

abilities. No countertop, cabinet or fireplace mantle is too high for a Bengal. Their athleticism does not stop at their climbing and leaping abilities. They are some of the best sprinters in the world. Bengal's love to do laps around your living room at 2 am and the more furniture and rugs they can move while they do it the better.

Bengals are quite fond of water sources such as a toilet, shower, bathtub, sink or an aquarium. They will often join you in the shower or help you wash the dishes. Fishing can be a favorite past time if the aquarium isn't equipped with a secure top. Some Bengals are good about playing in the water, but some have a tendency to splash it all over the room.

The Bengal is so intelligent that it can be easily trained. A word of warning, be careful what you teach them. With its very adept paws it can easily



learn to flush the toilet or turn the faucet on when it wants to play in running water. They can easily open doors, cabinets and refrigerators.

Many Bengal owners have found bags of bread and potato chips spread all over the kitchen after the cat had an eventful night. Some just love to figure out how the water fountain works!



The Bengal is a very vocal cat, although it is not necessarily loud. Some are quite talkative as they interact with their owners while others tend to be a little growly.

They often have a paper fetish. A single paper wad can keep them occupied for an hour, and a toilet paper roll can intrigue them all night long.

Their intelligence can get them into trouble if they don't get the necessary attention or environmental enrichment that they need. Boredom equals mischief for the Bengal. If their owner is away from home a lot it is best to give them a playmate to keep them from becoming destructive.

Bengals are easy to litter box train; however they can sometimes be a little messy with the litter. On occasion they get into flinging the litter outside the box. The Asian Leopard Cat has been known to urinate and defecate in streams to hide its scent from predators. Some Bengals will mimic their wild ancestors by urinating in the sink, tub or toilet.

If you are looking for an intelligent, active companion the Bengal may be just the cat for you. But if you are more of a couch potato, please keep looking for the right breed of cat for your lifestyle.



**Indigo Mountain
Nature Center**

A Sanctuary for Wildlife, Exotic and Alternative Pets

The Bengal Cat



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The Bengal Cat: Is The Bengal the Right Cat For You?

The Bengal cat is considered to be an exotic breed of domestic cat created by breeding an Asian Leopard Cat (ALC) to a domestic cat such as an American Shorthair, Abyssinian, or Egyptian Mau. Today's Bengal is a far cry from the jungle dwelling wild cats of its ancestry. This athletic, exotic looking feline is now one of the most popular domestic breeds in the US and is one of the only hybrids widely accepted by cat organizations. But this little hybrid is not necessarily the cat for everyone.

Before purchasing any pet it is important that you do your research. Will it fit in to your lifestyle? Can you provide the necessary environment for the cat? Most importantly, does this cat exhibit the characteristics and traits that you find desirable? Just because the Bengal is a beautiful, exotic looking animal doesn't mean it is right for you. They are not ornaments or status symbols. You will also need to look into your city, county and state regulations. Some locations ban the ownership of hybrid cats regardless of the amount of "wild blood" or the number of generations away from a wild cat they are.

The Bengal breed has retained some of



the physical and behavior characteristics from the founding Asian Leopard Cats (ALC). While some of the traits have been removed through generations of domestication, some have been diluted somewhat and still others have remained intact. Early generation cats (F1-F3) may still display the elusive, independent, shy traits of the ALC. Some are very distrustful and uneasy. They often flee to high ground until the threat goes away. Some are fearful of loud noises or new people. These cats typically exhibit very strong instinctive behaviors that often require drastic changes in the owner's lifestyle. These cats require specialized care from experienced owners. Most Bengals purchased as pets are considered SBT or studbook tradition and eligible for competition in many shows. These cats are affectionate, intelligent and easily adapt to your household as the family pet.

The SBT Bengal is a very curious, intelligent animal that thrives on interaction and activity. They are very happy, loving, affectionate cats that have a strong

desire to be an integral part of the family. They are self assured and somewhat demanding with strong personalities yet are not a dominant cat. Their high energy makes them a great companion for children who have been taught how to play with a feline as they don't enjoy being handled roughly.

The typical female will be in the 7 to 10 pound range and the male will be slightly larger and weigh between 9-12 pounds. Occasionally, you will come across a Bengal that exceeds 15 pounds, but



that is rare.

The Bengal cat behaves like a dog in many ways. They tend to follow their owner

throughout the house giving leg rubs and keeping an ever watchful eye on what's going on around them. They love toys and will often play ball with their humans.

Like the Asian Leopard Cat their sleek, athletic bodies are designed for movement. They are equipped with great vertical and horizontal leaping