



Pet Buyers Guide

Prospective pet owners who are considering adding a cat or dog to their family have an exciting journey in front of them. While the future is full of promise for you and your next pet, buying a puppy or kitten isn't the simplest thing to do – the choices you make now will have consequences for your pet's long-term welfare. You and your pet deserve the time and effort it takes to research the best breeds and breeders for your family.

Whether you're a seasoned pet owner or a first-timer, this guide will help you navigate the exciting process of choosing a pet that fits your lifestyle and brings new life into your home.

Determining the Right Breed for You

Choosing the right breed of cat or dog is crucial and should align with your lifestyle, living situation, and family dynamics. Each breed possesses unique characteristics, and it's important to match a pet's temperament, size, energy level, and grooming needs with your own capacities and expectations.

Temperament

Some breeds are known for their calm, gentle demeanour, making them excellent companions for families with children or elderly members, while others might be more energetic and suitable for active individuals or those interested in training their pet for specific tasks.

Size and Space

Consider the size of the pet and the space available in your home. Larger dog breeds typically require more room and exercise, while smaller breeds or cats might be more appropriate for apartment living.

Energy Level

High-energy breeds, such as Border Collies or Siberian Huskies, are best suited for owners who can provide lots of physical exercise and mental stimulation. On the other hand, breeds like the French Bulldog or the Persian cat are more laid-back and require less physical activity.

Grooming Needs

Some breeds require regular grooming, which can be time-consuming and costly. For instance, long-haired breeds like the Maine Coon or the Afghan Hound require frequent brushing to prevent matting and skin issues.

Health Issues and Life Expectancy

Researching potential health issues and the life expectancy of breeds is important. Some breeds may be prone to specific genetic conditions that can impact long-term health and care expenses.



Finding the Right Breeder

Once you have decided on the breed, finding a reputable breeder is the next step. This should be a 2 way interview process, you should be interviewing the breeder to make sure they are responsible and ethical, and the right breeder will be interviewing you to make sure that you are a good fit for their animals. This can be a daunting task, but there are resources that can help you in your search.

Resources for Finding Breeders

Breeder Lists:

Reputable breedings organisations will have a list of their members that should be available to the public. You can reference these lists, which usually include the species and breed of pet that they breed.

Veterinarian Recommendations:

Your local vet can be a great source of information on where to find reputable breeders for the specific breed of pet you want.

The PetsForHomes Breeder Directory:

PetsForHomes' breeder directory connects soon-to-be pet owners with responsible and ethical breeders. All breeders in the directory are required to provide proof of registered breeder club membership (such as RPBA), as well as other information to confirm their identity.

Visiting the Breeder's Facility/Home

In some cases physically visiting the breeder's facility/home may not be an option due to distance or quarantine reasons. In this case, ask the breeder for a virtual tour and have a video call with the breeder where they can show you their breeding setup.



Identifying a Responsible and Ethical Breeder

A responsible breeder will be transparent about their breeding practices and open to your questions. They should be committed to the welfare of their animals and adhere to the highest standards in breeding. Good breeding organisations will hold their breeders accountable for how they raise their pets, so that they can make sure that they can safeguard the welfare of pets both now and in the future. Certain tools such as [RPBA's Verify a Breeder tool](#) can be invaluable when figuring out whether the breeder you're talking to is who they say they are.

Key Indicators of a Responsible Breeder

Transparency:

A good breeder will be happy to share information about their breeding practices and show you where the animals are housed.

An ethical breeder will allow you to meet the mother of the litter (and also the father if they own them), see where the litter is raised and how they are cared for. You should be able to meet the litter before you put a deposit down and be able to receive regular updates.

Registration:

A responsible breeder should be able to show proof of their breeding licence for the state they live in and that they are part of a breeding organisation with a Code of Ethics related to breeding.

Health Testing:

All responsible breeders will conduct genetic testing of their breeding animals to ensure they are free from any hereditary conditions which can be passed on to their offspring.

Knowledge:

The best breeders will know about the care needs of the animals they breed, how much exercise they require, what amount of mental stimulation they need, whether they would suit a quiet home or a busy home with lots of engagement.

Questions:

A responsible breeder will ask you questions about your lifestyle, if you have owned pets before and what type, what sort of commitment you are able to make to spending time with your pet each day.

Questions to Ask the Breeder:

Breeding Practices:

How often do they breed their animals, and what is their primary goal in breeding?

Puppy or Kitten Socialisation:

What steps do they take to ensure the young animals are well-socialised and prepared for a variety of household environments?

Return Policy:

What is their policy if you are unable to keep the pet?

Expectations from a Responsible Breeder

Purchasing a pet from a reputable breeder comes with certain expectations regarding the support and documentation you should receive.

What to Expect

- Health Guarantee
- Vaccination Records
- A clear contract that outlines the responsibilities of both the breeder and the buyer, including any spay/neuter agreements or restrictions on breeding
- Flea, worming and vaccination records for the animal you are interested in
- Microchipping details (once old enough to be microchipped)
- Copy of DNA testing performed on the parent animals

Support After Purchase:

- Cooling-off period
- Lifetime rehoming

Ethical breeders will also remain available to provide advice on diet, health care, training, and other aspects of pet care.

Choosing the right pet and breeder is a significant decision that requires patience and thorough research. By carefully considering the breed that best matches your lifestyle and ensuring you deal with a responsible breeder, you can find a pet that will bring joy and companionship to your life for years to come. When in doubt, make sure that your breeder is a member of a recognised breeder organisation, making them someone who has affirmed their commitment to the welfare of all pets, regardless of breed.



Attention Please

Buying any pet sight unseen opens you up to being scammed out of your money. To protect yourself, we strongly recommend that you refrain from paying any deposit or transferring any money before doing the following:

- Seeing your potential pet in person
- Verifying the breeder with their breeding organisation or government body