

Unusual Cat Breeds

Are you looking to get a new cat soon? Great! You may want to consider a purebred cat. There are many breeds that can be found in this country, each with its own characteristic appearance and temperament and history. Think carefully about what you would like to see in your new companion. Perhaps you would care to consider something a little bit different:

The Munchkin

When you think of the Munchkin, think of a cat that is built like a dachshund. A cat built with a long body and short legs. Munchkins are a very recently developed breed. They have only been established since 1983. The foundation cat was a female named Blackberry who was rescued from dogs by school teacher Sandra Hochenedel. Blackberry was a black cat with very short legs. Found pregnant, she passed on her unusual body type to her kittens. Blackberry's son, Toulouse, was left unaltered and it wasn't long before there were a good number of short legged cats living around his owner's home. Strangely enough, Toulouse and his short legged sons had no trouble competing with standard toms for females.

In 1990 a study of the genetics of these short legged cats was conducted. The study found that only one copy of the short legged gene to create more cats with the same characteristic. The spines of these cats were also examined because there were fears that they would have issues just like the low long bodies dog (e.g. dachshund) have. Though nothing wrong was found at that time, judgment was reserved due to the extremely small population that existed at that time.

Munchkins were named for the little people in Wizard of Oz that Dorothy

met

when she first arrived in Oz. Breeders became interested in the quirky little Munchkin and began controlled breeding programs. The Munchkin was first introduced to the public at the Madison Square Garden Cat Show. The breed has faced some opposition.

There are people who believe that deliberately breeding for a mutation, even one that occurred naturally, is ethically wrong. The cats themselves seem unaware that they are in any way different from their long legged cousins. They self-assured, outgoing and curious in nature. Munchkins tend to be people-oriented and bond easily with their people. Munchkins leap and play just like other cats. The only difference is they can't jump as high due to their short back legs.

The Sphynx

If you ever wondered what a cat would look like naked, look no further.

The Sphynx is virtually hairless. Sebaceous oils secreted by the skin are normally transferred to the fur in other breeds. The Sphynx requires regular wiping down to remove these oils to prevent skin infections.

This breed originated in 1975 as spontaneous mutation in a shorthaired litter. One hairless kitten was born in that litter. She was named Epidermis. The following year a hairless male was born. He was called Dermis. When bred to normal shorthaired cats, Epidermis produced normal kittens. When Epidermis was bred to one of her sons, three hairless kittens resulted. The hairless gene was a recessive. Both parents must carry it in order for hairlessness to be expressed.

The breed was named after the great Sphynx monument of Egypt. The Sphynx cats are devoted, loyal companions, who love attention and will purr happily if

their favorite person is near them. They are very athletic and like to jump to high places or hang upside down from their climbing trees. Sphynx have strong personalities and don't like being left alone. A feline companion will help to keep a Sphynx happy and occupied while you are gone.

These very unusual cats are not everyone's' cup of tea. Give these very different cats a closer look. Their unique appearances and lively personalities might just make a great pet. These cats may be exactly what you are looking for in a new companion.