

Make a Perfect Match

Many roads may lead to your ideal kitten. Here's where to start.

Theresa Meyers

Five little kittens, their eyes just barely open, were huddled together in a bed of fluffy towels in the closet at a friend's house. One in particular immediately drew Sharron McClellan's attention. She gently scooped up the longhaired tortoiseshell kitten into the palm of her hand. It was exactly what she had been looking for over the past several months.

I knew the minute I saw her that she was the one, said McClellan, who immediately named the kitten Salazar, or Sally for short. There had been a hole in her Auburn, Wash., home since she had lost her old female cat, Nimby. Our second cat, Kushka, wasn't used to being the only one and he really was needing a sister.

Sharron waited for Sally to grow old enough to bring home. It was the longest wait of my life. Every week, I had to check in and see how she was doing. Now she walks like Kushka, plays like him and sleeps on him. She was the perfect kitten for us.

There are many ways and places in which to discover your ideal kitten. Some options may be as close as your own front door and others might involve a trip of thousands of miles. But no matter where you find your kitten, one thing is certain you're making a commitment that involves great responsibility and financial obligations.

So where can you find that special kitten? Just about anywhere. But what are you looking for? Do you want a special personality? Do you crave a calico? Is grooming something you'll enjoy or hate? Answer a few questions within your family and gain a consensus, then begin the search.

Adopt-A-Cutie! If you want a kitten immediately, local shelters or adoption clinics often have the largest selection of kittens to choose from and are in the business of saving the lives of animals that might otherwise be destroyed. May is generally the time when the explosion in the kitten population starts, and it continues through December, said Zibby Wilder, Cat City Supervisor for the Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in Seattle, Wash.

Before you go, think about what your house is like and how you imagine the kitten fitting into your home. The one thing that potential kitten owners need to be aware of is what type of animal they are looking for, Wilder said. A lot of people come in who want a spunky kitten, but their home and lifestyle is very serene. We work very hard to make sure the animal will fit into the household as it matures.