

The British Shorthair



Overview

According to the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA), the British Shorthair is the fifth popular breed of 2013. The British Shorthair is characterized by a chubby face, chipmunk cheeks, and a happy smile, made famous by the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." As mature adults, they are relatively calm cats when compared to most other short haired breeds. They are an easygoing, very affectionate cat that is not very vocal. The British Shorthair can become very attached to their owners. They tend to get along with all members of the household, no matter what the age. However, the British Shorthair does not like to be carried! They are not acrobats, and can actually be clumsy at times. They do well in multi-species households where they are mixed with dogs, rabbits, birds and other pets.

History

The British Shorthair is probably the oldest English breed of cat, which can trace their ancestry to Roman domestic cats. As one of the first cats in the cat fancy, this breed has changed very little over the centuries. Between 1914 and 1918, the British Shorthair was crossed with Persians to introduce the longhair. Then the cats born with the short coats would go into the British Shorthair breeding program while the longhairs would go into the Persian breeding programs. Also early on, it was simply the blue shorthair which had two distinct types of cat; the sturdy, compact, and round headed British and the long, elegant, triangle headed Russian. These two would compete together, and would be interbred together, before they were separated into their separate breeds. It was after WWI that the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy stated that



to be shown a cat had to be a 3rd generation descendant of a Persian/British Shorthair cross. This decision reduced the breeding stock of British Shorthairs, and then events of WWII almost lost the British Shorthair lines altogether. Breeders had to go back to breeding domestic shorthairs, Russian Blues, and Persians along with others to help reestablish the British Shorthair. The British Shorthair gained breed recognition with the CFA in 1980.

Personality

The British Shorthair is friendly, affectionate, loyal, intelligent, quiet, calm, and yet maintain an air of proper etiquette. They enjoy attention but in an undemanding way. They would rather snuggle up beside you than sit in your lap. And though



they are not active cats, they do have their moments of kitteness...running around, acting like a clown, and clumsy at times. But don't expect them to do high flying toy acrobats, nor do they enjoy being carried around. The British prefers to keep its feet on the ground. As far as intelligence, these cats can be easily trained and are very adaptable. Their wonderful disposition makes them great family pets.

Traits

The British Shorthair is a medium to large compact muscular cat. They are a slow maturing breed that does not reach their full size until 3 years of age. Mature males can range from 9-17 pounds, while females range from 7-12 pounds. The British Shorthair should have a broad, full chest, short strong legs, and a short thick tail that tapers slightly to a rounded tip. They have round heads with short noses, chubby cheeks, and rounded whisker pads. The eyes are also round and wide. The coat is short and extremely dense and plush. While the classic blue is still the most popular color, the British Shorthair does come in a wide variety of colors. Maintaining this coat requires no more than a quick comb to easily remove any loose dead hair. The coat does not typically tangle.

Health

No specific breed health problems affect this breed. However, the British Shorthair does love food. Since they are not an active cat, they can quickly gain weight. Therefore it is important to keep an eye on their feeding portions to make sure they don't become obese. The British is a larger cat ranging from 9-18 pounds, but this should be from their muscular bodies and not from fat. Using teasers and training them to fetch, helps them to burn calories while toning their muscles.

