

Finding Your Feline Friend

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

Justin Sanders

To find the best breeders in the country, Sadler recommended going to cat shows and perusing the websites for the Cat Fanciers Association and The International Cat Association. Both sources offer assistance in finding reputable breeders. Attending cat shows is also an excellent way to meet breeders.

Select the person handling the kitten with as much care as you would the kitten itself. Upon entering a breeder's home, examine the surroundings. Are the rooms and cat areas clean and well-maintained? Do the kittens appear healthy? Check the skin, Edwards said. Run your hands through the kittens' fur and make sure their hair looks and feels healthy, and that they don't have sores on their skin. Make sure they're active and playful.

One of the best ways to locate a quality breeder is through word-of-mouth. Ask some of your friends or acquaintances with purebred kittens where they purchased them. Was it a good experience?

If it appears a breeder is not taking proper care of his or her kittens, do not buy from that person, even if you feel sorry for the cat. Buying a kitten out of pity supports negligence, keeps the cycle of bad breeding alive and can get you a kitten with serious problems.

Breeders should issue a contract that includes a trial period, during which you can take your new kitten to a vet and have it checked out. If the vet finds any problems, you should be able to return it for a full refund, with heritable diseases covered, Sadler said.

The Local Pet Shop Many budding purebred enthusiasts are inclined to start their search at the pet store. A pet store may only have a limited amount of one kind of breed, and the chances of it being the one you seek will likely be slim. If you fall in love with a purebred at a pet store, you can expect the same amenities you would from a breeder: top-notch physical and mental health, and a trial period to get the cat checked out by a vet.

Some pet stores do not specialize in selling pedigree kittens. However many, including PETCO and PETSMART, work with local animal welfare organizations and donate space for strays.