

Serval, Caracal Care Sheet



Cost

Just the kitten: Serval: \$5000 Caracal: \$3500

Prices are subject to change without notice. We reserve the right to refuse a sale for any reason.

Before contacting any breeder regarding availability, first find out if YOU can legally own this animal by checking your state, city, county, zoning, parish, municipality, etc. regulations ([hyperlink](#)). Contact ANY agency that governs you.

Much of the diet and general care for all small exotic cats is the same. We will give a description of the 3 species of cats we raise as well as a few characteristics that are specific to each species. The rest of the care sheet will apply to the care of all 3 species of exotic cats.

Description and Unique Characteristics

Serval

One of the most commonly kept feline species, the serval is a medium sized African cat averaging 20-30 pounds and standing 15-25 inches at the shoulder. Resembling a miniature cheetah, it is a lanky species with noticeably long legs and neck and large ears in proportion to the rest of the body. It has a medium length tail about 8-12 inches long. The coloration is normally yellowish, with lots of black spots on the sides and stripes on the neck and shoulders. They eat 1-3 pounds of meat per day. Servals love to show affection towards their humans with head-butts and rubs and purrs. They are high-energy, tightly strung cats and very talkative, expressing themselves with a variety of vocalizations. While servals are extremely affectionate, they can also be terrifically stubborn.

Caracal

While we have 2 pair of caracals, we have experienced difficulty in breeding and have not had a litter in several years. We continue to hope and will let you know as soon as we do.

Upon first glance one might think a caracal is a miniature cougar. They have somewhat reddish to beige fur that's basically a solid color, a white spotted underbelly, and black ears with tufts on the ends.

Caracals are 16-17 inches at the shoulder and weigh 30 to 50 pounds when full grown. The females are smaller than the males. They eat 1-3 pounds of meat per day. Caracals like to "talk". For those of you who have never been around exotics cats, a caracal's hissing can sound extremely aggressive or angry. But hissing is how they talk along with growling, trilling, and a very soft purr. They actually have different kinds of hisses, with only one or two types that are warning or aggressive. While caracals seem more daunting than servals, I find them a bit more laid back.

Characteristics

One of the most important considerations about exotic cats...THEY DO NOT RE-HOME WELL. Their bond with you is for their lifetime, and many never establish any kind of bond with humans again once they are re-homed. PLEASE RESEARCH THOROUGHLY....and not just this site as there is no way we can cover everything. Be responsible and commit to a forever home.

Good characteristics

When you put in the appropriate time (think as much as possible) with your exotic kitten you will be rewarded with a friendship and bond unlike any other you've experienced. Often, they will choose to be wherever you are and sleep with you. When properly socialized and trained they can walk on a leash and travel with you and meet other people. Exotic kittens and adults are also extremely playful; like all felines they love to play "pounce". Playing and interacting with your exotic kitten is an enjoyable pursuit for both owner and cat.

Bad characteristics

Unless significant time is spent throughout their lifetime, exotic cats tend to bond with only one person or family, and will hide from everyone else. Unlike most grown domestic cats, exotic cats of all ages chew on things including shoes, electrical cords, baskets, plants, bed frames, etc. Exotic cats are also somewhat infamous for swallowing strange objects, requiring surgery to remove them. This can be both heartbreaking and expensive. A fun game of stalking and wrestling with your kitten can be painful as they use much more force than a domestic kitten so it's best to never allow your exotic kitten to "kill"

you, but rather exotic cat-safe toys. A grown exotic cat landing on top of your head from the staircase to “kill” you is not pleasant. If you have pets that look like prey, it’s entirely possible they will become prey over time. Spraying is possible and quite common. Neutering and spaying may reduce, but will not eliminate this behavior. Litter box training can be challenging and is not a sure thing. I do not recommend an exotic cat to become a part of your life if you have children younger than 6 years of age. Exotic cats are significantly stronger than domestic cats. While many behaviors are similar, multiply the strength involved with these behaviors x 10.

Diet

There are many acceptable diets in captivity Diet can include but is not limited to:

Commercial diets: ZuPreem canned diet, Mazuri Feline Diet, Nebraska Brand

Raw Diet Supplements: When feeding a raw diet you need to supplement with a multivitamin and when young, a calcium supplement. We are currently using Wildtrax brand supplement.

Raw Diet: Ground turkey, chicken (always include bones!), chicken organ meat such as livers, gizzards and hearts, red meat as well as whole prey such as chicken, rats, rabbits and deer.

Many people “treat” their exotic cats with a variety of other foods and fruits. In small doses this can be fun for everyone. Domestic cat food, no matter how high end, CANNOT be used as a main food source. While ok to serve as an occasional snack or treat, nutritional requirements of exotic cats are vastly different from domestic cats.

Housing

Even though your exotic cat is going to be your “house pet” the happiest owners and exotic cats have a dedicated room just for the cat for the times it will be unsupervised, as well as an outdoor enclosure. Many owners have their outdoor enclosures attached to their house, installing a doggie door into a door or a window for access. This dedicated room is totally “safe”. When building the outdoor enclosure bigger is always better and you must secure this habitat with a top. Even de-clawed exotic cats can climb up and escape an open topped enclosure.

Proofing your home

Exotic cat-proofing your house can be a formidable task. To start you will always want to take measures to keep your exotic cat from escape. Once it gets out it may or may not come to your call and now you've given animal rights activists' ammunition to help them take away your right to own an exotic cat. Exotic cats are supremely athletic and can actually jump up to the top of your 7 foot tall entertainment center, or the top of your refrigerator, or they may think there is actually a ledge on top of your flat screen TV and investigate. All plants are worth playing with or tasting. Wires also can be tasted or deemed a great play-toy. Anything can be deemed a great play-toy including your breakables and keepsakes. Use common sense and "proof" accordingly.

Enrichment and Exotic Cat-safe Toys

Most exotic cats enjoy water, so a child sized wading pool in their outdoor enclosure is entertaining. Even more entertaining is adding a few feeder goldfish to the pool. Many exotic cats also enjoy a good game of fetch and will actually retrieve toys for you! The best exotic kitty toys are those that will do no harm if swallowed. Exotic kitty-safe toys can include organic fruits and vegetables. Many exotic cats enjoy batting around a small pumpkin, green pepper or cucumber and some will even eat it after playing with it!

These also make good "fetch" objects. Use your imagination to find appropriate enrichment and have fun!

Litter box & Spraying

Most exotic kittens easily litter box train....however; it's almost never 100%. Large Rubbermaid boxes are nice as well as several convenient boxes throughout the house help. Be prepared for the stray accident or even a deliberate accident. Also be prepared for the possibility of spraying...some may not, some may a little, and some may a lot. Both male and females may spray. Spaying/neutering can help.

Children

I do not recommend exotic cats in homes with children under 6. This is for both the kitten's sake and the children's sake. Young children do not always play well with kittens resulting in them being scratched or bitten, and the kitten could be hurt or escape. While I do not believe an exotic cat is meaning to be aggressive, children can look like the ultimate "pounce" toy. Avoiding any potential problems by waiting till your children are at least 6 is best.

Other pets

When raised together as a kitten, exotic cats generally get along with other pets. Use common sense and proper introductory supervision as well as proper play supervision and all should go well. However, if you have a "prey" pet such as a rat, hamster, sugar glider, parakeet etc. this pet needs to be in a separate safe area as it could very well become your exotic cat's next meal. If for whatever reason your exotic cat does not get along with your other pets, have a plan to deal with this and still provide a great home for all your pets.

De-clawing

This can be a controversial subject and what you decide will be what's best for you. I personally recommend de-clawing all 4 paws as early as possible. The sooner you de-claw, the faster they heal. I've de-clawed as early as 5 weeks of age.

Disclaimer

Please remember that the animal health and husbandry information contained on this page is geared towards pet ownership and is merely what has worked for us. Please realize that we do not claim to know **all** the answers about each animal, but can only offer you the best information we have based on our experience. This information is not meant to be a substitute for common sense and proper veterinary care. Remember that age, health; sex, metabolism and individual temperament can vary from animal to animal to dictate the proper environmental and nutritional requirements for each individual animal. Please use common sense and monitor your animal's condition daily. If you have questions, please consult your veterinarian directly if the health and welfare of your animal is in question.

This care sheet is just a beginning and is not intended to be your entire education about exotic cats. There are so many things to know and talk about that we simply cannot remember to list everything you will need to know. We are also just one opinion, and you should solicit other opinions to see what others think before you make up your mind. It is your responsibility to find out as much as you possibly can **BEFORE** you decide to buy an exotic cat.