

Egyptian Mau:



A Gift from Re

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First Edition

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Dedication

This Breed Guide is dedicated to the Egyptian Mau breeders, such as Doris Morgan (Maipet), Princess Natalie Troubetskoy (Fatima), Jan Wydro (Matiki) and their cats, GC, NW, BC Maipet Shanadu of Kayzie, Fatima Baba, GC Matiki's Better Maustrap, among others, without whose contributions the breed would not exist.

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History

Although shrouded by the sands of time, the Egyptian Mau is believed to one of the oldest breeds of domestic cat. Like its cousin the Abyssinian, it is believed to be a direct descendant of the African wild cat subspecies, *Felis Lybica Ocreata* which roams the highlands of Ethiopia. It is believed the ancient Egyptians were the first people to domesticate the cat between 4000 and 2000 B.C.

To the Egyptians, the cat was not just a companion but a god. Major deities Mafdet, Sekhmet and the most famous Bast were all feline in form. The Egyptians displayed their reverence for the cat by depicting them in tomb art beginning in approximately 1540 B.C. Cats were also mummified both as companions to their masters in the afterlife and as a form of ritual sacrifice. The Egyptian word for cat, “mau”, comes from the Egyptian Mau’s unique meow which is more in the form of “mau, mau” than “m-i-i--a-o-w”.

The Egyptian Mau was bred in Europe prior to World War II. The War decimated the breeding population with just a few breeders in Italy keeping the breed alive. While living in Rome, exiled White Russian Princess Natalie Troubetskoy became enchanted with the breed. She sought to find cats to develop a breeding program. She was able to obtain an eleven-year-old black male Gregorio and a silver female Lulu then imported a smoke male from Syria named Geppo. When the Princess moved to New York in 1956, she brought three of her cats with her: a silver female named Baba, Baba’s bronze son Jojo, and their silver daughter Liza. These cats were the foundation of her Fatima cattery, and the Egyptian Mau breed was born....

The Egyptian Mau was accepted for championship in 1968 by the Cat Fanciers’ Federation and soon thereafter by the Canadian Cat Association. The Cat Fanciers’ Association, Inc. (CFA) and the International Cat Association (TICA) both recognized the Egyptian Mau for championship in 1977.



Characteristics

Maus retain many of their wild ancestor's characteristics. They are:

- Smart: one of the smartest cat breeds. Wild cats - having to fend for themselves - have larger brains and are smarter than their domestic cousins.
- Quick: need speed to avoid predators and to catch prey
- Willful: "independent" like their wild forebears....



Maus:

- Love toys, especially feathers.
- Like to feel in control of themselves and the situation. (They *are* used to being worshipped!)
- Tend to be somewhat shy of strangers but bond closely with "their people."



Other Facts:

- Maus retain their canine teeth until the permanent teeth have grown in behind them; thus, there are times when the cat will have two full sets of canine teeth. This can make teething extremely uncomfortable.
- Maus tend to carry their kittens longer than most breeds: 67+ days.



What's Your Line?

Mau breeders sometimes speak of traditional, Indian, or Egyptian bloodlines or “lines.” The different lines developed when breeders began importing cats to freshen the bloodlines and to keep them from becoming too inbred. Eventually different physical traits and some characteristics began to be associated with the different lines.

Traditional

The “traditional” line is generally based on the foundation Egyptian Mau stock. They tend to be stockier with rounder heads.



Indian

The Indian lines descend from two cats imported by from India by Egyptian Mau breeder (and Bengal breed founder) Jean Mill. They tend to be longer and more refined than the traditional or Egyptian lines.



Egyptian

The Egyptian lines have their sources in imports from Egypt made subsequent to the Indian imports. They tend to have less of a definite type associated with them; however, they do often have more body length and length of leg than the traditionals as well as a higher ear set.

Although all three lines still exist to some extent, most Maus today are a combination of one or more of these lines. Thus, the difference between them is minimal compared to what it was historically.



Description – General

The Mau is the only naturally occurring domestic breed of spotted cat. It is an active, colorful cat of medium size. Mau size can be deceiving – many cats that appear large because they are of the required medium-long body length are well within the medium size of 7 to 9 pounds. Thus, the Egyptian Mau standard requires balance to be more important than the cat's *apparent* size. Otherwise, many cats that are well within the size range would be penalized for appearing to be too big.

Like many wild members of the feline family, Egyptian Maus are dimorphic. From an early age, the growth rate of male kittens will outpace that of females, and male adults will be larger than females.

The ideal Mau has perfect physical condition with an alert appearance and is well balanced physically and temperamentally. They have fashion model classical beauty not cheerleader “cuteness.” This is an elegant breed.



Head

Skull

The Egyptian Mau's head is a wedge shape (a triangle) that is rounded just enough ("slightly rounded") to remove the triangle's perfectly straight lines (i.e., "the head has no flat planes"). The head is medium in length and not full cheeked.



A short head, a head that is wider than it is long, is penalized. Additionally, a head without any rounding of the triangle is *too oriental* in shape, which is penalized. Conversely, a head that is so round that it causes the wedge/triangle shape to not be clearly visible is *too round* which is penalized.



In the show ring, an allowance is made for jowls and muscular necks in adult males. (If no allowance was made, males' heads would appear to be too round.)



Ears

The ears are an important part of the Mau breed, harkening back to the semi-desert-dwelling African wildcat. Like the African wildcat, the ears are medium to medium large in length. This allows the ears to trap sound and better enables it to hear prey across an open area. As a consequence, short ears are penalized because they do not keep with the breed's progenitors.



So what is meant by “medium”? “Medium” ear length means ears that are as long as the length of the head. Anything longer than the length of the head is “medium large”.

The ears are also required to be held “alert” and to be “moderately pointed.” This is because Mau ears function like an antenna or a funnel. They are narrow at the tip and taper down to a wider base to concentrate sound in the inner ear and heighten the cat’s ability to locate prey. Therefore, ears that are round at the tip are not correct because they do not have the same funneling action.



The ears continue the planes of the head and are broad at base with slight flaring. This means that if a line were drawn along a Mau’s cheek, the outer edge of its ear would continue up from the cheek. The placement of the cat’s ear is also related to the cat’s ability to locate prey. By placing the ears high up on the head, like an antenna, the cat has greater swiveling flexibility and the ability to catch a broader range of sound than if the ears were placed more on the sides of the head.

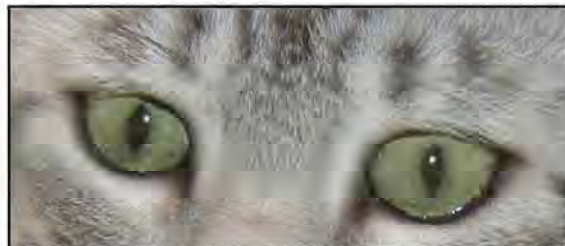
There must also be ample width between the ears but not so much width that it causes noticeable flaring of the ears and diminishes, even slightly, the cat’s sound-catching ability.



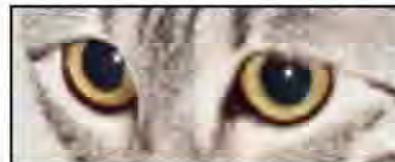
The hair on the ears is short and close lying with the inner ear a delicate, almost transparent, shell pink. The ears may be tufted.

Eyes

The eyes are large, alert and almond shaped. They may also be in a shape that breeders describe as "pregnant almond", which creates the worried expression commonly associated with the breed.



A pregnant almond-shaped eye is formed by a nearly vertical rise from the inner corner of the eye to a horizontal, rather than curved, upper eyelid. The vertical line of the inner eye creates a worried expression by causing the cat to look as if it has drawn its eyes inward in the same manner that humans draw their brows inward when they look concerned.



The eyes should slant slightly towards the ears. An obvious slant causes the eyes to appear oriental. The eye apertures are neither round nor oriental, and either should be penalized.

Eye Color

Eye color is "gooseberry green" and, like fine wine, can take up to 18 months to develop. Because of this, no deduction of points for eye color is made in the show ring if the eye color has an amber cast and the cat is less than 18 months old.



Egyptian Mau eye color develops from the center of the iris outward. Thus, to determine whether a cat's eye color is developing properly, look for a ring of green around the pupil.



Muzzle

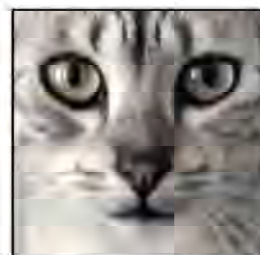
The Egyptian Mau's muzzle flows into the existing wedge of the head and is neither short nor pointed. The chin is firm, neither receding nor protruding.



Nose

The profile is a "gentle contour", i.e., a gradual line with a small rise from the bridge of the nose to the forehead to create a two-planed head. The profile should be neither dishy nor arrow straight. This evolutionary adaptation allows for maximum airflow through the nasal chamber which is critical for survival for a sprinter like a cat, living in a semi-desert environment.

The nose is even in width throughout its length when viewed from the front. Unlike the Ocicat, which has a broader head than a Mau, the width of the nose should be less than the width of an eye.



Body

The body shape is medium long and graceful, showing well-developed muscular strength.

Torso

The most important requirement for the torso is that the cat is balanced. A “balanced” Egyptian Mau has a medium-long body with medium-long to long legs. Leg length harkens back to the breed’s evolution. As a semi-desert dweller with the ability to reach speeds of up to 35 m.p.h., Maus must have long legs to be built for speed over flat surfaces. Consequently, cobbiness and stockiness (short body and/or short legs) are penalized.



The Egyptian Mau has an unique, loose skin flap (belly flap) extending from the hind flank to the hind leg knee. This is a natural adaptation that allows the cat greater reach when jumping and a longer stride when running. (Note: “Belly flap” is not “belly flab”. To determine whether it’s flap or flab, gently grasp the flap. If it’s flab, it will be thick. If it’s flap, it will be loose.)

Males may have muscular necks and shoulders.

Legs

Egyptian Mau forelegs terminate in high shoulder blades, a feature which contributes to length of stride and gives the Mau its distinctive, cheetah-like gait.

To give Maus good rear propulsion when running, their hind legs are proportionately longer than their front legs. This natural adaptation has the effect of making the cat look as if it is on tiptoe when standing upright.



Feet

The feet are slightly oval, almost round. Like a ballerina, they are small and dainty in keeping with the cat’s look of grace and elegance.

Tail

The tail is medium length and tapers slightly.



Coat

The coat is medium in length and long enough to accommodate two or more bands of ticking in the silver and bronze. In the smoke color, the texture is fine and silky. In the bronze and silver colors, it is dense and resilient.

Pattern

The pattern requires the coat to have “distinct spotting.” “Distinct spotting” means good contrast between the ground color and the darker markings.

No preference is given to the size or shape of the markings.

Preference IS given to how well those markings stand out against the ground color (i.e., darker markings are better).

The Mau Pattern consists of the following:

- ☛ Elongated spots along the spine.
- ☛ Dorsal stripe at haunches which continues to the tip of the tail.
- ☛ Tail is banded, tip is dark.
- ☛ Mascara lines extending from the corners of the eyes.
- ☛ One or more necklaces, broken in the center.
- ☛ The shoulder and haunch/thigh markings are a transition between stripes and spots.
- ☛ The barring on the upper legs does not have to match.



Color

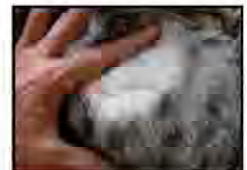
Maus come in three colors for exhibition purposes:

- **Bronze:** A brown agouti or “tabby” coated cat.
- **Silver:** A brown agouti/tabby cat that has the “inhibitor” gene turned “on” causing the yellow pigment in the hairs to be white.
- **Smoke:** A non-agouti or “self-colored” cat that has the “inhibitor” gene turned “on” creating a silver undercoat. It is the melanistic version of the silver.



Additionally, black Maus occur. They are the melanistic version of the bronze. Black Maus are not eligible for exhibition but are sometimes used in breeding programs.

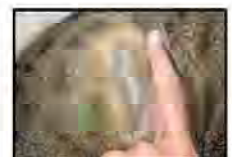
Silvers have a pale silver ground color that is ticked with black. The nose leather must be brick red, and they must have black paw pads. Sometimes the silver ground color has a yellowish cast causing the ground color to appear “dirty.” This effect is called “tarnishing” and is caused by the inhibitor gene not completely inhibiting the yellow pigment in the hairs.



Bronzes have a warm bronze ground color that is ticked with dark brown. Like silvers, their nose leather is brick red, and they have black or dark-brown paw pads.

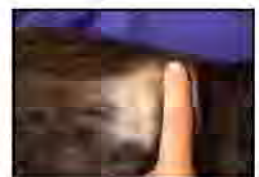


Warm” ground color encompasses a variety of yellow and brown shades. It can be a warm yellow-gold to a deep red-brown. What is important is that the color not have any white or silver hairs which would make the coat appear “cold” (think of the earth after a frost). Unlike in Abyssinians, which prohibit a gray undercoat or “mouse” coat, a mouse coat is permissible in bronze Maus.



Smokes have a silver undercoat. Unlike silvers and bronzes, their coats are not ticked but are “self-colored.” Also unlike silvers and bronzes, their nose leather is black and not brick red. They have black paw pads. Smoke Maus occasionally have an unique pattern flaw in which one side of the necklace appears to be a “blotch” or a smudge rather than a definite line.

The markings on a smoke are a form of “heightened” ghost markings that are found on black cats. The smoke’s silver undercoat makes them more visible than a black cat’s ghost markings. Because ghost markings can be difficult to see through a black coat, the requirement for contrast is lower for a smoke than it is for the silvers or bronzes (“sufficient” rather than “good”).



Unrecognized Colors and Patterns

In addition to the colors and patterns recognized for show purposes, other Mau colors and patterns exist.

- ✓ **Glitter:** “Glitter” is not a color but is more of a color effect. It is chiefly seen in the bronze coat color and gives the coat appearance as if it has been dusted with gold and, in heavily glittered coats, a “luminescent” sheen. Glitter is caused by a clear layer of bubbles in the hair shaft which more readily reflect light than normal, unglittered hairs. The absence or presence of glitter in coat is not considered when evaluating the quality of an Egyptian Mau’s color (i.e., the standard is indifferent to it) although it may be considered when evaluating the coat length, because heavily glittered coats can be too short. (The shorter the coat, the stronger the glittered effect because the hairs refract the light more.)

- ✓ **Blue Eyes:** Maus are sometimes born with blue rather than gooseberry green eye color.

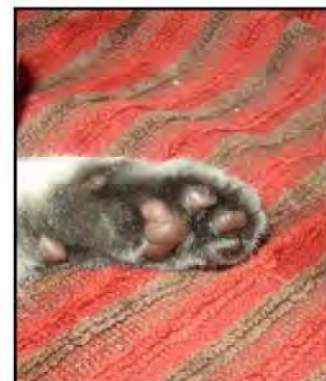
- ✓ **Classic Pattern:** Maus with a classic rather than spotted tabby pattern are occasionally born. They can be of any color.

- ✓ **Blue:** this is the dilute of black. There is a blue equivalent of each of the four “basic” Mau colors, i.e., blue silver; blue “bronze” (blue markings on a yellow coat); blue smoke; and solid blue.

A blue silver (which actually has gray markings) can be difficult to distinguish from a light black silver (the normal silver color). The only way to definitely tell them apart is by looking at the tail tips and the paw pads.



A black silver has black paw pads (as shown on the left) while a blue silver will have blue or pink paw pads (as shown on the right).



Coat Color Genetics

The basic Egyptian Mau coloration is the yellow-brown tabby. Geneticists use the letters “B” as code for the gene pair that causes the black coloration and “A” as code for the tabby or “agouti” gene pair. (Capital letters indicate a dominant form of the gene or a gene that is always expressed when present while lowercase letters indicate a recessive form of the gene which is always hidden unless two copies of the gene are present in the gene pair.) This basic coloration is modified by the interaction of the agouti (tabby) gene with another gene called the “inhibitor” gene, which inhibits the production of the yellow color in the hair shaft turning the hair white.

When a cat has at least one dominant form of the agouti gene (a cat always has at least two copies of each gene, one it inherited from each parent), signified by an “A”, the cat is either silver or bronze depending on whether it has a dominant form of the inhibitor gene.

If it has at least one dominant form of the inhibitor gene, signified by an “I”, it is a **silver**. This is written as “A_I_” if the other genes of the *agouti* and *inhibitor* gene pairs are not known.

If it does not have at least one dominant form of the inhibitor gene it must have two recessive forms of the inhibitor gene, signified by an “i”, which means it is a **bronze**. This is written as “A_ii”) if the other gene of the *agouti* gene pair is not known.

If the cat does not have at least one dominant form of the agouti gene, it must have two recessive forms of the agouti gene, signified by an “a”. It is either smoke or black depending on whether it has a dominant form of the inhibitor gene.

If it has at least one dominant form of the inhibitor gene, it is a **smoke**. This is written as “aAI_” if the other gene of the *inhibitor* gene pair is not known.

If it does not have one dominant form of the inhibitor gene it must have two recessive forms of the gene, which means it is a **black**. This is *always* “aaii”.

Egyptian Maus *never* have the recessive forms of the “B” or brown locus gene, which cause chocolate and cinnamon coloration. However, Ocicats, another spotted cat breed, may have these recessive genes.

Blue coloration results from yet a fourth gene called the “density” gene. This gene modifies the “B” gene and affects the distribution of pigment in each shaft. When the pigment is “less dense” as in a dilute form the normal black pigment is turned to gray which looks “blue”. The dominant form, coded as “D”, calls for dense distribution of pigment while the recessive form “d” causes gray or blue pigmentation.



Coat Color Inheritance

One of the most important questions to Egyptian Mau breeders – and one of the most difficult concepts to understand – is why any color when bred to any other color can have kittens of any color. For example, Siamese breeders know with 100% certainty that a lilac-point bred to a blue-point will never have seal-point kittens due to the fact that the gene which causes seal-point coloration is dominant to the lilac- and blue-point genes; thus, a seal-point Siamese must have at least one seal-point parent.

Mau color inheritance patterns are not as clear-cut because the two genes that cause Mau coat color, the agouti and inhibitor gene pairs, work independently of one another.

- The silver color is a product of a cat having the dominant form of both the agouti and inhibitor genes.
- The black color is a product of a cat having the recessive form of both of the agouti and inhibitor genes.
- The smoke and bronze colors are caused by a cat having a dominant form of one of the pairs (e.g., dominant form of the agouti gene in the bronze) and a recessive form of the other gene pair (e.g., the recessive form of the agouti gene in the smoke). Thus, when these gene pairs are combined, they can create the dominant form, i.e., silver.

• Silver:

- AAII (only produces silver)
- AaII (produces silver or smoke)
- AAii (produces silver or bronze)
- AaII (produces silver, bronze, smoke or black)

• Bronze:

- AAii (generally produces bronze but *can* produce silver **IF** bred to a silver or smoke)
- AaII (generally produces bronze or black but *can* produce silver or smoke **IF** bred to a silver or smoke)

• Smoke:

- aaII (generally produces smoke but *can* produce silver **IF** bred to a silver or bronze)
- aaII (generally produces smoke or black but *can* produce silver or bronze **IF** bred to a silver, bronze or black)

• Black:

- aaii (generally produces black but *can* produce silver, bronze or smoke **IF** bred to a silver, bronze, or smoke)



Health

Having survived for thousands of years on their own, Maus are generally a healthy breed. However, some lines do have heritable allergies, particularly to food. These allergies generally manifest themselves by causing excessive scratching, particularly around the neck. Known sources of food allergies are caramel color, a common additive to canned cat food and deli meats, and sunflower oil, which is often found in dry cat foods.

Thus, it is recommended that Mau owners check the ingredients of all pet food and treats prior to feeding them to their pet to avoid these additives.

Maus love food, so care must be taken with their diet to prevent them from becoming obese.



Development

Although kitten quality (i.e., pet v. show) can sometimes be determined at birth, kitten color and pattern often improves as the kitten ages.

Many silvers are born with tarnish along their backs. This generally fades as the kittens age and some silvers that are quite tarnished at birth end up as “clean” (no tarnish) when they are adults.



Tarnished kitten at one month



Same kitten one month later. Tarnish has faded dramatically.

Bronzes may be born “cold” (with a grayish or whitish tone to their coats) but become “warmer” (the gray/white fades) as they grow older.

The undercoat on smokes tends to become better as the cat ages and the coat grows longer. Good smokes can often be identified at birth by the presence of a white rim around the eye. The white rim shows that the undercoat is already apparent.



Newborn smoke kitten with white rim around eye.



Same smoke at six months with excellent contrast.

In all colors, the pattern tends to improve with age: the spots will become more distinct as the pattern spreads out over the growing body, and markings that once seemed to run together as stripes will break up into well-defined spots.



Pale silver kitten.



Same kitten as an adult with much improved contrast.

Handling

Here are few tips for exhibiting your Egyptian Mau:

- ♣ *"S/he who hesitates is lost!"* When approaching the cat to remove it from the cage in order to judge, approach with confident deference. (After all, you are approaching a god.) Maus are extremely smart and sensitive. They will perceive any sort of hesitation as fear and assume control, making it very difficult to get them out of the cage.
- ♣ The Mau likes the security of having all four feet on the table. They should not be thrust upward or swung around which may make them apprehensive and cause them to "peddle" or swim" with feet.
- ♣ The head and muzzle is best viewed from behind. When checking the profile, avoid rotating the head excessively which could make them struggle. When touching the muzzle of kitten of around 6 months of age, they may react negatively; for example, by pulling back or "snapping". This is because when teething, they carry a double set of teeth and may have a sore mouth.
- ♣ Maus are vocally interactive and sensitive to sounds, approaching them with a soft, soothing voice can do wonders to reassure them and make them curious about you.
- ♣ Maus do not like to "dangle" from your arms, so when carrying them, support the chest right behind the forelegs and the belly just in front of the hind legs. They like to have at least two feet on the floor, if not all four.
- ♣ Avoid direct eye contact. Maus don't like to be stared down and interpret that as a challenge or threat.







Start handling them from birth in order to accustom them to being handled in the show ring. Gentleness will help prevent a kitten from becoming a shy adult!

"Look-alike" Breed: the Ocicat

Unlike Egyptian Maus, which are a natural breed that still may be found today in feral cat populations in the Middle East, Ocicats are a manmade breed developed by crossing Siamese & Abyssinians. As a manmade breed, the **Ocicat** has **uniformity** in its pattern and the shape of its markings, while the **Egyptian Mau**, a natural breed, has **randomness and variance** in its pattern and markings.

The Egyptian Mau and the **Ocicat** coat colors **both include the brown-spotted tabby** (called "bronze" in the Mau and "tawny" in the Ocicat). However, the **Egyptian Mau** includes the **non-agouti** colors or smoke and black while **Ocicats must always be agouti**. In contrast, the **Ocicat** allows **dilute** colors such as blue and **variations of the basic brown-spotted tabby** such as chocolate and cinnamon while the **Egyptian Mau does not**.

Ocicats differ from Maus in body style as well as in pattern and color. Ocicats tend to be heavier boned with broader heads than Egyptian Maus. Breeders of the two breeds frequently say that Ocicats are supposed to resemble jaguars while Maus are more like cheetahs.

<u>Breed</u>	<u>Body</u>	<u>Head</u>
<i>Ocicat</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Uniform pattern and spot shapeVariety of agouti colorsHeavier built like a jaguar		
<i>Egyptian Mau</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Random pattern and spot shapeBrown and silver agouti and non-agoutiLighter built like a cheetah		

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CFA YEARBOOK 1972, The Egyptian Mau by Wain Harding.

CFA YEARBOOK 1977, The Egyptian Mau by Jacqueline and Melanie Mountain

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EGYPTIAN MAU BREED STANDARD, Cat Fanciers' Association Inc., as revised 2003.

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