

## New to Nairobi and thinking about getting a dog?

Do NOT buy any pets from the roadside! Puppies purchased sometimes live for only a few days. There have been cases of people buying puppies and finding out later they have exposed their families to various dangerous diseases including RABIES.

A few things to think about before deciding what type of dog is best for you;

Why do I want a dog?

Do I intend to breed or show?

How much money do I want to spend?

What kind of dog would suit my lifestyle?

Do I know how big the dog will get when fully grown?

Will I take the dog with me when I leave Kenya?

Do I know how much it will cost to ship a dog to another post and/or quarantine boarding?

Do I know how much grooming it will take to keep a coat clean and tangle free?

Do I know how much time & effort it takes to raise & train a puppy to adulthood?

Do I know how much it will cost to feed and take care of veterinary requirements?

Do I have enough time / energy for a dog with my family & work requirements?

Do I know what the dog was bred to do, if a purebreed? I.E. their jobs; herding,

hunting, guarding, vermin hunters, companions etc. This will determine

requirements for raising & training the breed of your choice.

Have I researched the various genetic problems associated with my breed of choice?

Hip Dysplasia, Elbow Dysplasia, Epilepsy, PRA (Progressive Renal Atrophy) these are just a few health problems that can be genetic and passed to the puppies.

The East Africa Kennel Club (020 209 2319) is great place to seek guidance to find a pure breed dog. The EAKC can tell you which breeders currently have properly registered litters available. Many dogs that are advertised on bulletin boards at the shopping centres are not properly papered to be registered or shown at the East Africa Kennel Club or eligible for export papers . Don't be fooled by a fancy name either, DoberDanes or St Weilers are not breeds, just made up names for crossbreeds. If you buy a dog with a fancy name but no Official Registration Papers, you have an expensive shenzi (mutt) If papers are not important to you, then by all means go to the KSPCA (020 243 0318) where they have many, many great dogs awaiting new homes. However, if you are willing to buy a pedigreed dog, please get your monies worth. A cheap dog is not cheap in the long term, a dog with the blue registration (meaning they have been Xrayed for hip problems and scored well) will be far less likely to require expensive pain medication or hip surgery. A dog that comes from a long line of correctly tempermented dogs will be less likely to cause injury to a child or family member.

If you work at an NGO or Embassy, check the bulletin boards for families leaving behind pets. If you have small children, you might even find a dog that has lived with similar aged children. (If you have small children, the dogs's temperament should be considered over the preference for a certain breed)

If you decide to buy a purebred dog, what are some signs of a good breeder?

A good breeder will allow you to see all of the puppies, (even if some of them are already spoken for) and one or more of the parents. Both the parents and puppies should be clean, and in good condition. Take note of any other dogs in the compound as well, they should all look healthy!

The area where the dogs are kept should be open to you as well. It should be clean, and well lit. If a breeder wants to bring a single puppy to you at a petrol station or shopping mall, beware!

The breeder should have vet records for the parents and the puppies. This should include vaccination records, deworming dates etc. They should have the Official Registration papers for pup's parents, showing they are properly registered with East African Kennel Club, and the pedigree (family tree). The breeder should be willing to help you get the proper paperwork and fill it in, and submit it for your pup to be properly registered. The breeder should also have a "new puppy information pack" to give you that includes indicating how the pups should be fed after they are weaned and are ready to go to their new homes, and dates of follow up vet care required. (vaccinations and deworming) as well as other useful information.

The breeder should ask you questions about your dog experience, how you will raise, train and socialize the pup. It should feel like an interview. A good breeder is not out to just sell puppies but to improve the breed, educate people and ensure their pups get good homes!

And last, if you know of a dog being left behind and looking for a home, please contact me directly. I keep a list of dogs looking for homes and try informally to help find good homes for them.

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