



Turkish Vans

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The Turkish van

About The Turkish van

Turkish Van cats are intelligent, loving, and loyal. There are lively and playful and enjoy both being entertained and entertaining their human companions. They are soft-spoken and are good with both other pets and other cats. Well tolerant of children, Turkish Vans make good family pets. Unlike most other breeds of cat, Turkish Vans not only tolerate water, they actually enjoy it.

Turkish Van cats originate in the area around Lake Van in Turkey, where they have been domesticated for hundreds of years. A British couple on holiday in the region in the 1950's brought a pair of Turkish Van cats back to England and began breeding them. The cats were exported from U.K. to both Australia and the U.S., and have been popularly received in both of those countries, although they are still somewhat of a rarity outside of Turkey.

General Characteristics

Turkish Van cats have muscular white bodies and distinctively colored heads and tails. They have large close ears that are set high on the head. Their large eyes are oval shaped. Medium to large in size, the Turkish Van usually weighs between 6 and 18 pounds. They have silky long single coats, with no undercoat. Their bodies are white and their heads have clear markings of auburn, cream, black, tortoiseshell, blue tortoiseshell, brown tabby, tortoiseshell tabby, or blue tortoiseshell tabby. In each case, there is a vertical white blaze on the head separating the markings. The Turkish Van has similar markings on the tail, where the markings may take the shape of faint rings.

Moderate shedders, Turkish Vans require regular grooming. Daily combing can prevent their coats from matting or developing tangles. Their coats are heavier in the winter and will require more attention then. Turkish Vans also require occasional baths, especially if they are to be shown. Since Turkish Vans have a genuine affinity for water, bathing them is much easier than many other breeds. It is still a good idea to introduce the idea of a bath at a young age, to ease the process.

Average Weight	6-18 pounds (2.7 – 8 kg)	Temperament	Intelligent and playful.
Average Height	5 kittens	Good with Children?	Does well with children and pets (may be better with non-feline pets than other cats).
Coat	Long with no undercoat. Usually white bodies with a variety of standard markings.	Health Concerns	Turkish Vans are a hardy breed and rarely suffer breed-specific health problems.



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Selecting your Turkish Van: Adoption or Breeder?

Deciding whether to adopt a pet from a shelter or rescue group, or purchase a pet from a breeder is a personal choice. Whichever you decide, be sure to research the source and find out as much as you can about how the cat has been cared for up to this point. Breed clubs and online groups are good sources of information about breeders and shelters.

A few words about adoption:

Your local ASPCA or municipal animal shelter likely has a variety of cats available for adoption. If breed is not important to you, shelters like these can be excellent sources for an adoptable cat. If, however, you are committed to finding a Turkish Van, you may need to do a more specific search. There are groups that specialize in rescue and adoption of Turkish Vans; check the Internet for a group near you. Your local vet may also be a good resource for locating groups or individuals who have cats for adoption.

Finding a Turkish Van available for adoption or rescue may take longer than locating a cat through a breeder. Your persistence will be rewarded, though, with the good feelings that come from providing a loving home to a Turkish Van in need.

Some shelters or rescue groups charge a small fee for processing the adoption, others ask that you make a donation to their organization. Most shelters require you to spay or neuter the animal. Overall, the expense of taking in a rescue cat is usually much lower than the cost of buying one outright.

A few words about breeders:

A good breeder will always have at least as many questions for you as you have for him. A breeder who cares about his animals will want to know that each cat is going to a good, loving home. You may find that you have a lot of initial contact with a breeder over the phone or via email. When you actually meet with the breeder, you may have your choice of only a few or several cats, depending on the size of his breeding operation.

Always make sure your breeder keeps sanitary and pleasant conditions. The cats should appear well-cared for and well-fed, with ample space to play, and clean cages. Look for a cat with clear eyes and a shiny coat. The cats should be active and alert. Be wary of a breeder whose cats are overly timid or aggressive. The cats should be well socialized and appear healthy and happy.

Get any agreements from the breeder in writing, and be very wary of a breeder who refuses to do so.



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Any reputable breeder should also provide you with a written guarantee regarding your animal and should clearly explain any return policies.

The Internet can be a good resource for locating a Turkish Van breeder. You can also check with local Turkish Van clubs in your area, and ask your vet for recommendations. There are national and sometimes regional groups and professional societies for cat breeders. You may wish to find a breeder associated with a group like the Classic Turkish Van Cat Association. While not all cat breeders will belong to such groups, membership in a group like this may be an indication of how seriously the breeder takes her work. Ask other cat owners for recommendations for a breeder, or consult listservs and other websites devoted to pet cats.

How to Choose Your New Turkish Van

An important decision is whether to bring a kitten or an adult cat into your home. It's no secret that Turkish Van kittens are cute and cuddly, but they are also a lot of work. If you cannot devote a serious amount of time and patience to house training and socializing a kitten, consider adopting an adult cat. Make this important decision before you begin looking at cats. When an adorable Turkish Van kitten is curled up in your lap, it can be very difficult to think of anything but taking her home.

When selecting a cat, it is important to find out as much as you can about how the Turkish Van was raised to this point, to have an idea of any health problems or behavioral issues that may not be readily apparent.

There are several signs of a healthy cat. Among these are the following:

- Healthy skin and coat
- Clear, bright eyes
- Energetic and playful demeanor
- Clean ears

Preparing for Your Turkish Van

There are several items you will need to care for your new Turkish Van. Some examples of these include food and water bowls, good quality food, grooming products, litter and litter boxes, toys, and books on cat care.

Your Turkish Van will need a place to eat and drink. Cat bowls are often made from plastic, ceramic or stainless steel, all of which are durable. It is important to put the bowls in the same place each day, so your cat knows where to find his food and water. Cat bowls should always be made from safe, non-toxic materials.

Cat food is the basis of your Turkish Van's nutrition, so feeding him the right food and in the right quantities is critical. Healthier food means a healthier cat. Cat food comes in three main forms: hard dry food, canned wet food, or semi-moist food. Check with your vet or breeder for recommendations based on the age and health of your cat.



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You'll need these basics before your Turkish van comes home. Click the items below to go to CheapPetStore.com to find the best prices for online pet supplies.

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Grooming products can include brushes, combs, and topical treatments like shampoos and flea prevention products. For Turkish Vans, you will fare better with a comb than a brush. It is important to get your Turkish Van kitten used to being groomed at a young age. Start with just a few minutes each day, until your kitten is accustomed to the attention and activity. Cat shampoos can include flea and tick formulas, detangling formulas, deodorizing formulas, and more. It may take some patience and practice to bathe your Turkish Van or apply topical treatments. Be prepared with all necessary supplies and be ready to give your cat plenty of praise and maybe even some treats.

Litter boxes come in simple pan styles, enclosed “privy” types, and even automatic-scooping models. Whichever type of litter box you select, there are certain factors to keep in mind. The sides of the box should not be too high, especially when used for young kittens or older cats. Some cats like privacy while using the litter box, so a covered model is best for them. Others, however, do not like to feel enclosed and will not use a litter box with a cover.

Cat litter comes in three basic forms, clay litter, clumping clay litter, and crystals. While there are other types of cat litter on the market, these are the most prevalent types. Clay litter is a traditional choice and works well for many kittens. Clumping clay litters absorb the moisture from the urine and form clumps which can be scooped out like solid waste. Crystal cat litters are fairly new on the market. Regardless of the type of cat litter you select, be sure to keep the litter box scrupulously clean.

Don't forget something for your Turkish Van to play with. As kittens and mature cats, Turkish Vans are naturally very playful creatures; giving them their own toys to play with can protect your curtains, shoes, and even your own feet. There are toys that mimic prey, toys that smell enticing, toys that bounce, toys that hold treats, and on and on and on.

A few good books on raising cats, purchased at a pet or book store or borrowed from your library, can be invaluable. Knowledgeable pet owners have happier, healthier pets!

Your Turkish Van Through the Years: The Turkish Van Kitten

Turkish Van kittens tend to be skinny, with very prominent cheekbones, tall ears, and thin tails. By around 6 months of age, their coats begin to fill out and their faces appear to soften. The Turkish Van's tail becomes fuller at this point and the beginnings of his long coat start to show, although the hair is still short at this point.

Turkish Van kittens develop slowly, and by around 18 months begin to resemble the adult cat. The coat will continue to lengthen and fill in more completely through maturity.

Kittens should be fed two small meals a day, to aid in digestion. A high-quality food specifically formulated for kittens will help your Turkish Van to



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get a healthy start in life. Get your Turkish Van used to being groomed as a kitten; it will make life easier for both of you as the cat matures.

Immunizations are important to your cat's health. Core feline vaccinations are feline panleukopenia, also known as feline distemper, feline calicivirus (FCV), and feline herpesvirus type 1 (FHV-1). For cats over 16 weeks of age, one modified live virus dose of each is recommended. A booster shot should be given at one year, and every subsequent three years. Kittens under 16 weeks of age should receive parenteral (not through the digestive tract) dose at 6-8 weeks, 9-11 weeks, and again at 12-16 weeks of age. Feline rabies is also a core vaccine. An inoculation with killed rabies vaccine should be given to kittens at 12-16 weeks of age. A booster shot should be given at one year, and every subsequent three years. Some veterinarians administer recombinant vaccines rather than killed; discuss the differences with your vet.

Your Turkish Van Through the Years: The Turkish Van Adult

Turkish Vans reach maturity at around five years of age; spayed and neutered cats mature sooner. There is now no mistaking this breed with another; the cat looks distinctly like a Turkish Van at this point. Her head will have broadened and her ears, which seemed so large when she was a kitten, are now medium-sized in proportion to the rest of her. Her coat is thick and luxurious; male cats will have a lion-like ruff around their necks at this point.

As your cat matures, switch him from kitten food to a high-quality adult cat food. This will meet all of his nutritional needs and help to keep him healthy. Be sure to bring your Turkish Van to the vet annually, for a "well cat" check up. Stay current on your cat's vaccinations, to ensure the health of his immune system. Feline panleukopenia, also known as feline distemper, feline calicivirus (FCV), feline herpesvirus type 1 (FHV-1) and rabies vaccinations should be given to adult cats every three years.

Your Turkish Van Through the Years: The Turkish Van Senior

As cats age, their immune systems become less able to fight off infections and disease. Be sure to bring your Turkish Van senior to the vet each year to have her health checked. Turkish Vans are normally a healthy breed, and there are no breed-specific issues to be concerned with. Normal aging issues among cats include hyperthyroidism, hypertension, and diabetes. Some of these can be avoided through proper diet and regular exercise. As they age, some cats groom themselves less effectively; it is important to keep up with the grooming of your Turkish Van to avoid matting and an increase in hairballs.



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Medical Considerations

Turkish Van cats are a very hardy breed. There are relatively few health issues to be concerned with, other than those normally associated with an aging cat.

The average litter size of the Turkish Van is five kittens. The average life span of a Turkish Van is around 12 to 14 years. Properly cared for, many Turkish Vans live to their late teen years.



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