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# Saluki

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## Saluki



Salukis come in a variety of coat colours.

### Other names

Gazelle Hound  
Royal Dog of Egypt  
Persian Greyhound

### Country of origin

Middle Eastern Region

### Traits

### Classification & standards

<b>FCI</b> Group 10 Section 1 #269	standard ( <a href="http://www.dogdomain.com/fcistandards/fci-269.htm">http://www.dogdomain.com/fcistandards/fci-269.htm</a> )
<b>AKC</b> Hound	standard ( <a href="http://www.akc.org/breeds/saluki/index.cfm">http://www.akc.org/breeds/saluki/index.cfm</a> )
<b>ANKC</b> Group 4 (Hounds)	standard ( <a href="http://www.ankc.aust.com/saluki.html">http://www.ankc.aust.com/saluki.html</a> )
<b>CKC</b> Group 2 - Hounds	standard ( <a href="http://www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=99&amp;BreedCode=SLK">http://www.ckc.ca/en/Default.aspx?tabid=99&amp;BreedCode=SLK</a> )
<b>KC</b> Hound (UK)	standard ( <a href="http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/37">http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/37</a> )
<b>NZKC</b> Hounds	standard ( <a href="http://www.nzkc.org.nz/br484.html">http://www.nzkc.org.nz/br484.html</a> )
<b>UKC</b> Sighthounds & Pariahs	standard ( <a href="http://mail.ukcdogs.com/UKCweb.nsf/80de88211ee3f2dc8525703f004cc">http://mail.ukcdogs.com/UKCweb.nsf/80de88211ee3f2dc8525703f004cc</a> OpenDocument)

The Saluki is perhaps the oldest known breed of domesticated dog. A study published in the May 21, 2004 issue of *Science* confirms the Saluki's antiquity through DNA analysis identifying it as one of the

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earliest breeds to diverge from wolves.<sup>[1]</sup> Like elsewhere in the Fertile Crescent region, Saluki-like animals appear on the ancient ceramics from Susa and Sialk of 3500 BC in Iran, as well as on Egyptian tombs of 2100 BC.<sup>[2]</sup> The breed was first imported to England in 1840, however there was no real interest until the Hon. Florence Amherst imported the first Saluki in 1895 from the kennels of Prince Abdulla in Transjordan. The Kennel Club recognised the breed in 1923.

Widely admired for its beauty, speed and endurance, the Saluki is a sighthound and historically traveled throughout the Middle East with nomadic desert tribes over an area stretching from the Sahara to the Caspian Sea. As a result, different Saluki subtypes, varying mostly in colour and coat, can be found across this widely scattered area.

Although the greyhound is the fastest dog breed with a top speed of around 45 mph (72 km/h), the Saluki's strength lies in its great endurance and stamina. They may not be the fastest sighthounds, but they can run for much longer than the sprinting breeds.

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## Description

### Appearance

The overall appearance of the Saluki is one of grace and symmetry. Salukis are "sight" hounds which means they sight the quarry, run it down, catch and retrieve/dispatch it. The impression given should be one of the ability to hunt efficiently. While on the coursing field the impression becomes a reality with the addition of an intense desire, drive, and focus that is not seen in the show ring. Combined, these qualities comprise undeniable Saluki breed type and function.



A pair of Saluki puppies

There are two coat types evident in the Saluki gene pool: smooth and feathered. Smooth is a short coat over the entire body, and feathered is long hair on the ears, backs of the legs and tail. This hair can be of varying lengths and sparseness is not to be penalised. Both coat types exhibit the same qualities. In both varieties males may range from 23 to 28 inches at the top of the shoulder with females measuring

somewhat smaller.

## Temperament



Saluki with light coat

A true Saluki retains the qualities of hunting hounds and may seem reserved and aloof. They learn quickly but can get bored with repetition, so training sessions should be short and varied. Sensitive and intelligent, the Saluki should never be trained using force or hard-handed methods.

Salukis need regular exercise, but can behave quietly indoors. They are usually quiet and don't bark unless there is a reason, but they will "sing" (a high pitched howl, with oscillating volume) when they feel that something is wrong or when a member of the family is away for a long period of time. This "singing" can also be for bonding in the family (pack) group. There are salukis that have been taught to "sing" on cue. Salukis can get along well with children and can become protective, but the family must respect the dog's need for quiet and peaceful time alone to rest. Salukis have a fairly long life span, living an average of 13-16 years.

According to the National Veterinary Scholars, Salukis should not be allowed off leash. Salukis can have a strong prey drive as they are sighthounds and have an ancient heritage of hunting by sight (over 7,000 years). However, this does not mean that they cannot get along with smaller dogs, cats, or other small pets. Training and understanding of the individual saluki comes into play when integrating a household of mixed species. The Saluki Club of America recommends a fence of at least five feet tall, as a Saluki can very easily jump anything lower than that.

## Health

The Saluki is a very healthy breed. The largest widespread health problem in the breed is a sensitivity to anesthesia as a result of low levels of body fat. The Saluki tends to have large litters. Litters of ten puppies are not at all unusual.

## Saluki in art and popular culture

The Saluki is the mascot for the Southern Illinois University sports teams because the southern portion of Illinois is known as "Little Egypt." Because of this connection, one of the new Amtrak trains serving Illinois is called the "Saluki," making this possibly the first Amtrak train to be named after a dog.

The Saluki is the mascot for Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Red Hill High School in Bridgeport, Illinois, has also taken the Saluki as



Salukis of China's Xuande Emperor, painted by the emperor himself in 1427

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their mascot.

Alberto Giacometti's 1951 sculpture titled "Dog" was modeled after a Saluki.<sup>[3]</sup>

During the filming of *Kingdom of Heaven* in Morocco (2004-05), English actor Orlando Bloom rescued and adopted a dog, Sidi, who is a black Saluki mix.

Cross is a fierce female Saluki in the Japanese manga series *Ginga: Nagareboshi Gin* and its sequel, *Ginga Legend Weed*, both by Yoshihiro Takahashi. Her sons Ken and George play important roles in *Ginga Legend Weed*.

Rita from *Oliver and Company* is a Saluki.

## History



Dogs of King Antef

The Saluki has historically served as a courser, a speedy hunting dog that operated in packs. They often hunted in tandem with falcons which locate the prey and for the dogs to run down.

Salukis appear on Egyptian tombs from 2100 B.C. The dogs were so esteemed that they were often mummified like the bodies of the Pharaohs themselves. Numerous Saluki remains have been found in the ancient tombs of the Upper Nile region.

In Muslim cultures, dogs are often seen as unclean. A saluki, however, is given a different status by the Arab culture. The breed is treasured by the Bedouin for the white spot on the dog's chest. The Bedouin value them, breeding them for both beauty and hunting qualities. A saluki, instead of being viewed as unclean, often sleeps in tents with their owners, to be protected from the heat of the day and the cold of the night.

Salukis were first brought into England in 1840. There was no real interest however, until the Hon. Florence Amherst imported the first Saluki in 1895 from the kennels of Prince Abdulla in Transjordan. King Abdullah's hounds were probably originally from Kurdish areas of Syria.

As is the case with some other pedigree breeds in the United States, including the Basenji and Portuguese Podengo, the current domestic population of Salukis is descended from a small number of founders introduced into the country within the last 100 years, and must be carefully mated to avoid inbreeding. However, the original dogs imported into the US came from throughout the Middle East, a vast geographical area, unlike most other breeds that come from very small areas, so, worldwide, Salukis have the largest genetic base among purebreds. Recently, the AKC (American Kennel Club) has allowed the



Gazelle Hound circa 1915

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third generation of COO (Country of Origin) salukis to be registered after inspections by recognised judges so the DNA base will broaden.

## References

- <sup>^</sup> Genetic Structure of the Purebred Domestic Dog - Parker et al. 304 (5674): 1160 - Science (<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/304/5674/1160>)
- <sup>^</sup> Xavier Przedziecki, *Le Destin des Lévrier*, Translated by Jonathon Brown, ISBN 2-904304-17-7.
- <sup>^</sup> MoMA.org | The Collection | Alberto Giacometti. Dog. 1951 (cast 1957) ([http://www.moma.org/collection/browse\\_results.php?object\\_id=80979](http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=80979))

## External links

- AKC Breed history (<http://www.akc.org/breeds/saluki/history.cfm>)
- Salukis Breed-FAQ (<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/dogs-faq/breeds/salukis/>)
- The Arabian Saluki Center (<http://arabiansaluki.ae/>)
- Desert Bred Salukis in Israel (<http://www.ruahmidbar.co.il/>)
- Saluki Europe (<http://www.saluki-europe.com/>)

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