

Kitten History: Munchkin

While she may be short in stature, your Munchkin kitten is long on love.

Stacy Hackett

This breed's diminutive stature hails from a stray cat found in Rayville, La., in 1983. Sandra Hochendel discovered two cats hiding under a pickup truck; both were pregnant, and both had short, stubby legs. Hochendel gave one cat to a friend but kept Blackberry for herself. When Blackberry had kittens, Hochendel gave one short-legged kitten to her friend, Kay LaFrance.

Blackberry and her offspring gave birth to several more short-legged kittens, and soon Hochendel and LaFrance contacted Dr. Solveig Pflueger. As chairperson of the The International Cat Association's genetics committee, Pflueger determined that the cat's short legs were the result of a genetic mutation. Further study revealed that the mutation did not result in any unhealthy characteristics, and TICA accepted the Munchkin as a new breed in 1994. Today the cats enjoy popularity in the United States, Australia and New Zealand, among other countries.

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