

## THE ANATOLIAN SHEPHERD

**UNIQUE ORIGIN:** Anatolian Shepherd Dogs are members of a very old breed, probably developed from powerful hunting dogs from Mesopotamia. The breed was developed over time to meet a specific set of circumstances such as very hot, dry summers and very cold winters. Those who developed these dogs were mainly sedentary, semi-nomadic, or nomadic and needed dogs to guard flocks moving great distances on the Central Anatolian Plateau, what we know as Turkey. The Anatolian took shape here and was further developed as a breed in America.. Many Turkish breeders believe that the Anatolian is a cross of the Kangal and the Akbash dogs.

**PERSONALITY:** The Anatolian Shepherd was developed to be independent and forceful, responsible for guarding its master's flocks without human assistance or direction. They can be challenging as a pet because of this independent nature. Owners of Anatolians must socialize them early to make appropriate companions of them. They are very intelligent and can learn quickly, but might choose not to obey. According to Turkish shepherds, three Anatolian Shepherd Dogs are capable of overcoming a pack of wolves and injuring one or two of them. They like to roam, as they were bred to travel with their herd and to leave the herd to go hunt for predators before the predators could attack the flock. Anatolians are not recommended for life in small quarters. They do well with other animals, including cats, if they are introduced while still a puppy and have their own space. Neither puppies nor adults really like to fetch, but they do like to run and sometimes swim.

**APPEARANCE:** The Anatolian Shepherd is a muscular breed with thick necks, broad heads, and sturdy bodies. They will range from 26 to 31 inches tall and between 90 and 150 pounds. Their coats may be any color, although the most common are a white cream, sesame, and white with large colored spots. Their thick coat is double and somewhat wiry. They should be brushed a couple of times a week in warm weather to help control shedding. The hair on their neck is very thick to help protect their throat in any fight with a predator. They are naturally thin animals with large rib cages and small stomachs. They look heavier than they are due to the thick coat.

**INTERESTING FACTS:** Anatolian Shepherds are used by the Cheetah Conservation Fund in their efforts to prevent cheetahs which have attacked livestock from being killed by farmers. Anatolians are bred and then given to farmers to use in protecting their livestock from cheetahs. The dogs are an effective, non-lethal discouragement that prevents the cheetahs from taking livestock. The incentive for farmers to shoot the cheetahs is removed, and the cheetahs tend to concentrate their hunting on wild game.