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His paws remained white as a symbol of his purity. How the cats really came to be is unknown. Theories include crosses of Siamese with Angoras or Persians, but when or where those original meetups occurred is unknown. They may have taken place in southeast Asia, between various cats who carried the genes for a pointed pattern, long hair and blue eyes, or the breed may have been created in France from cats imported by two Europeans, a Frenchman named Auguste Pavie, and a Major Gordon Russell, who were given a pair of temple cats in as a reward for aiding the priests. The cats were shipped to France, but the male did not make it there alive. Before he died, however, he had impregnated the female, and her kittens helped to establish the breed in Europe. It was recognized in France in as the *Sacre de Birmanie*, from which comes the current breed name, Birman. The cats were first imported to the United States in and were recognized by the Cat Fanciers Association in

Size Birmans typically weigh 6 to 12 pounds. **Personality** If you like the pointed pattern of the Siamese but not the yowly voice, a Birman might be the cat for you. He is a docile, quiet cat who loves people and will follow them from room to room. The Birman is a smart cat and, of course, curious. He likes to explore his environment and has been known to get trapped underneath floors that are being replaced or to accidentally maybe on purpose go for a ride on top of a car. He enjoys being held and will relax in your arms like a furry baby. **Health** Both pedigreed cats and mixed-breed cats have varying incidences of health problems that may be genetic in nature. Problems that may affect the Birman include the following: Congenital hypotrichosis, which causes them to be born with no hair, and thymic aplasia, an immune deficiency that leads to increased risk of infection and death. Fortunately, these conditions are rare. Corneal dermoid, the presence of skin and hair on the surface of the cornea the clear front of the eye of one or both eyes. It can be corrected surgically. Spongiform degeneration, a progressive degenerative disease of the central nervous system causing signs that include hind-limb weakness and uncoordinated movement. Shaking and trembling in kittens. This condition begins in some kittens when they are about 10 days old and lasts until they are about 12 weeks old. The cause is unknown and recovery occurs spontaneously. Comb it weekly to remove dead hair and distribute skin oils. Birmans shed their winter coat in the spring, so you may want to comb more frequently than to remove loose hair. A warm bath can also help to loosen and remove the shedding coat. To accomplish a Birman bath, wetting the cat with a hand-held shower nozzle is often preferable to immersing him in a tub of water. Brush the teeth to prevent periodontal disease. Daily dental hygiene is best, but weekly brushing is better than nothing. Trim the nails every couple of weeks. Wipe the corners of the eyes with a soft, damp cloth to remove any discharge. Check the ears weekly. If they look dirty, wipe them out with a cotton ball or soft damp cloth moistened with a mixture of cider vinegar and warm water. Avoid using cotton swabs, which can damage the interior of the ear. Cats are very particular about bathroom hygiene, and a clean litter box will help to keep the coat clean as well. Birmans who go outdoors also run the risk of being stolen by someone who would like to have such a beautiful cat without paying for it.

Coat Color And Grooming The Birman has a silky, medium-length coat in the pointed pattern of the Siamese meaning that the color is darker on the face, ears, legs and tail, a broad, rounded head topped with medium-size ears, bright blue eyes that give him a sweet expression, and four white feet that give him the appearance of wearing little white mittens. This is a medium-size to large cat with a stocky, powerful body that belies his gentle demeanor. The medium-long to long coat has a silky texture and little undercoat, which means that it rarely mats. It forms a heavy ruff around the neck and is wavy on the belly. For instance, a seal point Birman has a body that is a pale fawn to cream color with a warm tone, gradually shading to a lighter color on the belly and chest. The points are a deep seal brown. On the back paws, the gloves extend up the back of the leg called laces and end in a point or an inverted V shape. Besides seal point, Birmans come in blue point, chocolate point, lilac point, and various

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parti-color point and lynx point colors. The legs and tail have stripes and rings. He is happy to live with cat-friendly dogs, too, thanks to his amiable disposition. Introduce pets slowly and in controlled circumstances to ensure that they learn to get along together.

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