



General Description

The racy, low-slung Munchkin is built for speed and agility. To appreciate these bundles of energy, one has to know one. They have lots of energy and great cornering speed—just like the sleek race cars they resemble—and tend to stay low to the ground although they are perfectly capable of jumping. They are a cat that provokes a reaction because of their short legs—those that do not know the cats in person see only a handicap whereas those that know them have come to love the bundle of joy that sees no limits. Badgers, ferrets, otters, raccoons, and squirrels are just a few of the animals in the wild that have short legs to help them survive—some are diggers, some are climbers and, in the case of otters, some are swimmers, but their short legs have evolved to help their survival skills. Dachshunds, Bassetts, and Corgis are a few of the dog breeds developed with short legs for specific purposes—Bassetts are scent hounds and short legs put them closer to the scent while Corgis are herding dogs that need to turn on a dime, with rapid twists and turns to herd the animals in their charge. Munchkins are the same as every other cat—except they have short legs, speed & exceptional cornering skills, and a great deal of love to offer their devoted owners.

History

The Munchkin is not a new mutation. Short-legged cats have been recorded throughout the years and around the globe. In a British veterinary report in 1944, Dr. H E Williams-Jones described four generations of short-legged cats including an 8-year-old black female that had extremely healthy life. The report stated that her dam, grand-dam and progeny all were similar and the only difference between them and normal cats were the short legs. This line disappeared during WWII. The trait was also seen in Stalingrad in 1956, in New England in 1970 and Louisiana in the 1980s. In 1983 Sandra Hockenedel found a pregnant short-legged female that became the foundation for the breed we call the Munchkin. Sandra named the cat Blackberry. She gave a male, Toulouse, from one of Blackberry's litters to her friend Kay LaFrance and it is from these two cats that the breed was established using domestic cats as an outcross to ensure a diverse gene pool.

TICA accepted the Munchkin into its New Breed development program in September 1994. The program tracks the pedigrees of cats used to create the new breeds and monitors the breeding statistics as the breed develops under the oversight of the Genetics committee. The breeding data showed that the short legs in the cat followed a dominant pattern of inheritance like that in the Corgi and the Dachshund. After years of development and observation, the Munchkin achieved TICA Championship status effective May 2003.

Personality

These sociable cats are extremely playful and love to run, chase and play with toys. They love company including children, dogs and other pets, leading them a merry chase as they zoom by in their games. Munchkins are extremely curious and will sit up on their hind legs like a rabbit to get a better view of something that has caught their attention. These self-assured cats leave no stone unturned or corner unexplored. They may not jump from the floor to the top of the bookcase in a single bound but they will show off their jumping prowess and intelligence as they find a path that takes them there in smaller steps. Once you know them, these lovable little cats capture your heart forever.



Traits

Munchkins come in both coat lengths and a veritable painter's palette of colors and patterns. The colors and patterns have been introduced through the outcross program that maintains the breed's genetic diversity. In some cases, other breeds have been used to introduce specific features. However, a Munchkin is a unique breed and should never resemble a miniaturized version of another breed. Shorthaired Munchkins have a medium-plush, all-weather coat whereas the longhairs have semi-long, silky all-weather coat.

They are a small to medium sized cat and weigh between 5 and 9 pounds when fully grown. Other than their short legs, they look just like any normal cat. The short legs are a natural mutation that shortens the long leg bones similar to the one that gives the Corgis and Dachshunds their short stature. However, the spine of the cat differs in structure from that of a dog and so the short legs do not result in the spinal problems that sometimes appears in canines. And any concerns about mobility are quickly erased as you watch the Munchkin dashing around and cornering tightly in whatever game they are playing.

Grooming is quick and easy. Shorthair Munchkins should be combed once a week to help remove loose dead hair. Comb the longhaired Munchkins twice a week to remove the dead hair and prevent tangles or mats from forming.