

Finding Your Feline Friend

Ready to add a new cat to your life? Consider these adoption options.

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One cool February night, a beautiful tabby kitten followed me as I walked home from a party. A month later, after several attempts to locate her previous owner, I accepted that Squeak was with me to stay. I was lucky. My cat chose me.

But unless the perfect kitten plops itself on your doorstep, your success in finding a new feline friend will take some thought and effort. Kittens can be found in shelters, pet stores, the yards and living rooms of breeders, in newspapers and on the streets. Sifting through all the options to find the kitten that fits you and your lifestyle can be a little daunting. But fear not its just a matter of discovering what you want and learning about your options.

Before thinking about where to get your kitten, you must decide what kind of kitten you want. The best reason for getting a [kitten] is because you want it, said Anna Sadler, owner of the Brannaway Cattery in Dallas. Many cats are in shelters and on the streets because they didn't gel with their original owners. Often these ex-owners did not prepare beforehand and wound up with a kitten they couldn't give a proper home to. With a little foresight, you and your kitten can avoid a similar fate.

Exploring Purebreds

At its most basic level, your kitten choice is between purebreds and mixed breeds and the differences between the two are significant. Perhaps the biggest benefit of seeking a purebred is that there are specific attitudes and activity levels associated with different breeds, according to Anne Edwards, a Missouri breeder of Persians and Havanas and board member for the National Animal Interest Alliance. For example, Havanas need company, she said. If no ones going to be home all day, you shouldn't get a Havana. Persians, if nobodys home, will curl up on the couch and take a nap.

With purebreds, you also can find a breed with a personality that complements yours. Are you often away from home? Then, look for breeds that are self-sufficient and mellow. Do you want to talk with your cat? Find one of the more vocal breeds.

You will find a variety of breeds by looking through magazines, such as CAT FANCY and CATS USA, and on websites. Many newspapers and magazines have entire classified sections devoted to purebred kittens. The Internet also has resources for purebred seekers.