



# TICA Sphynx Breed Introduction

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**General Description:** The intriguing Sphynx cat never fails to draw a reaction from people - some people love the bald, wrinkled look, some are fascinated by the cat, while others are less than enthusiastic. But for those that take the time to get to know the cat, a great treat is in store. They have very soft skin that feels like the softest chamois leather and are so very warm to the touch that you just want to cuddle up with them-especially in cold weather. Their toes are like fingers and they use them that way as they investigate and play with everything that takes their curiosity. They wrinkled faces remind you of the wisdom we all gather with age while their big ears and lemon-shaped eyes give them a unique look. Their rounded Buddha-like bodies bring a smile to the face. The Sphynx is definitely an enigmatic breed for the connoisseur.

**History:** First attempts at breeding Sphynx began in 1966, when a black and white cat gave birth to a hairless kitten in Ontario, Canada. The owner named the hairless kitten Prune, due to the wrinkled hairless skin. Prune was bred to other cats in an attempt to create more hairless kittens. Because hairlessness is a recessive gene, some of the kittens resulting from this union had hair, while others did not. These kittens were called Canadian Hairless Cats, which some people referred to as Sphynx cats, due to their physical similarities with an ancient Egyptian cat sculpture called the Sphinx. Between 1975 and 1978, several natural mutations of hairless kittens were found in Minnesota and Toronto. These kittens, named Epidermis, Punkie, and Paloma, were bred to Devon Rex, another breed with very little body hair. The Sphynx breed traces its history to the offspring of these unions. TICA has recognized this breed for over 20 years and there are now several thousand Sphynx registered in the world.



**Personality:** The Sphynx is an inquisitive, intelligent, and extremely friendly cat. Warm and soft to the touch, Sphynx frequently sleep with their owners under the covers. The term "Velcro lap cat" used to describe the desire of the Sphynx to be on you all the time, is very accurate. Sphynx love to greet every new person visiting the home, and most get along well with dogs and other pets. Because of their hairlessness, Sphynx have a tendency to get cold but they are intelligent enough to find a warm place- usually a computer monitor, a sunny window, a television, or under a blanket with their owners. Sphynx are highly active and will entertain themselves for hours and some Sphynx even fetch toys. Many Sphynx owners describe their cats as elf-like or childlike due to their inquisitive and intelligent nature. Sphynx are loyal and dedicated to their owners and make very affectionate companions for everyone.

**Traits:** The Sphynx is one of a few hairless breeds. Striking and distinctive in appearance, they do not lack hair entirely. Fine down covers the skin of most Sphynx, giving the skin a chamois or suede-like texture. Light hair is usually visible on the nose and backs of the ears. Sphynx come in a variety of colors, including solid, particolored, tabby, tortoiseshell, and are recognized in all four of TICA's categories: Traditional, Pointed, Mink, and Sepia. Their color is viewed on the pigment of the skin and on the few hairs (down) they have. Perhaps their second most distinguishable feature is their huge ears, frequently more than 2 or 3 inches in height. The Sphynx also has an open and sweet expression, greatly facilitated by the large lemon shaped eyes. This is a sturdy medium-boned, athletic and highly muscular cat. The belly of the Sphynx should give the appearance of having recently eaten a large meal. Because of their friendly nature, Sphynx often make excellent show cats as they are highly accepting of new people and easy to handle. Because of their lack of absorbent coat, Sphynx tend to get oily and need to be bathed often, but they are not hypo-allergenic. While some individuals with allergies find they are not allergic to Sphynx, others discover they are allergic but usually to a lesser extent.