

## Selecting Your Cat

It's a great day today! Today is the day you go out to find your new friend and companion, your new cat. But where do you go to find her? What will you need to look for? What would you be wise to avoid? Let's take a look at each question.

Where do I find my new cat? There are a large number of places where cats are available for new homes. The local animal shelter is an excellent place to begin. They always have a very good selection of cats and kittens to choose from. With so many different breeds, sizes, colors, and ages to choose from you're almost sure to find a new friend just waiting for you to come and pick her up. Farmers frequently have kittens that are available to go to a new home. If you are interested in a particular breed of cat, contact their registry. They should be able to direct you to a reputable breeder in your area.

Now that you have looked over the cats or kittens available, how do you select right one for you? First and foremost, make sure the cat or kitten is healthy. Bright eyes, shining coat and a lively manner are indicators of good health. Interact with the kitten or cat. Does she hiss and pull away when you touch her or does she purr and rub her head against your hand? Is she patient or happy to be picked up, or is she frantic to get away? Does she walk away from people and sit down as far away as she can with her ears down or does she hold her ground and let her curiosity draw her to the new person. It will become obvious pretty quickly which kitten or cat will have the kind of personality that you will enjoy. Avoid the cat or kitten with an ugly attitude or that shows poor health. That will be the way to avoid heartbreak on down the road.

Another thing that you should consider is yourself. What do I mean? I mean that you should take stock of yourself. Most people are a sucker for kittens. Those little fluff balls with their sweet faces are nearly impossible to resist. Do you have the time and energy to deal with a lively kitten and her antics? (Oh, you mean I'm not supposed to swing on the drapes?) Perhaps you would be more comfortable with an older cat who already knows all about litter boxes and not climbing on top of the counter. A quiet adult who will sit on your lap and purr while you watch your favorite show may be more your speed. Be honest with yourself. You and your new cat will be much happier for it.

Okay, you've assessed yourself and the kittens and cats available to you. You've picked out your perfect new friend. On your way home think over what supplies you have at home. Do you have everything you need? A litter box with nice fresh litter? Is there a little scooper to clean her litter box with? A food dish and a water bowl? Do you have good quality food for her? Is it the one she is already used to? No? Perhaps you might want to stop and pick up a small bag of the one she's familiar with. It will be something she already knows in a strange place and may help her become comfortable in her new home faster. You can begin blending your preferred food into her old one in the coming days, eventually shifting her completely to her new food by the time the small bag ends.

There is much to consider when getting a new cat. Take your time. Make sure all your preparations are made. You will be well on your way to a happy life for you and your new cat.