

Colour and Pattern Guide for Domestic Cats

Colours: there are 8 different base colour variations a cat can be:

<p>White: there is never an underlying pattern to white fur</p>	
<p>Black: can appear brown in sunlight</p>	
<p>Orange: strongly linked to the tabby pattern</p>	

Grey: a dilute version of black



Silver: a very light grey often with darker markings



Cream or Buff: the dilute version of orange



Brown: a truly brown cat is pretty rare

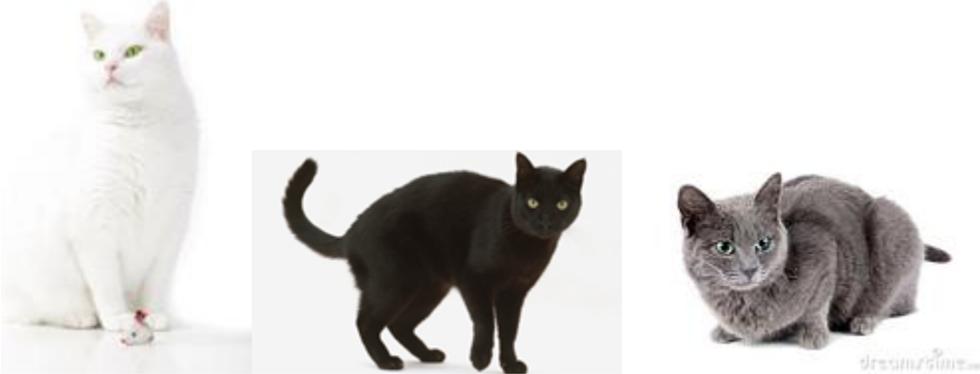


Cinnamon: a dilute brown sometimes with red overtones



Patterns: There are 6 main patterns in the domestic cat world, and each has a few variations.

1. Solid: The cat is only one colour, with no other colours or markings present.



2. Bicolour: Cats are a colour + white. This can also include a tabby pattern.



Some variations of this are:

i) Harlequin: cat's have more white than colour present



ii) Van: Cats have colour only on their head and tails



iii) Tuxedo: a common term for cats that are black with white on their chest, paws, stomach and face



3. Tabby: The most common pattern seen in domestic cats. For a cat to be a tabby there are two kinds of hair present: The tabby pattern is created by a darker coloured hair while the “background” colour is actually created by hairs with more than one colour on them called Agouti Hairs. This is why it can be difficult to truly tell the colour of some tabby’s - What looks like a grey tabby to one person might be called a brown tabby by another because of these agouti hairs. The tabby pattern can appear in all coat colours except white and is characterized by dark striping across the body and the “tabby mask” - dark pencil marks from the corners of their eyes back along their face and the characteristic M about their eyes. There are 4 types of Tabby patterns as well as variations

i) Striped: The cat has vertical stripes along its entire body including the tail.



ii) Blotched: The two colours of fur create a pattern of splotches and circles rather than concise stripes.



iii) Spotted: The darker colour appears as distinct spots across the body while on the legs and tail there may still be stripes.



iv) Ticked: Not as common. The entire body is covered in the agouti hairs (each hair has multiple colours on it, therefore cat doesn't appear to be a "solid" colour). Striping is only present on the tabby mask and occasionally on the tail and legs.



Variations:

- the combination of a tabby pattern and the bi-colour pattern. Below is a blotched brown tabby bi-colour.



- a combination of the tortoiseshell pattern and the tabby pattern, often called a torbie



- a combination of the tabby pattern and the colour-point pattern, known as lynx-point



4. Tortoiseshell: This refers to a coat with a consistent mix of black and orange. Torties have very little or no white on them.



Variations:

- Dilute Tortoiseshell: Tortie markings are “faded” looking



- Torbie: Tortie markings combined with the tabby stripes (can also have dilute torbies)



5. Calico: This refers to the combination of white, black and orange. The more white there is, the more defined the black and orange will be.



Variations:

- Dilute Calico: calico markings look “faded”



6. Colour-Point: This refers to the pattern where the “cool” points of the body (face, paws and tail) are a darker colour than the rest of the body. This can occur in a number of colours and to varying degrees, where the difference is extremely noticeable, to more faint. The points don’t have to be a solid colour.

Variations: These variations can combine. for example you can have a flame-lynx-Point

- Lynx-Point: The points have the tabby pattern



- Seal-Point: points are brown in colour and the hind-end is darker than the rest of the body



- Chocolate-Point: points are brown in colour



- Flame-Point: points are orange in colour. The photo shows a flame lynx point (note the tabby stripes)



- Blue-Point: points are “blue” or grey in colour

