

Leonberger

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Initially bred to resemble the lion depiction on a town's crest, Leonbergers are gentle, loyal, and affectionate animals. These dogs are large and intelligent. Their waterproof coats and webbed feet make them excellent water dogs. Leonbergers have a proud posture, striking black masked muzzle, muscular body, and - once adolescence is reached - a beautiful breast mane. Unlike many similar-sized dogs, Leonbergers are not as likely to drool, thanks to tight jowls and an absence of flews (the pendulous lower lip corners of certain dogs).



First bred by Leonberg, Germany mayor, Herr Heinrich Essig, in 1846, these large and elegant dogs instantly became favorites of European royalty. Though the exact breeds Essig used to cross-breed are unknown, they probably included Saint Bernards, Newfoundlands, and Great Pyrenees. Almost decimated after World War I, today's entire breed line was rescued from just 12 surviving dogs.

Interesting Breed Facts:

First recognized as a breed: Albert Kull wrote the first breed standard in 1895; Recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC) 2010.

UKC Grouping: Guardian.

Size: Average height at shoulder - approximately 30" for males, 27" for females. Weight ranges vary from 80-145 lbs. or larger, depending on gender.

Appearance: The Leonberger is a large dog, whose muzzle is masked in a dark black color. Their temperament is of extreme importance and must be even. Well proportioned, with a muscular body and a strong back, Leonbergers also have a well-feathered, bushy tail and ample feathering on the legs. Their ears hang down alongside their head. Their eyes



**#1
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are light to dark brown with an intelligent, friendly appearance. Their fairly long coats are golden-yellow to red-brown and fairly rough in texture.



Leonberger puppies need sound [nutrition](#) to ensure proper growth of their bones in relation to their muscles. As with any large breed dog, daily, low-impact exercise is also needed to keep weight under control and joints healthy.

Preferences: Though fond of water, Leonbergers enjoy any type of play and relish interaction. They prefer to be with their owners and do not do well without attention.

Best features: Playfulness, loyalty and intelligence make these clever dogs a great guardian companion.

Biggest challenge to owners: The breed's size may be the biggest challenge. Although keeping these intelligent giants occupied, properly fed, and exercised can also be difficult. [Obedience training](#) is a must.