

The Akita – Is This Breed Right For You?

A natural monument in Japan, the Akita's proud heritage includes hunting large game such as bear, elk, and boar. This powerful and dignified member of the Working Group is renowned for courage and loyalty, but may not be tolerant of other animals. His luxurious double coat can include any combination of vibrant colors. Aloof toward strangers, they form strong family bonds. Highly intelligent with keen sense of humor, the Akita responds best to respectful commands and training techniques that rely on motivation rather than force. Strong-willed and proud, Akitas are not receptive to abusive methods.

Akitas originated in Japan many, many years ago, and have been designated a natural monument of Japan. They are a large, impressive breed with natural guarding instincts. While generally reserved with people they don't know, Akitas are affectionate but not "clingy" with their family. They tend to be independent, and while they will always know where you are in your home, they are not constantly underfoot, or in your face, needing attention as do some of the more dependent breeds.

Their independent nature means they should NEVER be allowed to roam loose or off lead in an unfenced area. Early and constant socialization and training is a must with this headstrong breed, as they will tend to want to make their own decisions unless taught otherwise.

The Japanese originally bred them for hunting bear, so they have a strong hunting instinct. This is another reason they should never be off

leash in an unsecured area, as they will go off hunting on their own. Their regal demeanor stems from a dominant attitude. In other words, they feel the need to be the boss of other dogs. They may get along well with dogs of the opposite sex that respect them; however they will not tolerate a challenge from another dog. Despite their size, they can do well in a smaller area, as long as they are given daily exercise.

Their thick double coat "blows" twice a year (this means it will come out in clumps all over your house). Their grooming needs are not excessive; regular brushing and nail trimming, with the brushing stepped up during the coat blowing period to help get rid of the dead coat and save some work on your vacuum!

All that being said, why would anyone want one of these large, challenging dogs that does not appear to 'live to please' as most other breeds do? The breed does have its benefits, or what those who are suited to the breed consider an "up" side!

Akitas are generally quiet and not prone to nuisance barking. Despite their quiet nature, they are natural guardians. They do not need and should not have special watch dog training. The Akita will instinctively guard your home, which is one of the reasons they require extensive socialization. They need to learn that not all strangers are threats.

The Akita, despite their generous coat, tends to be a clean breed with not much of a "doggy" odor. Dirt tends to dry and fall off a proper Akita

coat, and they can often be seen grooming themselves in a cat-like manner. As mentioned earlier, they do shed excessively twice a year, when they lose old undercoat and grow new. However, the rest of the year shedding is almost non-existent.

Akitas are an independent breed, but most have a silly side reserved only for those people they know, love and trust. They do require being a part of a family, and should never be a trophy relegated to the back yard. Their exercise level is medium. They will be happy with a good walk or jog, and are not an overly hyper breed.

Finally, this is a breed that requires respect, from family, friends and strangers; a hard concept for some people to grasp. This does not mean that they do not respect their owners or see them as leaders. If trained properly, they will and should see every member of the family as a leader, above them in the "pack order". Unfair or abusive treatment and training will lead to an Akita that resents you.

In addition, friends and strangers should wait to be properly introduced. Akitas are not given to indiscriminate friendships and do not need or want attention from every person that crosses their path. This does not mean that people should be afraid of an Akita. This does mean they should treat them as the beautiful, noble breed they are, giving them their space and respect, not forcing themselves on the dog.

For More Information see the National Parent Club website at www.AkitaClub.org or send an email request to: ACA-PEC@AkitaClub.org