

Kitten History: Turkish Van

Pure white with bold spots, this treasured Middle Eastern breed is unique.

Stacy Hackett

What a stunning first impression your Turkish Van kitten makes! With a pure white coat covering most of his body, and bold spots of color on his tail and head, he's a real head-turner. This unique coat pattern is part of what makes the Turkish Van such a treasure in his homeland of Turkey.

An ancient breed thought to have developed in southwest Asia (in the areas encompassing Iraq, Iran, parts of the Soviet Union and eastern Turkey), the breed's name Van is a common term used to name many towns and villages in the region. What better name for the regions treasured cat?

The first Turkish Van entered England in 1955, and was named Turkish Van to avoid confusion with the Turkish Angora. The breed came to America in the early 1970s, but it wasn't until 1983 that the Turkish Van was actively promoted. Barbara and Jack Reark imported a pair of Vans from France and a trio of the cats from the Netherlands. The couple is credited with creating interest in the Turkish Van in the United States, leading to the Cat Fanciers Association accepting the breed for championship status in 1994.

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