



# TICA Tonkinese Breed Introduction

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**General Description:** Wrapped in a mink coat with sparkling aqua eyes, the gregarious Tonkinese is purring solid package of pure love who knows that your whole purpose for being is to give all your love and attention to him. They are a medium-sized muscular cat with a sense of humor and will entertain you for hours with their antics. While often considered a new man-made breed, they are actually an old breed that appears in 'The Cat-Book Poems of Siam' from the Ayudha Period (1358-1767). These affectionate, social cats are outgoing and lively but also like nothing better to curl up in your lap and bask in your undivided attention. It blends the best of both worlds from its Siamese and Burmese ancestry to create a delightful cat that adds joy to the lives of everyone lucky enough to own one.

**History:** The Tonkinese developed from a cross between the Siamese and the Burmese. Often considered the first Burmese, we now recognize that Wong Mau was actually the first Tonkinese and she came to the US in 1930. Burmese breeders worked with Wong Mau to isolate the brown sepia color we now see in the Burmese breed. Wong Mau herself was actually a mink Tonkinese although the breed had yet to be defined. By the 1960s the Burmese type was well established and very different to the Siamese. Jane Barletta decided she wanted to create a cat that was in between the two extremes and set about developing such a breed that would actually recreate the Tonkinese from an earlier period. At about the same time, Margaret Conroy in Canada also bred a Burmese to a Siamese-in her case she had a shy Burmese female from England that she was reluctant to ship to a stud and a judge suggested she breed the Burmese female to a Siamese. The resulting kittens with their tan coats and aqua eyes fascinated Margaret and she started working with the color. Jane and Margaret started to work together to develop the moderate breed that blended the unique traits of two different breeds into a third unique confirmation that we know today as the Tonkinese.



**Personality:** The warm and loving Tonkinese likes nothing better than to be with you-on your shoulder, on your lap, or overseeing everything you do. They are intelligent cats with a long memory and a strong will so persistence pays off when training them. They love to invent and play games from playing fetch with a favorite toy to engaging in a game of tag with other cats. Tonkinese greet and entertain all your visitors, sure that the guests have come to visit the Tonkinese in the household. While playing games and chasing through the house is a favorite pastime, the Tonkinese also loves to cuddle and is best for anyone wanting a loving lap cat as a companion. These gregarious cats also enjoy the company of children, dogs and other pets. While they are not as vocal as a Siamese, Tonkinese will hold chatty conversations with you and expect your full attention while they talk with you.

**Traits:** Tonkinese come in a variety of colors with patterns of differing intensity: Seal, Chocolate, Cinnamon, Red, Blue, Lilac, Fawn, Cream and the tortoiseshell counterparts of these colors; patterns strike the medium between the pointed Siamese and the solid sepia Burmese with varying intensity resulting in Pointed (high contrast and closer to the Siamese pattern), Mink (medium contrast and the pattern most closely associated with the breed), and Solid (low contrast and closest to the sepia Burmese). No matter what color the Tonkinese is painted, the coat is short and close to the body with a very silky feel reminding one of a cat all wrapped up in a luxurious mink coat. While sparkling aqua eye color is often considered the defining characteristic of the Tonkinese, it is not the only eye color that a Tonkinese can have. Just as the mink pattern is halfway between the Siamese and the Burmese, so the aqua eye color halfway between the sapphire blue of the Siamese and the deep gold of the Burmese and Mink-patterned cats have aqua eyes. The Pointed Tonkinese, though, have more of the Siamese characteristics along with brilliant blue eyes ranging from glittering sky blue through violet. The Solid pattern cats have a shimmering chartreuse eye color (green-gold to yellow-green) that is closer to the spectrum of the Burmese eye color. The solid muscular Tonkinese is a medium-sized cat that is neither cobby nor svelte and is surprisingly heavy. Males weigh from 8 to 12 pounds and females range from 6 to 8 pounds. They appear alert and active and everything about them is moderate. Their sparkling eyes, shaped like a peach pit with an almond top and rounded bottom, are set into a pleasant modified wedge with a blunt muzzle. The medium-sized ears are pricked slightly forward emphasizing the cat's alertness. Keeping the Tonkinese's coat sleek and soft is easy as the short thick coat does not need a lot of maintenance. A rubber brush used once a week removes any loose dead hair and an occasional bath keeps the mink-like coat at its very best.