# Maine Coon

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

Maine Coons are typically known as the gentle giants of the cat world. Though impressive in size, these playful, intelligent, and thick, yet silky, furred cats have captured the hearts of cat fanciers for centuries. Though they were first documented in colonial America, many theories exist about the breed's origins. Today, Maine Coons are considered to be the native longhaired breed of the United States. Despite their potentially mysterious beginnings, however, there is no denying their continuous popularity in both the home and show ring.

## Interesting Breed Facts:

**HISTORY:** The history of Maine Coons is not fully understood. But there are numerous theories as to how Maine Coons came into existence. Some biologically impossible ideas indicate a colonial house cat bred with a raccoon. Other ideas suggest modern Maine Coons are descendants of the Angora cats Queen Marie Antoinette sent to America in advance of her planned escape from France during the French Revolution. Regardless of how this beautiful breed began, however, it is known that Maine Coons were the first recognized American cat breed. In fact, a Maine Coon was the recipient of the first Best Cat award at the first major cat show in America. Their increasing popularity was threatened to the point of near extinction, however, as more and more exotic felines, including Persians and Angoras, were brought to America. But the past and future of the breed was secured with the development of the Maine Coon Breeders and Fanciers Association in 1968. Today, Maine Coons are considered the second most popular cat breed in America.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:** Maine Coons are one of the largest domestic cat breeds. Males commonly weigh 13 to 18 lbs; females average between 9 and 12 lbs. Their bodies are well-proportioned and muscular with a broad chest and an overall rectangular shape. Interestingly, the breed develops slowly and individuals do not achieve their full size until they reach three to five years in age. Everything about Maine Coons, however, is adapted to life and survival in the harsh winter climates of forested Northeastern America. They have silky, heavy, water-resistant coats that tend to be heavier on the stomach, ruff, and britches for protection from wet and cold. Their long, bushy tails easily wrap around the torso for added warmth. Their big, round, and tufted feet helped serve as a natural snowshoe. They also have heavily furred ears and large eyes. Traditionally, the Maine Coon is a brown tabby cat; however, the coat can be of any color except pointed colors or patterns. Eyes are typically green, gold, or copper though blue or odd (one blue and one gold) eye colors are often seen in white colored cats.

**TEMPERAMENT:** Though easy-going and good-natured, Maine Coons retain a fair amount of kitten-like energy throughout their lives. As such, they require daily play sessions with suitable cat toys. However, Maine Coons are not particularly demanding of their owner's attention. In fact, though the typical Maine Coon will follow her owner around the house and investigate the day's activities and chores, most prefer the proximity of companionship over full-time interaction with their owners. Additionally, the Maine Coon is not a very vocal breed, though they will use their distinct, chirping trill to express their intelligence and independence when necessary.

**PREFERENCES:** Maine Coons, like their human companions, tend to be creatures of habit. As a result, most train easily to fetch cat toys or accept a harness and leash for supervised excursions outdoors with their owners. Unlike many breeds, however, Maine Coons are usually not big climbers. Instead, they often prefer to chase objects on the ground and catch them with their large paws, which probably stems from their history as mousers on colonial farms. Though Maine Coons are typically easy to groom, they do require regular grooming sessions with a suitable brush or comb to help avoid mats and tangles of the fur. Typically, Maine Coons are very tolerant of dogs and other pets and generally favor children but may be leery around people they do not know very well.



*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*

**BEST FEATURE:** With their clown-like personality, affectionate nature, and relative ease of care, Maine Coons are well suited for life in large, active and animal-loving families. Though large in size, Maine Coons are not overbearing, provided they have plenty of avenues to explore their playful nature and intelligent, curious disposition. They also have a fairly long life expectancy of twelve to fifteen years when kept in good health.

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO OWNERS:** Since Maine Coons remain energetic throughout their lives, keeping them active and healthy can be a problem for the unprepared owner. In the past, Maine Coons often inherited health problems such as hip dysplasia and cardiomyopathy. However, responsible breeders routinely screen against these conditions. To help keep a Maine Coon healthy throughout their long lives, owners need to be prepared to stimulate this curious, intelligent, and playful breed with a variety of interactive toys and active companionship. To help control weight issues, Maine Coons should be fed a high-quality cat food or, if necessary, a low-calorie adult cat diet with a fresh supply of clean drinking water at all times.

## WE RECOMMEND FOR YOUR MAINE COON:

Ultimate Scratching Post
Towering, tip-resistant design suits the biggest Maine Coons

Laser Cat Toys
Entice your Maine Coon to actively play and pounce.

Doctors Foster and Smith Adult Dry Lite Cat Food
Reduced-calorie diet helps maintain your cat's healthy weight.

Dual-Sided Cat Brush
Easily untangles mats and brushes to a healthy coat shine.



*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*