

# Pet Buyer's Guide to Adopting a Maine Coon

*\*please note you will most likely pay a similar price regardless of whether the breeder does all of these things so why not get from a reputable breeder who does?!*

## BEFORE YOU ADOPT – THINGS TO CONSIDER & LOOK FOR

- Kittens are sometimes adopted based on an approved waiting list. This is NOT a bad thing. Be patient and get a healthy, well socialized kitten from a reputable breeder.
- Kittens should never be shipped via cargo (this is dangerous for the pet). If possible, make arrangements to pick up your kitten and see the cattery (and meet the parents). Delivery, by courier, is also an option. This is when another human hand carries the kitten in the plane's cabin.
- Does their website show full names of the parents and registered cattery name? Do they have information on a public site that is verifiable? Do they offer you references? Do you see any positive or negative posts online when you do a search by cattery name or breeder name?

## THE FELINE PARENTS

- Should be registered with one of the major cat registries, such as TICA.
- Should be DNA negative for the HCM mutation. Carriers (one copy) should NOT be bred.
- Should be DNA tested for the other common, Maine Coon diseases such as PK Deficiency and SMA. These diseases will be present when offspring have two copies of the DNA mutation. This means breeding one carrier to a non-carrier will not produce effected offspring.
- Should have clear echocardiograms for HCM prior to breeding and be checked on a regular basis throughout their breeding career (every 12-24 months).
- Ideally have had their hips checked for feline hip dysplasia (some also check for luxating patellas).
- Should be friendly and healthy (you should meet them in person during your cattery visit).
- Results of all tests should be given to new pet owners and provided to potential buyers if requested.

## THE KITTENS

- Should NEVER be allowed to leave for their new homes before 12 weeks of age
- Should be healthy and free of contagious disease and parasites when leaving.
- Should be microchipped
- Should have well-kitten check-ups, a health record & appropriate vaccination(s)
- Should be Feline Leukemia and FIV tested negative. Providing parentage testing for these means little – you need to know your own cat is clear as these are contagious diseases and not genetic.

- Should have a negative stool sample analysis with results provided. Deworming based on results.
- Should have an overall health & genetic health guarantee (via the contract)
- Should will be spayed/neutered at pick-up or on a spay/neuter agreement (the owners spay/neuter when the kitten is 6-10 months old) & cannot ever be bred. You are buying a pet.
- Should go to an indoor-only home, or outdoors only allowed in an enclosure such as a stroller, carrier, catio.
- Should go on a contract where the new owner agrees they will not be declawed (neither front nor back paws).

#### THE BREEDER

- Have a home that welcomes new owners to visit their kitten and the parents (or video to share their home and cats).
- Have a home that is clean.
- Should care that their kittens will be placed only in approved homes where they are given a lifetime of love.
- Feed a high-quality diet and receive regular vet care.
- Provide TICA/CFA/Major Association registration papers (once spayed/neutered)
- Provide a detailed contract & new owner provided health documentations (of kitten and parents)
- Provide the kitten's pedigree
- Provide food starter kits and/or a list of foods the kitten has been eating.
- Provide continued communication and assistance to the new owners.

#### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- You may adopt a kitten that develops an illness (such as a minor upper respiratory) once in your care. Moving to a new home is stressful and can lower their immune systems. Contact the breeder immediately, seek veterinarian care, and review your contract. Things do happen, it's how the breeder handles it that is important. Kittens should NEVER leave sick from the breeder though.
- Breeders that have kittens on demand might seem enticing, but please do your due diligence and research before impulse adopting.