



The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.
World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats

260 East Main Street • Alliance OH 44601
Phone: 330-680-4070 • Fax: 330-680-4633
www.cfa.org

TURKISH VAN



Front Top: CH Tanzervan's Offer Me Cash
(Brown Tabby & White Male)

Front Bottom: GC, BW Abykatzen Rock N' Roll Rebel
(Red Tabby & White Male)

Back: CH, BW Tanzervan's Skippa Star's Lace
(Blue Patched Tabby & White Female)



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TURKISH VAN

The cat known in the United States as the Turkish Van is a rare and ancient breed that developed in central and southwest Asia, which today encompasses the countries of Iran, Iraq, southwest Soviet Union and eastern Turkey. "Van" is a common term in the region that has been given to a number of towns, villages and even a lake - Lake Van - so it is no surprise that the uniquely patterned cat native to the region was named the "Vancat" by the residents.

They were first brought to England in 1955 as the Turkish cats, but this was later changed to Turkish Van to avoid confusion with the Turkish Angora. Although the breed has an ancient lineage, the Turkish Van is a relative newcomer to the United States, arriving in 1982. They are considered regional treasures in their homeland, and are not readily available for export to other countries. Even in areas where the breed has been known for centuries, they are still relatively rare.

The breed was first brought into Europe from the Middle East by returning crusaders, and has been known by a variety of names over the centuries such as the white ringtail and the Russian longhair. A common misconception is that the Turkish Van is simply a color variation of the better known Turkish Angora. In reality, the Van and the Angora are distinct breeds that developed in geographically distant regions of Turkey. When seen together, the differences in type, size, boning and coat are readily apparent.

The coloration of the Turkish Van, which is considered by many to be the original breed to carry the piebald gene, calls for a white, semi-longhaired cat with colored markings restricted primarily to the head and tail. Other piebald cats that have been selectively bred for many generations to achieve similar markings are said to be "van-patterned" after the breed that originally sported it. The coat lacks an

undercoat and has a very unique cashmere-like texture that makes it water-resistant. This brings us to another interesting feature of this breed - they love water and in their native region they have been termed "the Swimming Cats."

The Turkish Van takes three to five years to reach full maturity and is a large and agile cat of substantial strength. They are very intelligent as well as curious and make very rewarding companions in the right home. The breed is a healthy one and the unique coat does not lend itself to matting, so they require little grooming.

Pricing on Turkish Vans usually depends on type, applicable markings and bloodlines distinguished by Grand Champion (GC), National Regional winning parentage (NW or RW) or of Distinguished Merit parentage (DM). The DM title is achieved by the dam (mother) having produced five CFA grand champion/premier (alter) or DM offspring, or sire (father) having produced fifteen CFA grand champion/premier or DM offspring. Usually breeders make kittens available between twelve and sixteen weeks of age. After twelve weeks, kittens have had their basic inoculations and developed the physical and social stability needed for a new environment, showing, or being transported by air. Keeping such a rare treasure indoors, neutering or spaying and providing acceptable surfaces (e.g. scratching posts) for the natural behavior of scratching (CFA disapproves of declawing or tendonectomy surgery) are essential elements for maintaining a healthy, long and joyful life.

There are CFA clubs devoted to the promotion, protection and preservation of the Turkish Van breed. For more information, please send inquiries to CFA at cfa@cfa.org.