

## American Quarter Horse

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# BREED PROFILE: AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE

Though known as the first true all-American horse breed, the American Quarter Horse has gained worldwide respect.

They were first developed, in part, as a race horse and are named for their ability to sprint a 1/4 mile race faster than any other breed. Today, however, American Quarter Horses are prized for their athleticism and their versatility, loyalty, and classic, well-muscled beauty. Equally at home under saddle or in harness, American Quarter Horses and their unmistakable silhouette have become a staple on the ranch, in the show ring, or on the trail.

### Interesting Facts:

#### History & Origins:

The American Quarter Horse is, in part, uniquely tied to the history of the United States. The breed was first developed in early 17th Century Colonial America. Early colonists bred select horses of Arabian, Turk, and Barb descent that had been previously brought to the New World with those breeds then arriving from England and Ireland. The eventual result was a strong, heavily muscled, and compact horse suited to both farm work and colonist-favored short-distance races. As pioneers pushed westward in the 1800s, however, the American Quarter Horse gained new respect. With keen cow sense (or ability to outmaneuver cattle) and a calm disposition, the breed quickly became the preferred companion on the vast cattle ranches that developed across the plains. Today, the American Quarter Horse is known as the world's most popular breed and is favored for nearly every facet of farm life, competition, show, and recreation.

**Size:** Stands 14.3 to 16.1 hands (57.2" to 64.4") high.

**Color & Markings:**

The American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), which was formed in 1940, recognizes 13 colors. The most prominent color is sorrel (reddish brown). Other colors include bay, black, brown, buckskin, chestnut, dun, red dun, gray (what most people call "white"), grullo, palomino, red roan and blue roan.



American Quarter Horses are also only allowed limited white markings on the face and below the knees. These markings may be of a variety of shapes, including stockings, stars, strips, and blazes. However, no American Quarter Horse may have white spots or patches anywhere other than the face or cannon.

**Physical Appearance:**

Though compact with a short body and head, American Quarter Horses are defined by their heavily muscled body, powerful shoulders and hindquarters, and strong, sturdy legs. Their heads are finely chiseled and of a flat profile with a wide forehead.

**Temperament:**

American Quarter Horses are generally calm and docile. They are also highly intelligent; however, most are easily trained, handled, and kept. Because of their gentle and steady demeanor, the breed is an ideal family horse and well suited for the beginning rider.

**Unique Characteristics:**

The American Quarter Horse is a unique combination of speed and strength. However, when combined with their gentle nature and versatility as both a work and pleasure horse, it is easy to see why the breed has gained such worldwide popularity. From the ranch to the show ring to the trail, American Quarter Horses continually please both spectator and rider with their sure-footed gait, agility, comfortable mount, and willingness to please.