



## ~~ TURKISH CATS ~~

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

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*In this leaflet we hope to answer your most common question about Turkish cats, however please remember that, like people, cats are all different and each have their own characters. The answers below are general observations, however individual animals will exhibit their own unique behaviour, which is what makes them so special to us.*

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### **GENERAL**

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#### **Are the Turkish cat breeds related to each other?**

The Turkish Van and Turkish Vankedisi are very closely related, differing only in coat colour. The intention is that the Van and Vankedisi can be inter-bred, with the offspring being registered according to whether they are white coated, or van-pattern coated.

The Turkish Angora was probably also related at some point in its ancestry, although from a breeding point of view there is no permissible out-crossing between the Turkish Angoras and the Turkish Van/Vankedisi. There are many similarities between them, however the basic bone structure is quite different with the Turkish Van/Vankedisi being more sturdy and muscular.

Turkish Vankedisi have completely white coats, whilst the Turkish Van has the very distinctive "van-patterned" markings. Conversely, the Turkish Angoras are available in a wide range of different coat colours and patterns, including white.

#### **Do they need any special attention or grooming?**

The silky nature of their coats combined with the lack of a woolly undercoat means that very little grooming is necessary. Occasionally one or two mattes may appear which need to be teased out, and a light brush now and again will always help keep the coat in good condition.

#### **Do they get on well with other cats & dogs?**

In general yes, although, like people, different cats will behave in different ways, and some will get on better than others. Some breeds of dog have a strong prey-instinct, and are not suitable for co-habiting with cats. Dog breed-clubs will be able to advise in this respect.

The Turkish Vans/Vankedisi are often described as being very dog like in their behaviour, and they seem to show an affinity with dogs. They can certainly stand up for themselves too, when necessary, so dogs beware!

## **Should I let my cat outside?**

People have strong views both ways on this issue, however most breeders would agree that entire (un-neutered) cats should never be allowed to roam freely. You might also want to bear in mind that pedigree cats are not generally as "street-wise" as domestic "moggies", and don't have a good understanding of things like road-safety. Another concern is the risk of theft, so how much do you value your cat? Would you let your child out unsupervised?

## **Is a Turkish cat the right cat for me?**

Only you can answer that question, although hopefully the information on this faq will help you decide. if you want a cat that is beautiful, elegant, intelligent, playful, and devoted, then certainly consider a Turkish Angora. If you want a cat that is dignified, mischievous, playful, dog-like and loving, then think about a Turkish Van or Vankedisi. However if you are concerned about getting cat hair on your clothes and furniture then you might find a shorthaired breed more suitable. You may have to wait a while if you set your heart on a Turkish cat, but that is all part of what makes them so special.

## **Is there a club for owners/breeders/admirers?**

Yes there is! The Turkish Van Cat Club represent all Turkish Cats, although since Turkish Angoras are so rare in the UK, and not recognised by the GCCF, there is only limited interest in them and limited support.

There are also several clubs in Europe, many of which can be found on the Internet.

## **Where can I buy a kitten?**

Have a look on our website for details of kittens available, or request a copy of our kitten list (see end for details). You could also contact a breeder directly. NEVER buy a pedigree kitten from a pet shop or department store, no reputable breeder would allow their kittens to be sold in this way and you have no recourse if things don't work out for you. Ask to see the kitten's parents; you should be shown the mother, although it may be that the father is not owned by the breeder. Beware of unscrupulous breeders! If in doubt, always consult a breed club like the Turkish Cat Society, they are there to advise and help you.

## **What does the Turkish "Evil-Eye" represent?**

The logo is known as Nazar Bonjuk in Turkey, and is a charm used to ward off evil. This superstition stems from the belief that a person can lay a curse upon another by giving them the "evil eye", however the Nazar Bonjuk wards the wearer by seeing through the curse, revealing it for what it is, and thereby negating its powers. Many Turkish households have one, and many Turkish breeders do too.

## **Where can I find out more?**

It is possible to buy books about the Turkish Angora cats, however there are no breed specific books about the Turkish Vans and Turkish Vankedisi. Visit our website (details at end) for more information about the cats, the club, and how to contact us.

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# *TURKISH VAN*

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## **What does a Turkish Van look like?**

Turkish Vans are semi-longhaired cats of substantial build, with a muscular body and wedge-shaped head. They are particularly characterized by their chalk white coat with coloured van-patterned markings on the head and tail. They have tufts of hair under their feet, and have no woolly undercoat which makes for easier grooming. Their oval eyes are blue or amber, or one of each (odd-eyed) although the colour can fade with age, the amber particularly taking on a greenish tinge.

## **Do they make good pets?**

Absolutely! It might be more apt to say that your Turkish Van owns you, rather than you owing it, since they are very intelligent cats and know how to get what they want! They are often described as being dog-like in behaviour, fetching paper balls and dropping them in front of you so that you can throw it again for them to chase, and in fact they seem to have an affinity with dogs no matter how large the dogs are. Turkish Vans are not lap-cats, although this isn't to say that they won't sit on your lap, but simply that they will sit on your lap when *they* want it, not when *you* want it! They have their moments, but in general they're quite confident easy-going cats.

## **Are Turkish Vans very vocal?**

Not particularly, although there are of course exceptions! Neutered cats seldom feel the need to make excessive noise, however you can expect them to announce their presence when they want attention.

## **Why is their coat pattern so unusual?**

It would be reasonable to think that their pattern has evolved this way so as to allow a better camouflage in the winter against the snow, and a cooler coat in the summer, although this is purely speculation. Many cats have some degree of white on them, but in the case of the Turkish Van this has been taken to the extreme such that the white covers nearly all of their body. Genetically, this is due to having two **S** genes which gives twice the amount of white spotting, although there are other contributory factors as well.

## **Why are they called Turkish Vans?**

There is a city in Eastern Turkey called Van, so the Van cat is a cat that comes from the region around Van. There is also a large lake called Lake Van with which the cats are associated. So the Turkish Van is a Turkish cat from Van!

## **Is my cat a Turkish Van?**

Many people think that because their cat appears to be van-patterned, then it must be a Turkish Van. However the van-pattern can occur in other breeds too, like Persians, so it's not a true test for the breed. More important is the ancestry, or pedigree of the cat, i.e. whether its sire and dam were Turkish Vans. Of course, many pet owners know nothing

about the parents, so they should then look at the build, coat texture and type, ear set, head shape, etc, etc.

Because Turkish Vans are quite rare, the chances are that your cat is NOT a Turkish Van, but without proof to the contrary, there's no harm in believing it is, although you should certainly not try to breed more Turkish Vans from it.

### **Do they really like swimming?**

In their native Turkey they are known to swim in shallow streams and lakes, however the temperatures there are very hot, so this might be the reason why. Having said that, they definitely have an affinity with water, and might like to paddle in the sink or even join their owner in the bath. So you may be lucky and have a swimming cat, but don't expect it by any means.

### **Where can I show my Turkish Van cat?**

Turkish Vans are recognised by many cat associations around the world. In Great Britain there are many shows organised by clubs affiliated to the GCCF, and others organised under TICA or FIFe rules, both of which recognise Turkish Vans. It's highly likely that there is a show near you at some point, but you will need to submit your entry well in advance and ensure you're familiar with the procedures.

### **Are they very rare and expensive?**

Because there are so few breeders of Turkish Vans, kittens can be scarce. However public awareness is such that not many people think of having a Turkish Van, so waiting lists can be very short or even non-existent. They are also very reasonable compared to many other breeds, so if you think a Turk is the cat for you then don't be put off.

### **Do Turkish Vans travel well?**

They're okay, but some can suffer from travel sickness. Giving them plenty of reassurance and personal contact will help. Be prepared though, just in case!

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# *TURKISH VANKEDISI*

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## **What does a Turkish Vankedisi look like?**

Turkish Vankedisi are pure white semi-longhaired cats of substantial build, with a muscular body and wedge-shaped head. Like Turkish Vans, they have tufts of hair under their feet, and have no woolly undercoat which makes for easier grooming. Their oval eyes are blue or amber, or one of each (odd-eyed) although the colour can fade with age, the amber particularly taking on a greenish tinge. They are, in effect, a pure white Turkish Van.

## **Why are they called Turkish Vankedisi?**

Although the Turkish Vankedisi is effectively a pure white Turkish Van, the GCCF have adopted the word *van* to mean a particular coat pattern, and since the pure white cat doesn't outwardly exhibit this coat pattern then it cannot be registered as a Turkish Van. Instead, the GCCF has approved the name *Turkish Vankedisi* which retains the references to the ancestry of the cats (Turkey, Van) whilst maintaining a distinct breed name. In fact *kedisi* is Turkish for *cat*!

In TICA there is no such thing as a Turkish Vankedisi. They are instead registered simply as solid white Turkish Vans.

## **Why can't I find much about them on the Internet?**

Although Turkish Vankedisi have been around for many years, only since 2005 has the name *Turkish Vankedisi* been approved by the GCCF, therefore there is little printed information about them. However as the name becomes more recognised, then the amount of information is increasing.

## **Do they make good pets?**

Absolutely! As with the Turkish Van cat, it might be more apt to say that your Turkish Vankedisi owns you, rather than you owing it, since they are very intelligent cats and know how to get what they want! They are often described as being dog-like in behaviour, fetching paper balls and dropping them in front of you so that you can throw it again for them to chase, and in fact they seem to have an affinity with dogs no matter how large the dogs are. Turkish Vankedisi are not lap-cats, although this isn't to say that they won't sit on your lap, but simply that they will sit on your lap when *they* want it, not when *you* want it! They have their moments, but in general they're quite confident easy-going cats.

## **Are Turkish Vankedisi very vocal?**

Generally not really, although there are exceptions, and some stud cats have been known to be very noisy indeed! Cats with impaired hearing are likely to be more vocal since they cannot hear themselves properly.

## **Do they like swimming?**

As with Turkish Vans, in their native Turkey they are known to swim in shallow streams and lakes, however the temperatures there are very hot, so this might be the reason why. Having said that, they definitely have an affinity with water, and might like to paddle in the sink or even join their owner in the bath. So you may be lucky and have a swimming cat, but don't expect it by any means.

## **Aren't all white cats deaf?**

No they are not, although they have a higher risk of being so. The highest risk is for the blue-eyed white cats, since the blue eye colour is caused by a lack of pigment in the eye in the same way as for white hair, and this acts as a measure of how much the pigment has been inhibited by the white gene. The white gene also affects development of the cochlea in the inner ear, so it's a matter of how much influence it has had. Think of it as a race during embryonic development between the formation of the hearing sensors and the spread of the disrupting white gene.

## **Where can I show my Turkish Vankedisi cat?**

Turkish Vankedisi can be shown at GCCF shows, and are entered into the same classes as Turkish Vans where they can win titles such as Champion, Grand Champion, or even Supreme Grand Champion! However in TICA shows they compete as white Turkish Vans, and can also win titles.

## **Are they very rare and expensive?**

There are even fewer breeders of Turkish Vankedisi than there are of Turkish Vans, so yes, they could be considered very rare at the moment. But, like with the Vans, few people think of having a Turkish Vankedisi, so waiting lists can be very short or even non-existent. They are also very reasonable compared to many other breeds, so if you think a Turk is the cat for you then don't be put off.

## **Do Turkish Vankedisi travel well?**

In general they're okay, but some can suffer from travel sickness. Giving them plenty of reassurance and personal contact will help. Be prepared though, just in case!

## **What will I get if I mate one with a Turkish Van?**

The Turkish Vankedisi is effectively a Turkish Van with a white coat covering over the usual van-patterned markings. Apart from that they are the same cat, so matings between them should be perfectly acceptable. In fact it is strongly recommended that Turkish Vankedisi cats are bred to Turkish Vans rather than another Vankedisi, since white to white matings are much more likely to produce kittens with impaired hearing. If this breeding policy has been followed for the Turkish Vankedisi, then mating it to a Turkish Van should theoretically produce 50% Turkish Vans and 50% Turkish Vankedisi. Of course, nature is not quite so predictable as that, so don't assume anything!

If both parents of a Turkish Vankedisi are white, then there is a chance that the cat has a double-dose of the gene that gives it the white coat (and which is also responsible for deafness). In this case the cat would always produce white kittens, even when mated to a Turkish Van.

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# ***TURKISH ANGORA***

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## **What does a Turkish Angora cat look like?**

The Turkish Angora Cat is a semi-longhaired cat of medium to light build. It has a graceful appearance with a long flowing body finished with a feathered tail that is often held in an upwards curve. Its large ears are set high upon the head, and its face is wedge-shaped with almond shaped eyes. Its coat is fine and silky, and the lack of an undercoat makes grooming very straight forward.

## **Why are they called Turkish Angoras?**

Angora is the former name of the capital of Turkey, Ankara. The cats are named after it, probably because they were originally found there by traders from other countries.

## **Is this the same as the Angora cat that is bred in the UK?**

No. In the United Kingdom there is a breed of cat that used to be called an Angora, however this is a man-made breed that has no connection with Turkey at all. The British Angora has since been renamed to an Oriental Longhair (Angora).

## **What about Angora rabbits and goats?**

The rabbits and goats which share their name with the Turkish Angora cats are in no way connected, except possibly through their point of origin. Angora wool most certainly does not come from Turkish Angora cats!

## **Where can I show my Turkish Angora cat?**

In Europe the Turkish Angora is recognised by the Fédération Internationale Féline (FIFe), of which Felis Britannica in Britain is a member, and also by TICA. The other British registration body, the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF) does not currently recognise Turkish Angoras. You can therefore show your cats at any TICA or FIFe show, but not at a GCCF show (except in an exhibition pen).

## **Are they very rare & expensive?**

Rare yes, but expensive - not really. There are only a very small number of breeders in the UK, so kittens are difficult to find. Prices will vary from breeder to breeder, however they will not cost any more than any other pedigree cat.

## **Do they make good pets?**

Of course they do! Turkish Angoras are very loyal towards their owners, often devoting themselves to one or two people. They are very affectionate, gentle, but can be boisterous too.

## **Are Turkish Angoras very vocal?**

Not as much as some cats can be. It's not normally considered a problem with Turkish Angoras, although un-neutered cats can be quite vocal when calling for a mate.

## **Do they like swimming?**

They are not renowned for it, and don't have quite the same affinity for water that the Turkish Vans have. However some cats will enjoy paddling in shallow pools, or may like to watch you take a bath whilst sitting on the edge.

## **Do Turkish Angoras travel well?**

Generally they travel reasonably well, but can get quite vocal during the journey so take some earplugs! Plenty of fuss and reassurance will help keep them calm.

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## ***Further Information***

*For further information about the Turkish Van Cat Club, membership information, Turkish cats in general, or kitten availability, please contact us :*

### ***General Enquiries:***

Steve Lloyd    Tel: 01635 248436  
Email: [secretary@turkishvancatclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@turkishvancatclub.co.uk)

### ***Membership Enquiries:***

Mairi MacCorquodale    Tel: 07796 613530  
Email: [membership@turkishvancatclub.co.uk](mailto:membership@turkishvancatclub.co.uk)

### ***Kitten Register:***

Kathy McLeod    Tel: 0207 515 0119  
Email: [kittens@turkishvancatclub.co.uk](mailto:kittens@turkishvancatclub.co.uk)

### ***Welfare Enquiries:***

Kathy McLeod    Tel: 0207 515 0119  
Email: [welfare@turkishvancatclub.co.uk](mailto:welfare@turkishvancatclub.co.uk)

### ***Website:***

<http://www.turkishvancatclub.co.uk>

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