

PASSION *for* PETS

British Shorthair - Information Sheet



ORIGIN - Although there are only written records for the British Shorthair back to the beginning of the century the breed has been in existence for hundreds of years. The first shorthair cats were probably brought to Britain by invading Roman troops and they feature in engravings and paintings through the centuries. They were exported in large numbers to the New World where they were very popular. The variety of colours and coat patterns available today have come about from the selective breeding of the best street cats during the nineteenth century and continuing careful breeding plans to the present day.

DESCRIPTION - The British Shorthair is one of the largest breeds of cat. It is chunky and substantial and the male is much larger than the female. The face is round with full cheeks and the nose is short and broad. The chin is deep and strong. The tip of the chin is in line vertically with the tip of the nose. The ears are small and rounded and set so as to blend with the round contour of the head. The eyes are large and round. The head is set on a short thick neck. The body is cobby with a short level back. The chest is deep and the shoulders are strong. The legs are short and strong with round paws. The tail is thick and of medium length.

COLOUR - The British Shorthair is bred in over one hundred colour and coat pattern combinations. The coat is short, dense and should not show any tendency to softness or fluffiness. Self Coloured British Shorthair. The coat is one single colour and shows no shading to the roots. In all colours except the white there is no white hairs. 'White' - pure snowy white with no yellow tinge. Nose leather and paw pads pink. Eye colour can be deep sapphire blue or deep gold, orange or copper. In the odd eyed white there will be one eye of each colour. 'Black' - jet black. Nose leather and paw pads black. 'Chocolate' - any shade of rich chocolate. Nose leather and paw pads chocolate or pink. 'Lilac' - frosty grey with a pinkish tone. Nose leather and paw pads pinkish lilac. 'Red' - deep rich red. Nose leather and paw pads brick red. 'Blue' - light to medium blue. Nose leather and paw pads blue. 'Cream' - pale cream. Nose leather and paw pads pink. Eye colour in all the above colours except the white is deep gold, orange or copper. Tabby British Shorthair - The tabby is the oldest colour of British Shorthair and is indicative of its wild cat origins. Classic Tabby - The tabby markings must be clearly defined and intense in colour. The forehead will show the classic tabby trademark of the 'M' which gives the impression of a frown. Unbroken stripes run from the outer corners of the eyes and there are narrow lines on the cheeks. There will be numerous unbroken necklaces around the neck and chest. The ears will show the other classic tabby trademark the thumbprint, a patch of base colour surrounded by the colour of the markings. Over the top of the head run stripes, which extend down into the shoulders. The markings on the shoulder resemble the outline of a butterfly. An unbroken line runs down the spine and there will be stripes on either side running parallel to it. 'Oyster-shaped' patches appear on both flanks surrounded by one or more unbroken rings. The tail has as many unbroken rings as possible and the tip is the same colour as the markings. The legs have even bracelets from the body to the toes. The toes and tummy are spotted. The cats will have symmetrical markings on both sides. The eye colour is deep gold, orange or copper. Mackerel Tabby - The difference between a Classic tabby and a Mackerel tabby is in the body markings. In the Mackerel tabby there is a narrow unbroken spine line and on either side of this is a broken line running parallel to it from which numerous narrow lines run vertically down the body. This forms the Mackerel pattern. The tail rings are numerous and may be broken or unbroken. Spotted - The Spotted cat has the same head pattern as the Classic and Mackerel tabbies but

the body is patterned with oval, round or rosette shaped spots which form a tabby pattern. The tail has numerous narrow rings or spots. Tortie Tabby British Shorthair - In the tortie tabby the tabby pattern is overlaid with shades of red or cream. The coat is mingled or patched with red in the non-dilute colours and cream in the dilute colours. The tortie colours and tabby patterns must both be obvious. The eye colour in all but the silver varieties will be deep gold, orange or copper. In all the above patterns the silver gene may be evident. This shows as a silvery base colour and silvery roots to the marking hairs. The eye colour in the silver varieties will be green or hazel. Tortoiseshell British Shorthair - The tortoiseshell is a mixture of the base colour with red or cream hair forming mingled colours. The mingling should be even over the whole cat and both colours clearly evident. There should be no obvious patches of any one colour but a small blaze on the face is allowed. The tortoiseshell can be blue, chocolate, lilac or black. The nose leather and paw pads will be appropriate to the colour but may be mottled with pink. The eye colour is deep gold, orange or copper. Tortoiseshell & White British Shorthair - This cat has patches of any of the above tortoiseshell colours with white. The patches should be well defined and without tabby markings. At least one third but no more than one half of the cat should be white. Patches of colour must be present on the head, ears, cheeks, back, tail, legs and sides. The nose leather and paw pads may be pink and/or the colour appropriate to the body colour. The eye colour is deep gold, orange or copper. Bi-Colour British Shorthair - The Bi-colour has patches of one self colour and white. At least one third but no more than one half of the cat should be white. Patches of colour must be present on the head, ears, cheeks, back, tail, legs and sides. The nose leather and paw pads may be pink and/or the colour appropriate to the body colour. The eye colour is deep gold, orange or copper. Smoke British Shorthair - The smoke is genetically silver and this produces a silver undercoat giving maximum contrast with the self or tortie coloured top coat. There should be no tabby markings. The nose leather and paw pads colour correspond with the top coat colour. The eye colour is deep gold, orange or copper. Tipped British Shorthair - This is another genetically silver variety in which the colour is limited to the ends of the hair and the root ends of the hair appear silvery white. The tipping appears on the head, back, flanks, ears, and tail and should be evenly distributed throughout. The even distribution of the tipping is more important than the degree which may be heavy or pale. The chest, chin and tummy will be pale. The tipped varieties can be black, blue, chocolate, lilac, red or cream or any of the tortie colours. The nose leather will be brick red and outlined with the colour appropriate to the coat. The paw pads will be appropriate to the coat colour and may be mottled in the case of torties. The eye colour in all colours will be deep gold, orange or copper except in the black tipped which will be green. There is also a golden tipped British Shorthair. This cat has hair that is a rich golden apricot tipped with black or dark brown. The nose leather is brick red outlined with black or dark brown. The paw pads are black or dark brown. The eye colour is green. Colourpointed British Shorthair - The colourpoint has darker points and a paler body. There is a good contrast between the body and points. 'Seal' - The points are seal brown and the body is pale fawn. 'Blue' - The points are a medium blue and the body is glacial white. 'Chocolate' - The points are milk chocolate and the body is ivory. 'Lilac' - The points are pinkish grey and the body is magnolia. 'Red' - The points are rich red and the body is creamy white. 'Cream' - The points are cream and the body is creamy white. The above colours are also available as tortie points, tabby points, tortie tabby points, smoke points, silver tabby points and tortie silver tabby points. In the tortie and tabby points the pattern is only found on the points the body is a solid colour appropriate to the main colour of the points. The nose leather and paw pads are appropriate to the points colour. The eye colour is deep clear blue.

COAT LENGTH – Short

AGE EXPECTANCY - British Shorthairs usually live into their early teens but it has been known for them to live much longer.

WEIGHT / HEIGHT RANGE - 4 - 7kgs

AILMENTS - The British Shorthair is a sturdy healthy breed and suffers from no specific health problems. They are capable of living into their teens but an annual health check from about the age of eight is advisable. This may include teeth cleaning and a blood test for liver and kidney function.

PERSONALITY - The British Shorthair is a big soft lump of a cat. These are the 'gentle giants' of the cat world. They are loving and affectionate. They are good with children and other animals. They do not continuously demand human attention and are quieter than their foreign counterparts. Nor do they have the curious nature that gets many foreign breeds into trouble and if allowed out in the garden they are unlikely to roam. However they are often more than happy to be indoor cats.

ENERGY – Medium

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NOISE – Low

CHILD SUITABILITY – High

COMPATABILITY WITH CATS – High

OTHER ANIMAL COMPATIBILITY - Medium

FEEDING & GROOMING

FEEDING – The British Shorthair is a large cat and will require approximately 70 Kcals per kg bodyweight per day of food. However, many British Shorthairs are prone to obesity, particularly neuters, and some restriction on their diet may be necessary.

UPKEEP - One of the reasons that the British Shorthair became so popular in the last century was because it needed no grooming. The coat is short and dense and the cat can easily look after it itself.

SHEDDING - Little