



THE TURKISH VAN CAT

the swimming cat – stunning & unique

Often referred to as Swimming Cats, the Turkish Van originates from Eastern Turkey, and is associated with the area around Lake Van from which it gets its name.

The first Turkish Vans appeared in Britain in the late 1950's, have been brought in by Laura Lushington and Sonya Halliday, who were given a male and a female to take home with them from Turkey. They soon realised that the cats bred true, and sought recognition of the *Turkish* cat breed through the GCCF. Later they were to give up their *Van* prefix in order that the breed could be more precisely described as the *Turkish Van* cat.



In cat breeding and showing the word “van” is now used to describe the unique markings that the Turkish Van exhibits. Other breeds now describe cats marked in this fashion as van-patterned, although they have yet to reproduce the clarity and consistency that we see in our Van cats. In fact it is very difficult to produce a perfectly marked Van cat since it is a function of the random white spotting gene, and this randomness leads to many variations on van-patterning. We also see small “thumbprints” of colour sometimes, and legend has it that, as the cats left Noah’s Ark and made their way down Mount Ararat into Van, they were touched by Allah as he blessed them, and they carry this “Mark of Allah” as a coloured thumbprint even still.

Turkish Vans are striking in appearance; stunning auburn (or other colour) butterfly markings crown its head, matched by its beautiful flowing faintly ringed auburn tail, contrasting the chalk white coat that embraces its body. Sometimes additional spots of colour may also be present, which is permissible as long as they are small in size and number.

Traditionally Turkish Vans are auburn/white or cream/white, cream being a dilute form of auburn which is much lighter in colour, however other colours can also be found, including black/white, blue/white, and the various tortie and/or tabby combinations.

Additionally, pure white Turkish Van cats can be found. Within the GCCF these are known as Turkish Vankedisi cats, however some other registration bodies have accepted them simply as a pure white Turkish Van. They are identical to their Turkish Van counterparts in every way except for coat colour, but they still carry that van patterning even though it is not visible, and breeding a Van to a Vankedisi will result in a litter containing both Van and Vankedisi kittens. In Turkey this pure white cat is highly prized, the most sought after being odd eyed, although blue eyed cats are also regarded as special, being preferred over the amber-eyed specimens.



Turkish Vans are classified as semi-longhaired cats, which differentiates them from other longhaired breeds like Persians. Although the coat is indeed long its soft silky texture and lack of woolly undercoat allows it to remain unruffled and free from tangles, so little grooming is necessary which is what we would expect from a natural breed such as this.



The Turkish Van is a sturdy, muscular cat, weighing anything from 12 to 18 lbs (5 to 8 kg) for a fully-grown male. The adult cat will exhibit wide hips and a deep chest surmounted by well-developed shoulders. Its strong neck is encased in a lion-like ruff, and its wedge-shaped head is broad with a strong muzzle. They have large, tufted ears, and oval eyes blue or amber in colour, or possibly even one of each (odd-eyed). It's quite normal to see tufts of hair extending from between their paw pads too, this presumably being due to the harsh winters and snow they have to endure in their native land.

Where water is concerned, some are not very keen at all, whereas others may love dripping taps, especially drinking from them, then flicking the water with their paws, or dropping toys into their water bowl. It has been known for Turks to swim in the bath, swimming pool or even the sea, so be warned they may come and join in your daily shower.

They may also become curious about toilets, so don't leave the lid up!

The Turkish Van is a loyal, loving and very intelligent cat. Its temperament depends greatly on its upbringing, the amount of human contact and handling it receives as a kitten, and the temperament of the mother herself. They are very affectionate, giving head butts and love bites, but to the uninitiated this could be slightly alarming, but when you get to know your cat you will begin to understand.

Turks are often described as being dog-like in their behaviour, and in fact generally get on very well with dogs. They love human company too of course, and can be taught a few basic tricks like retrieving toys or paper balls. Unlike dogs though, they love being up high, and will climb on top of cabinets or kitchen units from where they can survey their territory. They'll also take great delight in relieving those cabinets or shelves of any ornaments or plants that inconvenience them, partly due to their slight clumsiness but often just for fun!



Although quite rare compared to many other breeds Turkish Van kittens are competitively priced, although availability is quite variable since there are not that many breeders. Don't let that put you off though, their unique look and character make them all the more worth waiting for!

Details of breeders can be found on the Turkish Van Cat Club website where you will also find information on kitten availability. Alternatively you can contact us on the numbers below.

Turkish Van Cat Club

General Enquiries:

Steve Lloyd Tel: 01635 248436
Email: secretary@turkishvancatclub.co.uk

Membership Enquiries:

Mairi MacCorquodale: Tel: 07796 613530
Email: membership@turkishvancatclub.co.uk

Kitten Register:

Kathy McLeod: Tel: 0207 515 0119
Email: kittens@turkishvancatclub.co.uk

Website:

<http://www.turkishvancatclub.co.uk>