

Welcome

Congratulations on your recent acquisition of a Kuvasz! The Kuvasz Club of America wants you to know that we are ready to help you enjoy your new Kuvasz to the fullest. This brochure will help you learn more about your Kuvasz and its Parent Club, the Kuvasz Club of America.



Description

The Kuvasz is a large and agile dog of great facial beauty, luxurious coat, and pleasing proportions of body. Males should be 26-30 inches tall at the shoulders, and females 24-28 inches. Body weight for males average 100 pounds and females 80 pounds. Triangular drop ears of medium size frame an intelligent face. No part of the Kuvasz' head or body is exaggerated: the appearance is that of a naturally developed breed, which is exactly what he is. Slightly longer than tall, his is the classic shape of a dog who spends much time on his feet. Tough and strong, the Kuvasz will ferociously defend all that he considers his: territory, people, or other animals. This strong will and cleverness of the Kuvasz make him an exciting companion.

History

While it is not especially difficult to follow the history of the Kuvasz through the last 1000 years, researchers differ in their views of the breed before this time. One theory (Dr. Sandor Pálfalvy, eminent Sumerologist) places the breed in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley (in Asia) as early as 5000 years before Christ. Other sources consider the Kuvasz to be an offshoot of the Tibetan mastiff, brought into present day Hungary by traveling traders and soldiers. It is fairly certain that Hungarian kings around 1000-1300 A.D. used the Kuvasz as a guard, hunting dog, drover, and hand towel (wiping their greasy fingers into the coats at banquets). Considered the father of the breed, King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (1443-1490) developed his own breeding program in order to surround himself with this loyal guard, whom he trusted more than the people of his court. In fact, it is quite possible that his brother-in-law, the historical Dracula, Vlad Tepes, might have owned Kuvasz. Kuvasz were first exhibited in a show in 1883. Some stud book records also date back to this year.

Temperament

The Kuvasz is a dog of unusual temperament and in many ways a study in contradictions. Depending entirely upon the situation, he can be friendly or aloof, even unsociable to strangers; a feared attacker to intruders; or a jealous and affectionate clown-like family member with his own people. Although the breed is known for its ability to function without human supervision in his guarding

capacity, the Kuvasz needs to be close to his *pack* of human family for his emotional stability. The happiest a Kuvasz can be between house, the yard, and the outside world is in his master's company.

Young dogs are remarkably adaptable and should be purposely exposed to new situations and people. It is entirely possible to have a well-socialized Kuvasz who is friendly in most situations and who will guard you with his life if you are threatened. An experienced Kuvasz will recognize a genuine threatening situation when it occurs. An inexperienced Kuvasz reacts to everything and everyone and may lack the confidence to handle a genuinely threatening situation.

Being extremely sensitive and intelligent, the Kuvasz is easily molded by the environment in which he is raised. Most Kuvasz are easily insulted at any age, and great care must be taken never to punish a Kuvasz unjustly. The "teenager" will often test the disciplinary structure of his family during the formative months from 12-18 months. His upbringing must be loving, but firm. The owner who shields his dog from contact with the outside world will wind up with a shy dog. Early socialization and training with introductions to as many new experiences as possible will produce a secure and confident adult.

Training

A young puppy is silly and full of fun. This is a relatively slow maturing breed. Your puppy may be as big as a house, but they are still a puppy, sometimes until your puppy is 2 to 4 years of age. Males mature much slower than females. The adult dog can be expected to be dignified and polite, yet discriminate towards strangers.

The best time to start training and socializing is immediately in a good puppy kindergarten class. The Kuvasz is known to be independent to the point of stubbornness. The young puppy must learn early to understand that the owner is "boss" and that commands are meant to be followed. Yet, heavy-handed training does not suit the nature of the breed, either. Look for classes that train with positive reinforcement training instead of heavy discipline and a lot of collar jerks.

Health

The Kuvasz is a rugged and healthy breed. Hip dysplasia and other joint problems are fairly common in large breed dogs. While the breed is not immune to any health issues, at this time there are not any that are considered common to the breed. Feed your puppy a high quality adult food. Do not utilize any puppy formulas for its food. Research has shown that slow steady growth will greatly reduce the manifestation of joint problems.

The long-term health of the breed is important to us. And it will also now be important to you. This is why health testing is so important. The Kuvasz Club of America participates in the CHIC (Canine Health Information Center)

program sponsored by the AKC Canine Health Foundation. The recommended tests for all Kuvasz are hips, elbows, and thyroid. Other tests, such as eyes, patellae, and heart are recommended, but not required. For more information, visit www.offa.org.

Many Kuvasz Club of America members support health research for the Kuvasz through the AKC Canine Health Foundation—a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to help dogs live longer, healthier lives. Supporting the Canine Health Foundation will help ensure a healthy future for all dogs. For more information about ongoing health research to help Kuvasz, see www.akcchf.org or call toll free 888-682-9696.

Coat Care

Care of the Kuvasz coat is remarkably easy. Frequent bathing is not necessary; indeed many Kuvasz live out their lives without ever seeing the inside of a tub. The coat is best combed often or brushed with a long-pinned brush. The area behind the ears must be checked often, as the fine hairs may mat easily; nails should be seen to about once a month and ears cleaned weekly, or at least checked. Some owners find that regular professional grooming helps minimize shedding in the house.

Be a Responsible Owner

Your Kuvasz will give you love and companionship, but with every gift comes responsibility. Pet owners must consider their responsibilities to their neighbors and community. Remember to keep your dog confined in a safe fenced area and not let it run loose. Not only is this dangerous for the dog, but it can also have legal ramifications for you, the owners.

Identify your Kuvasz with collar tags in case it is lost. AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR) offers a free dog tag with recovery information and a 24-hour toll-free hotline to help locate owners 7 days a week. For further protection, register your dog's permanent tattoo or microchip with AKC CAR. Call 800-252-7894 or go to www.akccar.org for more information.

When you exercise your dog, clean up after him and dispose of the waste.

Breeding

Shelters destroy many pets every year. Most are from poorly planned or unwanted litters. Only those Kuvasz closest to the ideal standard and who pass their recommended health tests should be bred. Breeding is serious and should not be a casual undertaking.

The number one obligation of a responsible breeder is to make sure puppies are placed with loving responsible owners. Not everyone can successfully raise a Kuvasz puppy. A spayed female or neutered male dog often live longer and are healthier. The chances of breast cancer are greatly reduced in a spayed female. Neutered males have a reduced tendency for marking, cannot develop

testicular cancer, and have a lower risk of prostate cancer. Protect your pet and the future of the breed by spaying or neutering your pet.

If you are determined to become a Kuvasz breeder, even if it is only for one litter, please consider joining the Kuvasz Club of America and becoming one of its approved breeders. Even if you do not plan to breed your Kuvasz, the club would love to have you as a member to learn more about this wonderful breed.

Activities You and Your Kuvasz Can Pursue Together

Kuvasz can compete in many events. Competition in the breed ring can earn an AKC championship title. Performance events are open to all Kuvasz, including those that have been spayed or neutered. Performance events include Rally, Obedience, Agility, and Tracking. Many Kuvasz make extraordinary Therapy Dogs. The breed is naturally intuitive to people's feelings and emotions—and they often excel at visiting hospitals and nursing homes.

Consider contacting a local kennel club for information on obedience classes, puppy kindergarten, or other companion or performance event classes for your new Kuvasz. These classes are an excellent way to socialize your new puppy and provide you, the new owner, with guidance in helping your puppy become a well-trained addition to your family.

For More Information about Kuvasz

Visit the Kuvasz Club of America Web site:
<http://www.kuvasz.com>

Membership applications can be downloaded from the site.

The Kuvasz Club of America also publishes a newsletter, *Kuvasz Quarterly*, which includes articles of interest about the breed. Club members receive the newsletter as part of their membership. You can also subscribe to the newsletter without joining the club. For subscription information, go to:

<http://www.kuvasz.com/quarterly/quarterlyDeadline.htm>.

