

BUYING A PEDIGREE KITTEN

What an exciting time it is going to be, now you have decided that you are going to buy a pedigree kitten to share your home, and be part of your family, but a few thoughts for you to consider, BEFORE, booking that first visit to see your kitten.

A kitten is for life, not just for Christmas. How very true that is. Whether your kitten is a pedigree or a moggy, it will probably be with you for the next 15-20 years, are you ready for that commitment?

Please take into consideration, the cost of looking after a kitten, not only the initial purchase price, but also microchipping and neutering, (if this has not already been carried out by the breeder), food, annual vaccinations and vet check-ups and, hopefully not, but perhaps vet costs in the case of accidents. Please insure your pet.

Consider what breed is suitable for your household. A cat is not just a cat. Some breeds are more extrovert and lively, while other breeds can be calmer and more reserved. Some need minimal grooming while others will need daily attention. Do your homework first. There is a lot of information on the internet, and don't be afraid to ask as many questions as you can think of!

So, having decided on your chosen breed, you will need to find a reputable breeder.

Visit a few breeder's, that have kittens available, so that you get to know what to expect, not all breeders have the same standards. You can then gauge what a breeder's premises should be like. However, DO NOT visit more than one breeder in the same day. This is to minimise any possibility of transferring infections from one breeder to another.

The happiest, healthiest and most confident kittens are brought up in the breeder's home, rather than reared in an outside cattery. However warm and clean the outside accommodation is, kittens need to learn how to mix socially with humans, other cats, and possibly dogs. To be a happy pet they need to have had the opportunity to experience a wide range of household noises. Those reared in isolation are often quite nervous, and despite the best intentions of some breeders, a radio playing in the cattery, just isn't sufficient.

The premises should be clean, with no strong smell of litter trays. If the premises are dirty, with uncleaned litter trays, dirty bedding, dirty water bowls etc, walk away.

If there appears to be too many cats and kittens all together, walk away.

If you are not happy with the situation, walk away.

You should see the kittens with their mother and litter mates, and they should all be bright and alert with no sign of sticky eyes, ear infections, fleas or diarrhoea. The breeder should allow you to handle all the kittens, not just the one you are interested in. Do not be tempted to choose a kitten that appears terrified or unhappy, or because you feel sorry for it.

When you find a breeder that you are totally happy with, and are pleased with the conditions, in which they live, you can then discuss with the breeder, the kitten you are interested in.

Many breeders have waiting lists for kittens, so be prepared to wait for a kitten of your chosen breed, and if you have decided on a specific colour, be prepared to be disappointed, breeders cannot always guarantee what colours will be produced from a particular mating, although they should know what the possibilities are.

A pedigree cat is ONLY a pedigree if it has been registered with a recognised body.

In the UK, this will probably be: Felis Britannica, (the English member of FIFe), The GCCF, TICA, or more recently, possibly CFA. However, there are many more organisations that register cats worldwide, all with their own registration policies and requirements. The breeder should be able to tell you which authority the kittens will be registered with, and whether you will be supplied with a signed and sealed certified pedigree, (as is the case with Felis Britannica), or a Certificate of Registration and a breeder prepared pedigree, (as is the case with GCCF).

Whichever organisation your kitten will be registered with it should be possible for you to register the transfer of ownership from the breeder, into your name.

All kittens should receive a full course of vaccinations prior to leaving for their new home. The vaccinations are given in two doses, the first at approximately 9 weeks of age, and the final one 3 weeks later. Normally the breeder will keep the kittens for a week after the final vaccination, to ensure that there have been no adverse effects, although very unusual it does sometimes happen. Your kitten will therefore be a minimum of 13 weeks old before you can take it home.

Prior to collecting your kitten, the breeder should give you written advice on feeding, in order that you can have everything ready for the big day, providing the same food when you take your kitten home. A change of diet, especially when young can create digestive problems. It is also useful to carry on using the same cat litter, as used by the breeder, to avoid accidents in a strange environment.

On collection, you should be given the vaccination certificate, the microchip certificate, if this has been done prior to collection, in order that you can update the information with the chip company, the certified pedigree, or registration certificate. If the pedigree or certificate is not available at the time of collection, ensure that you receive a signed receipt from the breeder, for the full purchase price, together with a signed undertaking that the documentation will be sent to you when it is available. Most breeders also provide a limited period of insurance, so do ask about this, and make sure you take the certificate home with you.

Having read this advice sheet, and with a bit of common sense you should be able to enjoy the company of your kitten for many years to come. Don't forget, if you have any problems at all, or if you cannot keep the kitten, for whatever reason, PLEASE contact the breeder in the first instance who should give you as much help and assistance as possible.

Felis Britannica

Breeding Health & Welfare Commission