



Is There a Siberian in Your Future?



History

The Siberian Husky was originally bred by the Chukchi, a tribe of Siberian nomads, to provide fast, economical transportation over the vast frozen land. Unusually strong and agile, this medium size dog was able to swiftly cover long distances on a minimum amount of food. Known for its gentle nature, the Chukchi dog often served as a soft, furry bed for the tribal children. Chukchis knew many a "three dog night".

A special relationship born of mutual need and nurtured by mutual respect existed between this dog and its people, thriving in virtual isolation for centuries before the outside world discovered and fell in love with this magnificent animal.

Although the present day Siberian has changed since entering this country around 1900, the breed still maintains many of the qualities that made the Chukchi sled dog such a prized possession.

General

Adult and child alike are captivated by the Siberian's childlike eagerness, stately beauty, and million dollar smile. However, as appealing as the Siberian may be, it is not THE breed for every dog owner. Too many Siberians have ended up lost, in dog shelters, under the wheel of a car, the neighborhood nuisance, or mistreated simply because the owner did not understand the breed.

THE SIBERIAN HAS TRAITS AND NEEDS THAT EVERY PROSPECTIVE OWNER

SHOULD BE AWARE OF. Take a close look at these traits--their advantages  and disadvantages --then decide if this is the breed for you.

Escape Artist



NONE

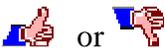


Siberians are great escape artists, and even the best cared for, best kenneled Siberian may get loose, never to be seen again. They can crawl through microscopic holes, scale 8 foot fences with a ballerina's grace, break tie-out chains and slip collars so skillfully even Houdini would be amazed.



Siberian owners must build strong compounds and continually check for that tiny hole, loose fencing, or gleam in their dog's eye that says, "I know something you don't!" Remember: the term "escape proof" is not in the Siberian's lexicon.

That Desire to Dig



One glimpse into a Siberian "crater" is enough to realize how efficient a hole digger the Siberian is. Of course true to the Siberian's nature, he will choose when and where to dig. This can present a problem for many homeowners.



Siberians who do have a place to dig seem more content and less destructive.



The instinct to dig is ancient, and while it can be curbed to some extent, it will not be eliminated.



Siberians will dig and chew, outside or inside! If left to roam freely in the house, the dog can turn a neat orderly home into a housekeeper's nightmare.



Nature Lover



One could call the Siberian a dog for all seasons, for its coat acts as insulation against both heat and cold.



Sometimes criticized for housing his dog outside, the Siberian owner knows his dog has been bred to flourish in an outdoors situation.



The housing needs of the Siberian are simple: clean kennel, fenced or stake-out area, and a dog house.



The lovely thick coat that so efficiently protects the Siberian will shed profusely several times a year, literally filling bushel baskets full of hair.



Vocalizing



The Siberian Husky rarely barks, preferring to whine or moan, and when the mood is right, with head held high, he will produce one of the most hauntingly beautiful sounds in nature: The Siberian Howl.



While this sound may be music to the ears of a Siberian lover, neighbors have been known to feel otherwise.



As a rule, the Siberian will not alert his owner when a stranger approaches. While the owner is not bothered with irritating barking every time someone enters his property, he is left without that added protection. Many Siberian kennels have another breed specifically for protection.

Nomad



👍👎 The Siberian can easily adjust to new environments. A nomad at heart, the Siberian has no fear of cars nor homing instincts compatible with our modern society, and once loose, he can easily fall prey to injury, disease, and hunger, or become a pest chasing and hunting small animals or digging in neighbors' yards. Siberian owners quickly learn that, for the dog's sake, it must be confined or kept on lead at all times.



Not Quite Obedient

👍👎 Given proper training, the Siberian should be able to obey simple commands and act quite respectable--most of the time.



Now we come to serious obedience training and the Siberian--something that non-Siberian obedience people call a contradiction in terms. This is an exaggeration, for the Siberian has the ability to perform admirably, and many have. As a breed, however, they do not excel in this area, and anyone wanting a dog solely for obedience work should not consider the Siberian. Siberian people who do pursue obedience titles tend to maintain a philosophical attitude towards the whole training process--perhaps because they, like their dogs, tend to be gregarious and well-behaved, but not always obedient enough for some.



Very Affectionate

 Siberians will greet almost everyone, especially children, with the same unabashed joy that other dogs reserve for special family members. To this gentle breed, all men are family for they remember the Chukchi. Siberian owners respect this special relationship.



 Not everyone understands nor appreciates the demonstrative nature of the Siberian. The owner must keep his dog under control, for no one appreciates a big Siberian love hug when least expected or desired.

 Because the Siberian has such a gregarious nature, and despite its impressive strength and somewhat wolfish appearance, this people-oriented breed should never be considered for guard duty. Leave your home in the care of a "guard" Siberian and he will most likely welcome an intruder with open arms, fetch (for the first time in his life) your valuables and show him the best route of escape--after all, Siberians are great escape artists.

 or  If you intend to acquire one and only one dog, be aware of the rabbit syndrome--a rare and as yet incurable malady that affects many Siberian owners. It usually starts with the desire to own just one special Siberian, and before long, that one Siberian has turned into two, five, or fifteen special Siberians. While Siberians can thrive in a single dog environment, most prefer and many need the companionship of other animals.

Curiosity

 The inquisitive nature of the Siberian is one of the qualities owners find most endearing and challenging.

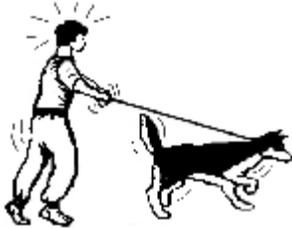


 Curiosity not only kills the cat, but a sizable number of Siberians as well. The desire to seek out that scent, to hunt, to chase, to discover the other side of the fence, is primitive, deeply inbred, and can become overwhelming at the most inappropriate moments. Ask any musher who has wrapped his/her sled around a tree because the team decided to take the "scenic" route.

Athletic



This extremely powerful dog is a natural athlete, thriving on vigorous exercise. The best exercise, of course, is in harness running on a team; however, your Siberian will keep in shape with twenty minutes of hard play every other day.



It is a misconception that the Siberian needs lots of open space. Adequate exercise can be achieved within a fenced area no larger than the average yard.



Perhaps no other breed has done more to keep his owner in shape than the Siberian. How many hearty individuals would have been willing to trek through knee deep snow with the temperature at -10 degrees F. before they owned that Siberian?



Siberians must be confined or on lead at all times.



Because of their great strength, they should not be left solely in the care of young children or less-than-physically-fit adults.



Siberians love companionship and they will expect it regardless of the weather. If you hibernate when the thermometer falls below 40 degrees F., reconsider owning a Siberian.

Natural Beauty



Few breeds are endowed with as much variety of coat and eye color as the Siberian. Match coats of velvet black, subtle grey, or the many striking hues of copper with eyes of rich chocolate brown, icy blue, or bewitching bi-color--every combination is a visual delight.



As with most natural beauties, the Siberian requires a minimal amount of care to look gorgeous. Just run a comb through his coat once a week, bathe him several times a year, and the fastidious Siberian will do the rest.



Because the Siberian is so desirable and gregarious, he is easy prey for dog snatchers.

Economical to Feed



Originally bred to perform on a minimum amount of food, the Siberian requires less substance per pound than other breeds his size.

Siberians need a balanced diet, high in protein and fat--especially during the winter months. Many commercial dog foods do not meet the dietary needs of the Siberian.

Finding Your Siberian

After weighing all the pros and cons of owning a Siberian, do you still feel that it is the breed for you? If so, may we congratulate you on your good taste and offer some advice on choosing that special Siberian.

READ everything you can on the breed and its care. The history of the Siberian and the remarkable people who have shared its destiny make for fascinating reading, and even if you never own a Siberian, you cannot help but be impressed by this amazing dog's past.

MAKE SURE everyone in the household is aware just what to expect from the breed.

DECIDE whether you are willing to put up with the special needs of a puppy--or would an adult dog better suit your lifestyle? There are many adult Siberians waiting to be rescued. Check out the Siberian Husky listing of available dogs in your area.

CONTACT the local affiliate of the AKC or, if you know it, the local Siberian Husky kennel club, for names of breeders in your area. If you are interested in a rescue dog, visit your local shelter or the Siberian Husky rescue site for names and contact information for your area.

VISIT several kennels before choosing one. Inspect the dogs and their environment. If possible, ask to see both the sire and the dam of any dog you are considering, and make sure their eyes and hips have been certified clear. Some kennels have temperament testing done on their litters, and this may help you in the choice of a puppy. Most important, take your time and be sure of your choice.

Having decided on the Siberian, make sure that everything you and the breeder/owner agree to is **IN WRITING**. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following: price of dog, sire and dam and their AKC registration numbers, limited guarantee on the dog, and vaccination records. It is suggested that the purchaser have the dog examined by his/her veterinarian within ten days.

GET as much **INFORMATION** on the care and feeding of your dog from the owner/breeder as possible.

Once your dog is home, don't forget to **KEEP UP WITH** the needed **IMMUNIZATIONS**. In addition to the required inoculations, your dog should

be protected against Parvo and Heartworm. All Northern breeds are susceptible to certain parasites; be aware of their symptoms and have your dog's stools checked periodically.

Your Siberian is the product of **CENTURIES OF CAREFUL, PURPOSEFUL BREEDING**. As a Siberian owner, it is now your responsibility to maintain this standard of excellence. We advise neutering all Siberians sold solely as pets. There is an abundance of excellent Siberians, and any indiscriminate breeding not only adds to the already serious pet population problem, but can lead to serious genetic problems for future generations.

One Final Observation

The more you learn about the Siberian psyche, the more you will understand there is usually a

reason behind even the most outlandish behavior. For instance, the compulsive desire to dig holes, while appearing to be destructive behavior, is but instinct developed centuries ago from the need to make shelter, gather and store food and exercise.

There is even a logical explanation for the Siberian's seemingly casual indifference to commands. The Siberian can easily sense any uncertainty or nervousness you may be experiencing and will quickly question your leadership ability. Every breed is guided to one degree or another by the pecking order, and while some breeds will submit more quickly to the will of man than others, the Siberian will insist you prove a good and reliable leader before he accepts your dominance. The Siberian will always give freely of his love and affection. However, his respect must be earned. As you gain confidence, become more skilled in handling dogs, and acquire some Siberian tricks of your own, you will probably find your Siberian listening and, yes, even obeying more. Given generous amounts of love, plus proper care and training, your Siberian will give you years of enjoyment--Siberian style, of course.

This pamphlet prepared by the Seneca Siberian Husky Club, a group of people dedicated to the promotion of better understanding and protection of the breed we love so dearly. It is reprinted here with permission of the Club Secretary,. They request that if you find this material useful and plan to distribute it to others you send a donation to the club at the following address:

SENECA SIBERIAN HUSKY CLUB

c/o Editor

1475 Latta Road

Rochester, NY 14612

Illustrations by Sharon P. Scott

Text by Nancy B. Kaplan

Copyright 1983 by the Seneca Siberian Husky Club, all rights reserved.