed in 2001.

**Traits:** Closely resembles its ancestor, the African serval. Very tall and slender, covered in dark spots, with long limbs that give it a striking, wild appearance.

**Personality:** Extremely active and adventurous. Intelligent and highly persistent, they are often mischievous and curious—some even learn to open doors or turn on faucets.



### **Ragdoll**

**History:** This cat lineage was developed by breeders and is believed to originate from a white long-haired cat and a “seal point” (Siamese) cat. It was recognized as a breed in 1979.

**Traits:** One of the largest cat breeds in the world, they are very sturdy, with semi-long, silky fur and blue eyes. They come in three patterns: colorpoint, bicolor, and mitted.

**Personality:** Affectionate, they enjoy being held by their owners and love children. They are very relaxed and enjoy playing.



### **Persian**

**History:** Probably one of the most well-known cat types in the world. They are very ancient, although their exact origins are unknown, even though, there are hieroglyphic references to them.

**Traits:** Sturdy and compact-bodied, with short limbs. They have long fur and large, round eyes. They come in a wide variety of colors.

**Personality:** Gentle and laid-back, they enjoy affection. They are extremely intelligent.



### **Oriental Shorthair**

**History:** Part of the Siamese-type group, they have been bred since the 1950s in England.

**Traits:** Short-haired (though there is also a long-haired variety). Very slender, elegant, and elongated. They have a straight profile, triangular face, very large wide-based ears, and slanted eyes.

**Personality:** Social, talkative, and affectionate. They tend to form strong bonds with their families and demand attention and affection.



### **Norwegian Forest Cat**

**History:** A natural feline variety, they traveled with the Vikings, helping to keep ships free of pests. Known as *Skogkatt*, they are surrounded by many legends in Norse mythology.

**Traits:** Their thick coat is a natural protection, as they originally lived in forests, as their name suggests. They can take up to five years to fully mature.

**Personality:** Clever yet gentle, they adapt easily, enjoy playing, and are very affectionate.



### **Nebelung**

**History:** A relatively rare and recent feline variety, related to the Russian Blue. Its name comes from the German word *Nebel* (fog). It is uncommon and was recognized by TICA in 1977.

**Traits:** Long-haired, with green eyes and silky blue fur with silver highlights. Medium-sized, muscular, and somewhat sturdy, though their bodies are generally long.

**Personality:** Loyal, though they need time to adjust. They don't usually get along well with very young children, but overall they are very playful.



### **Munchkin**

**History:** Accepted by TICA in 1994, although it is not a recent type—there are records of short-legged cats as early as 1944 in England, 1956 in Stalingrad, and 1970 in New England.

**Traits:** With a silhouette similar to a dachshund, they are extremely short-legged. They come in many colors and exist in both short- and long-haired varieties.

**Personality:** Very lively—despite their size, they love running, chasing, and playing. They are curious, agile, fast, and full of energy.



### **Minuet**

**History:** A hybrid breed derived from crossing the Munchkin with the Persian.

**Traits:** Sturdy-bodied with short legs thanks to its Munchkin lineage, but with a Persian-like face. Very round in appearance with strong muscles.

**Personality:** Affectionate, sociable, and curious. Loyal companions for older people. They enjoy playtime but prefer snuggling.



### **Manx (Isle of Man Cat)**

**History:** Commonly known as the Manx, they originate from the Isle of Man. It is believed they arrived by ship from England and Wales, with the tail mutation appearing later.

**Traits:** Round, heavy, and medium-sized. Known for being tailless, although some do have tails. Their hind legs are longer than the front ones.

**Personality:** Great with children—calm, affectionate, and prefer company, though they can entertain themselves if needed.





### **Maine Coon**

**History:** One of the oldest North American cat types, considered native to the state of Maine, where it is the official state cat. Believed to be a cross between short-haired domestic cats and long-haired cats from overseas.

**Traits:** Adaptable to harsh climates due to their semi-long, glossy, and dense fur, which is shorter on the back and neck and longer on the ruff, belly, and legs.

**Personality:** Very sociable—they enjoy being with dogs, are gentle, and often follow their owners around. They can be a bit mischievous.



### **Lykoi**

**History:** One of the most recent feline varieties recognized by TICA. Nicknamed “werewolf cats,” their name is a play on the Greek word *lycos* (wolf). The gene exists in feral cats, but in 2011, black domestic cats were used in breeding to avoid inbreeding.

**Traits:** Resemble small wolves at first glance and are partially hairless. Their fur varies in mixes from black to light grayish white.

**Personality:** Strongly bonded and loyal. Very intelligent, capable of solving problems, and often content playing alone. Sometimes display dog-like traits, such as fetching and hunting like wolves.



### **LaPerm**

**History:** Also known as *Gypsy Shag*, they were named by their founder Linda Koehl because their curly hair looks like a loose perm.

**Traits:** Come in both long- and short-haired varieties. Their curly fur (though sometimes straight) can even reach inside their ears. They exist in many colors and patterns.

**Personality:** Friendly and affectionate. They love kisses and cuddles from their owners. Playful and ideal for children.

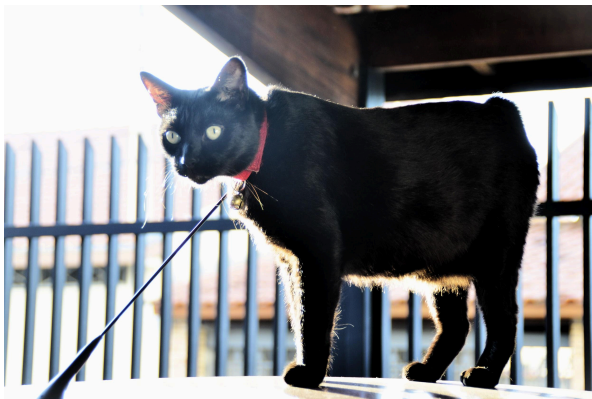


### **Korat**

**History:** Native to Siam (modern-day Thailand), known as the *Si-Sawat cat*, and featured in the ancient *Cat Poems* manuscript kept in the National Library of Bangkok.

**Traits:** Known for their heart-shaped heads, which makes them a symbol of good luck for brides. Small to medium-sized with well-developed muscles.

**Personality:** Curious and social. They dislike being left alone and seek attention. They enjoy being held or snuggling.



### **Japanese Bobtail**

**History:** Considered a symbol of good luck in Japan, its name comes from its pompom-like tail. Often depicted in ceramic figurines with one paw raised. An ancient variety represented in manuscripts and paintings for over 1,000 years.

**Traits:** Its most distinctive feature is its curled and twisted tail—no two tails are alike.

**Personality:** Intelligent and very active. Vocal, with a wide range of chirps and meows. Extroverted and restless



### **Kurilian Bobtail**

**History:** Native to the Russian Sakhalin and Kuril Islands, with records of their presence for at least 200 years. Known for their strong hunting instincts due to their wild ancestry. Not very well-known outside Europe, where they are quite popular.

**Traits:** Strong and somewhat stocky, with a robust bone structure. Found in both long- and short-haired types. They also have pompom-like tails similar to the Japanese Bobtail.

**Personality:** Very intelligent and gentle, independent yet affectionate, and cunning.





### **Devon Rex**

**History:** Originating in Buckfastleigh, Devon, England. In 1960, a kitten named Kirlee was born with the breed's signature look. Breeders developed a program to preserve the gene, and today all Devon Rex cats trace back to Kirlee.

**Traits:** Known as the "elves" of the feline world for their large, pointed ears. They have short muzzles, high cheekbones, and are small in size. Their short, wavy coat gives them a velvety appearance.

**Personality:** They get bored easily when alone. Very good with children and other pets.



### **Chartreux**

**History:** An ancient variety referenced in French literature since the 16th century. It is believed to be named after Carthusian monks who used them to protect grain stores used in making the famous Chartreuse liqueur.

**Traits:** Their signature eyes are said to be pumpkin-colored. Robust bodies with fine bones—often described as a “potato on toothpicks.” Their coat is short and dense.

**Personality:** Intelligent with extremely fast reflexes.



### **Burmilla**

**History:** The most recent breed recognized by TICA. It originated from a cross between a male Chinchilla Persian and a female Lilac Burmese. The 1981 litter was so attractive that a breeding program was started.

**Traits:** Medium-sized but muscular body. Their green eyes deepen in color as they mature. They have distinctive “makeup” markings around the nose that highlight their features and colors.

**Personality:** Sweet-natured, gentle, and adaptable. They enjoy playing and make excellent companions.





### **Birman**

**History:** Developed in the United States from Wong Mau, from whom the breed's most distinctive traits were isolated and bred. A series of crosses eventually led to the dark brown cat known today as the Birman.

**Traits:** Solid and pointed colors (dark brown, warm blue, honey chocolate, or lilac/pinkish gray) with golden eyes. Medium-sized and robust body.

**Personality:** Sweet, enjoy cuddling, and are very sociable. Extroverted and playful.



### **British Longhair**

**History:** The inspiration for the Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*. Their ancestry traces back to Rome and ancient English breeds. Known historically as good hunters and protectors of granaries. Also called the "Winston Churchill" of the feline world.

**Traits:** Round face and robust body, with a blue-gray coat.

**Personality:** Adorable, warm, and playful. Personality is said to vary slightly by gender.



### **Bombay**

**History:** An artificial breed developed by Nikki Horner from crossing the American Shorthair with a black Birman. The goal was to create a cat resembling the black leopard of India.

**Traits:** Exclusively black with a super shiny coat, giving it the appearance of a miniature panther.

**Personality:** Calm, affectionate, and sociable. They love their owners' company and adapt well to various environments.



### **Bengal**

**History:** Developed from the Asian leopard cat and domestic cats, but today they are bred exclusively from Bengal-to-Bengal crosses.

**Traits:** Their exotic coat resembles that of wild cats. They are very muscular.

**Personality:** Curious, loyal, and communicative. Highly active, they love heights and are restless; they enjoy climbing, chasing, exploring, and playing.



### **American Shorthair**

**History:** Arrived in North America, specifically the United States, with the first settlers. These were “working cats” serving as protectors of provisions on ships.

**Traits:** As the name indicates, they have short coats, though there is a long-haired variety as well. Medium-sized with a firm, muscular build.

**Personality:** Loyal, affectionate, sociable, and love the company of their owners and families.



### **American Curl**

**History:** Native to the United States. Their history begins with Shulamith, a long-haired black cat with distinctive ears. In 1981, she had her first litter, and all her kittens inherited her unusual ears.

**Traits:** Very distinctive short, rounded ears that contrast with large eyes and a medium-sized body.

**Personality:** Sweet, adaptable, and curious. They seek the company and attention of their owners and communicate through facial rubbing.



### **Abyssinian**

**History:** One of the oldest cat breeds, said to be a direct descendant of the sacred cats of Ancient Egypt. It is believed British soldiers from Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) brought the breed to England via a cat named Zula, although no documentation confirms this.

**Traits:** Their spotted coat can make them look like small wildcats, similar to little pumas. Almond-shaped eyes and warm colors make them very attractive.

**Personality:** Very athletic, active, agile, and extremely curious. Fiercely loyal and generally get along well with dogs.

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