

Breed in brief

Breed code



Average lifespan

15 - 18
YEARS

Temperament

Outgoing, lively, and loving.

Availability

Rare.

Average price:

£500 - £650

Average weight



Sweet like chocolate

A dedicated breeding process has created a dog-like cat with a gleaming coat — and the personality to match. Meet the Suffolk Chocolate.

Suffolks love stimulating environments.

Suffolk Chocolates may only have been introduced to the cat fancy in 2014, but these cats have already made their mark on cat lovers, thanks to their gregarious, outgoing personalities and beautiful, shiny coats.

Linda Spendlove, secretary of the Suffolk Breed Cat Club, says: "They're very dog-like and have got such loving natures. Suffolks will let you cuddle them, and they love to go out on their harnesses for walks. If you're a dog person, they're the perfect cat, but they don't need the commitment that a dog does. They love to play fetch; they'll pick a favourite toy and spend hours playing with it."

Suffolks are delightfully chatty cats,



Image: Kevin Workman.

Suffolks were developed from the Havana breed.

but Linda advises that they aren't for the faint-hearted, as they aren't the type of cats to just sit around all day.

She says: "They very much want you to be part of their lives, and won't just sit there and look pretty. They're not timid cats. They make great family pets, and love dogs and children.

"They're content to be indoor cats, as long as they have a stimulating environment or a feline companion. They love climbing up tall scratch posts and cat shelves on the walls."

Suffolks may be demanding of your time, but it's all for a good reason — Linda says they adore their humans and want to be around them as much as possible: "They will orientate themselves around

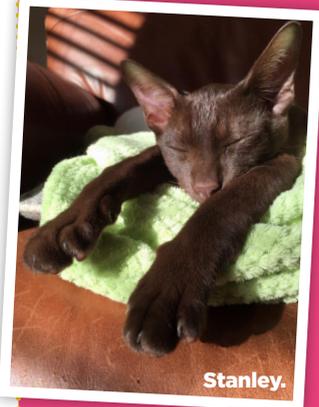
you. Other breeds of cat might get fed up and scratch you when they've had enough, but Suffolks never get tired of attention — if you fussed them 24/7, they'd love it!

"They fit into most lifestyles, and the more you put into them, the more they'll reward you ten-fold."

f Meet our Suffolks!

We asked our Facebook fans to share their Suffolks with us.

Jan Hopcraft: "This is our Suffolk, Stanley."



Stanley.

Stephanie Malec-Benham: "I have a Suffolk Chocolate; her name is Coco."



Coco.

Dee Baines: "My beautiful healthy girls, Maia and Missy. Missy is part of the outcross programme, which will widen the gene pool."



Maia and Missy.

History and origins

The breed has been developed over the past decade by Linda and fellow Havana breeder, Pamela Sharp-Popple, in response to the modernisation of the UK Havana. The Havana began life in the 1950s, and was created to be a breed in its own right by a group of breeders, who wanted a self-brown cat of Siamese type.

Due to a variety of

reasons, the gene pool was split. Some cats were sent to the USA, where they became American Havana Browns. The Havanas which remained in Britain had an insufficient gene pool, and had to be outcrossed to Siamese and other self cats. This eventually created the Oriental breed which we have today.

Since 2007, a group of Havana breeders has

extracted the best genes from the existing bloodlines in Britain. With like-to-like matings and the inclusion of a European Havana Brown, which originated from the British bloodlines, the Suffolk Chocolate was born.

The Suffolk Chocolate achieved new breed status with the GCCF in 2014, and reached preliminary status in 2016.



Most Suffolks will get on with other pets.

Image: Kevin Workman.

LIVING WITH Suffolks

“Rafi is a cross between a cat, a dog, and a toddler!”

They’ve got the look

Suffolks have sleek, shiny coats, which are only available in chocolate and the recessive colour, lilac. These medium-sized cats have graceful, muscular

bodies, long, slightly tapered tails, and elegant, long legs. Their ears are quite large and wide, and their medium-sized eyes are always green.

Want a kitten?

According to Linda, Suffolk kittens never use their claws and, as a result, will fall off things regularly! She adds: “They’ll never scratch you, unlike other breeds, which is another reason why they make such great family pets.”

As with all breeds, healthy kittens should have

clean eyes, bottoms, and ears, and should be lively and playful.

Always make sure you can see the kittens with their mum, and, if possible, their father.

Visit www.gccfcats.org/Cat-Breeds/Suffolk to find a GCCF-registered Suffolk breeder.

Health and welfare

As with all cats, the Suffolk Chocolate needs a balanced diet to maintain its exceptionally glossy coat. Linda adds: “They really benefit from having plenty of oil content in their diets, so you can try giving them a fish oil supplement in their food to keep their coats in good condition.”

Their coats are low shedding, single in texture, and very easy to look after, as they only require a weekly brush. Linda recommends grooming with

a rubber-bristled brush — you can even give them a polish with a silk scarf to keep them looking their shiny best, a treat they really enjoy!

The Suffolk Chocolate is a robust breed, and to date has shown no inherent diseases. As the gene pool originates mainly from the Oriental, it is possible these cats may be prone to certain conditions, such as flat-chested kitten syndrome and progressive retinal atrophy (PRA).

Is this the cat for you?

If you’re out for long periods of time, Suffolks will get lonely, so it’s best to give them a stimulating environment, or another cat with whom to play.

Linda says they can cope

on their own during the day, as long as you give them plenty of attention when they’re home, adding: “I’ve rehomed cats to single people, who say they’ve completed their lives.”

Lynne Shirley and her partner, Simon, from Ipswich, Suffolk, own handsome Suffolk Chocolate, Rafi — or should it be, he owns them?!

“We hadn’t heard of the Suffolk breed before we happened upon Linda Spendlove at the Suffolk Show last year,” says Lynne. “I was particularly taken with their majestic appearance and gentle nature; they seemed like no other cat I’d ever seen.

“On September 9, 2016, Rafi was born. He chose us; when we went to see him and his siblings, it was always Rafi who would launch himself at Simon and fall asleep. He came to live with us on December 9; since then, we haven’t looked back.

“Rafi is bold, into everything, and the most loving creature you could find. I’d heard others comment about a Suffolk being more like a dog, and Rafi has learned ‘Stay’ and ‘Come on’. He also learned very early on to walk on a lead.

“Rafi is a cross between a cat, a dog, and a toddler! If he doesn’t get his own way, he cries. He is scared of the strangest things: flip flops were an enormous hurdle for him to overcome! When he is naughty and we tell him ‘No’, he hides behind the sofa cushions and peeks out cheekily at us.

“Not only does he sit on our laps, but

he lies like a babe in arms with his feet in the air, and sits on our shoulders like a parrot! He is so amazingly affectionate. He is also very sensitive; he picks up on our emotions, and is always there to brighten our spirits.

“Forget everything you know about cats; Suffolks are very different. Be sure that you have time for them. Suffolks like to be in your company and follow you around; they are almost like your shadow! As Linda told me: if a Suffolk is awake and you are there, then he will want your undivided attention.

“Rafi has been an amazing addition to our home. We love him unreservedly, as do his big brothers, Prince and Gabriel. We wouldn’t change him for the world.”



Simon and Lynne with Rafi.



ARE YOU A SUFFOLK CHOCOLATE FAN?
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