

An Introduction to the

TIBETAN SPANIEL

History

Originating in the Himalayan Mountains of Tibet, the Tibetan Spaniel has been known for over 2,000 years. Bred and owned by Buddhist monks and lamas, "Tibbies" were never sold. They left the monasteries of Tibet only as treasured gifts to esteemed friends.

Legend has it that Tibetan Spaniels were trained to turn the prayer wheels in the monasteries. Though this legend is now doubted, they did serve the monks as com panions and bed warmers. Their keen eyesight and hearing made them ideal lookouts, lying on the high monastery walls and barking a warning to the monks and the larger Tibetan Mastiffs whenever any thing suspect approached.

The misnomer, spaniel, came to be part of their name from the French word *epagnuel* which, in the Middle Ages, referred to a companion dog and comforter much loved by the ladies of the European and Oriental courts. The breed first came to England in 1898, but few were bred until after World War II. Importation to the United States began in 1966, and the Tibetan Spaniel Club of America, Inc. was formed in 1971. The American Kennel Club recognized the Tibetan Spaniel in 1984, and they joined the NonSporting Group in competition.





Description

Tibetan Spaniels are small, well balanced dogs, with no exaggerated features. They have an alert, intelligent appearance. Measuring about ten inches at the shoulder, they weigh between nine and fifteen pounds. The head and face are distinctive. The muzzle is of medium length with a noticeable chin and an almond shaped eye, well set, and forward looking that gives a typically ape-like expression. The ears are pendant with varying length fringes. The body is slightly longer than high, and the richly plumed tail curls over the back.

Tibetan Spaniels have two coats—a soft undercoat for warmth and a moderately long, silky outer coat which lies flat. Feathering or fringes of longer hair, on the front legs, feet, and rear legs create the appearance of pantaloons. Males tend to have a more luxuriant coat with a lion-type mane around the neck and shoulders. Females have a shawl around the shoulders and less feathering on the legs. All colors and color combinations are accepted.

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Personality

Tibetan Spaniels are equally at home within the confines of an apartment or a stately home.

This is a very intelligent breed which thrives on human companionship, and for this reason they do not make good kennel dogs but are at home within an apartment or loving home environment. They can be aloof with strangers but are devoted to family and friends. Although they love being curled up on their couch by you they can also enjoy many of the programs that the American Kennel Club has to offer such as: Obedience, Agility, Rally, Tracking, Scentwork, Nosework, Barn Hunt and more. Tibbies are sensitive; they respond to your moods and feelings and adapt to almost any lifestyle and most readily mix with other pets.



True to their ancient duties in the monasteries of Tibet, they will vigorously alert you to any unusual event or arrival, yet, they do not bark unnecessarily. Neither nervous nor hyper, a Tibbie is like a large dog in a small body. In one compact package, they are both excellent watch dogs and very good bed dogs. They enjoy any high lookout such as a windowsill from which to survey their territory and, at the same time, they will be only too happy to cuddle up and keep you warm, nestle on soft pillows or clean laundry.



Raising your Tibetan Spaniel

Think of your puppy as an infant. These babies need a routine too—regular meal, bed, nap, play and "potty" times. Though, children are attracted to their small stature and sweet face, Tibbies need a home that is free from cruelties, even the unintentional ones, like teasing, hitting or rough handling. They need a safe home free from hazards such as poison and exposed wires; and a one that can provide secure off lead confinement.



A Tibbie's affection for its owner can be akin to worship. Though independent in spirit, Tibetan Spaniels are naturally clean and easily trained. If correctly and gently disciplined, they will readily obey a loved and trusted owner.

To maintain a natural appearance, only minimum grooming is needed. Brush them occasionally and comb the ear fringes once a week. Trimming of the coat, except for the hair on the bottom of the paws, is not permitted.

The breed is renowned for living to a healthy age—often fifteen years or more. Provisions should be made for the dog's future if an older person is thinking about a Tibbie for a companion.

Owning a Tibetan Spaniel is not a matter to be treated lightly. If you treat them sensibly, love them, and give them the consideration that is due a dog of their ancient origin, you will have a companion that is everything you need.

They are the perfect small dog—gay, active, not nervous, very companionable, a good watch dog, healthy, and extremely intelligent—what more could you ask?

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