

The Shirazi Cat

By Sabine Harding

The Shirazi have yet to be a registered breed. Nevertheless you can find plenty of them roaming the streets of Egypt. According to ancient sources and myths, this breed is a relatively old one. Their origin likely goes back to the Persian reign in Egypt when Persian cats got introduced to the local Mau population.

Shirazis are truly ancient, unique souls that compare the godlike traits of the Egyptian Maus with the royal look of the Persian cats. Since they are not registered breeds, the only way to differentiate pure Shirazis and Shirazi mixes nowadays is to compare their fur color and look with those of the purer, native Egyptian Maus. In this case you will surely find this short article a helpful source. Above all, Shirazis are the Egyptian Maus' fluffy relatives.

Body:

Middle-sized, muscular yet elegant. A loose skin fold protracts from the belly to the back knee, which provides an enormous springiness.

Tail:

Medium-sized, wide on the onset and slightly tapered often with rings and a dark tail tip. Due to their overall coat length, the tails are softer and bushier than those of the Egyptian Maus.

Legs and Paws:

Compared to the body proportion the legs are medium-sized, whereas the back legs are slightly longer than the front legs. The paws are small, delicate and lightly oval. The color is usually that of the cat's pattern (generally dark brown, dark grey, black or dark red) the legs are often randomly banded.

Coat:

The fur is very smooth and silky, rather thick and soft at contact. It is quite long, although length tends to vary from middle to long. Unlike the fur of the Egyptian Maus, the Shirazis' coat smoothly flows through the finger. Due to its length, significant markings are often not as easily to discover as they are with the Maus.

Coat color:

The coat color of the native Shirazi is basically the same as the Maus. Most frequent is bronze (brown coat in various shades with dark brown/black patterns) and golden (red). Black and diluted colors, such as blue (black dilution) and crème (red dilution) can also be found occasionally. Silver and smoke, on the other hand, are artificial fur colors which emerged due to intermittent mutations, followed by selective breeding, hence quite rare among native Shirazis as well.

Pattern:

Similar to native Maus, Shirazi usually have three significant coat patterns. Spotted tabbies are still the most frequent, but in addition Shirazi can also be marbled (blotched or Classic) or completely free of markings (especially black Shirazi). The latter is called non-agouti and can be found with other African wild cats, especially with leopards.

Broken necklaces on the chest, buttons on the stomach and the banded legs and tail complete the unique patterns of most Shirazis

Head:

Slightly rounded and wedge-shaped. The nose is neither short nor sharp. A clear Scarab-marking (or “M”) can be found on most cats’ foreheads, and so-called mascara lines often run from the eyes over the cheeks.

Ears:

Middle-sized to large, completing the lines of the head, with moderate distance between the ears.

Eyes:

Almond-shaped, large and expressive eyes; usually surrounded by black lines and frown marks, which provides the cat with a worried, yet ancient and wise expression. Like native Maus, Shirazi either have green or amber eyes (all shades)

Traits:

Shirazis, as well as Egyptian Maus are extremely intelligent, very loving and playful. Unlike most of the Maus, however, Shirazi are usually much more laid back and calmer. While Maus are more active and curious, Shirazi tend to be a lot cuddlier and thus make perfect pets for people who prefer a calmer cat to the very active Maus. Shirazi combine the best Mau features with a natural ease.

