

Data Packet 3E:

Afghan Hound

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_hound

The **Afghan Hound** is a **hound** that is one of the oldest **dog** breeds in existence. Distinguished by its thick, fine, silky coat and its tail with a ring curl at the end, the breed acquired its unique features in the cold mountains of **Afghanistan**. Its local name is **Tāzī Spay** (**Pashto**: سپې تازي) or **Sag-e Tāzī** (**Dari Persian**: تازی سگ). Other alternate names for this breed are *Kuchi Hound*, *Tāzī*, *Balkh Hound*, *Baluchi Hound*, *Barutzy Hound*, *Shalgar Hound*, *Kabul Hound*, *Galanday Hound*, or sometimes incorrectly *African Hound*.

Appearance

These **dogs** specialize in pursuing prey, keeping it in sight, and overpowering it by their great speed and agility. They must be able to detect motion quickly, so they have keen vision.

Sighthounds must be able to capture fast, agile prey such as **deer** and **hare**, so they have a very flexible back and long legs for a long stride, a deep chest to support an unusually (compared to other dogs) large heart, very efficient lungs for both **anaerobic** and **aerobic** sprints, and a lean, wiry body to keep their weight at a minimum.

The typical sighthound **type** also has a light, lean head, which is referred to as being **dolichocephalic** in its proportions.

This shape can create the illusion that their heads are longer than usual. **Wolves** and other **wild dogs** are dolichocephalic, but some **domesticated dogs** have become **brachycephalic** (short-headed) due to **artificial selection** by humans over the course of 12,000 years.

Dolichocephalic breeds have a wider field of vision but smaller overlap between the eyes and therefore possibly poorer depth perception in some of their field of view than brachycephalic breeds; most, if not all dog breeds have less visual acuity than their antecedent the wolf. There is currently no science-based evidence available to confirm the popular belief that sighthounds have a higher visual acuity than other types of dogs. However, there is increasing evidence that dolichocephalic breeds, thanks to a higher number of retinal ganglion cells in their "visual streak", retain more heightened sensitivity than other breeds to objects and rapid movement in the horizontal field of vision.

The Afghan Hound is tall, standing in height 24–29 inches and weighing 45–60 pounds. The coat may be any color, but white markings, particularly on the head, are discouraged; many individuals have a **black facial mask**. A specimen may have facial hair that looks like a **Fu Manchu moustache**. The moustache is called "mandarins." Some Afghan Hounds are almost white, but multi-color hounds (white with islands of red or black) are not acceptable and may indicate impure breeding. The long, fine-textured coat requires considerable care and grooming.

The long topknot and the shorter-haired saddle on the back of the dog are distinctive features of the Afghan Hound coat. The high hipbones and unique small ring on the end of the tail are also characteristics of the breed.

Afghan Hound



An Afghan Hound

Other names Tazi, Tazhi Spay, Da Kochyano Spay, Sage Balochi, Ogar Afgan, Eastern Greyhound/Persian Greyhound

Country of origin Afghanistan

	Traits	[hide]
Weight	Male 20–27 kg (45–60 lb)	
Height	Male 61–73 cm (24–29 in)	
Coat	Long and fine	
Color	Fawn, Gold, Brindle, White, Red, Cream, Blue, Gray and Tricolor	
Litter size	6–8 puppies	
Life span	11–13 years	

Classification and standards [show]

Dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*)

Behavior

The temperament of the typical Afghan Hound can be aloof and dignified, but happy and clownish when it's playing.

This breed, as is the case with many sighthounds, has a high prey drive and may not get along with small animals.

The Afghan Hounds' reasoning skills have made it a successful competitor in dog agility trials as well as an intuitive therapy dog and companion. Genomic studies have pointed to the Afghan Hound as one of the oldest of dog breeds.

The breed has a reputation among some dog trainers of having a relatively slow "obedience intelligence" as defined by author [Stanley Coren](#) in *The Intelligence of Dogs*.

History

[Sighthounds](#) are among the oldest recognizable [types](#) of dogs, and genetic testing has placed the Afghan Hound breed among those with the least genetic divergence from the wolf on some markers;^[1] this is taken to mean that such dogs are descended from the oldest [dog types](#), not that the breeds tested had in antiquity their exact modern form.

Sighthounds such as the saluki/sloughi type have existed for at least 5,000 years, with the earliest presumed sighthound remains appearing in the excavations of [Sumer](#) dated approximately 7000–6000 BC. The earliest description of a sighthound in European recorded history comes from [Arrian's Cynegeticus](#), of the 2nd century AD. Although today most sighthounds are kept primarily as [pets](#), they have been bred for thousands of years to detect movement, chase, capture, and kill prey primarily by speed. They thrive on physical activity. Some have mellow personalities, others are watchful or even hostile towards strangers, but the instinct to chase running animals remains strong.

Today's modern purebred breed of Afghan Hound descends from dogs brought in the 1920s to Great Britain, and is a blending of types and varieties of longhaired sighthounds from across Afghanistan and the surrounding areas. Some had been kept as hunting dogs, others as guardians.^[3]

Once out of [Afghanistan](#), the history of the Afghan Hound breed becomes an important part of the history of the very earliest dog shows and [The Kennel Club](#) (UK). Various sighthounds were brought to England in the 1800s by army officers returning from [British India](#) (which at the time included), Afghanistan, and [Persia](#), and were exhibited at dog shows, which were then just becoming popular, under various names, such as Barukzy hounds. They were also called "Persian Greyhounds" by the English, in reference to their own indigenous sighthound.

One dog in particular, *Zardin*, was brought in 1907 from India by Captain Bariff, and became the early ideal of [breed type](#) for what was still called the Persian Greyhound. *Zardin* was the basis of the writing of the first breed standard in 1912, but breeding of the dogs was stopped by World War I.

Out of the longhaired sighthound types known in Afghanistan, two main strains make up the modern Afghan Hound breed. The first were a group of hounds brought to [Scotland](#) from [Baluchistan](#) by Major and Mrs. G. Bell-Murray and Miss Jean C. Manson in 1920, and are called the *Bell-Murray strain*. These dogs were of the lowland or steppe type, also called kalagh, and are less heavily coated.

The second strain was a group of dogs from a kennel in [Kabul](#) owned by Mrs. Mary Amps, which she shipped to England in 1925. She and her husband came to Kabul after the Afghan war in 1919, and the foundation sire of her kennel (named Ghazni) in Kabul was a dog that closely resembled *Zardin*. Her *Ghazni strain* were the more heavily coated mountain type. Most of the Afghans in the United States were developed from the Ghazni strain from England.

The first Afghans in Australia were imported from the United States in 1934, also of the Ghazni strain. The French breed club was formed in 1939 (FALAPA). The mountain and steppe strains became mixed into the modern Afghan Hound breed, and a new standard was written in 1948, which is still used today.

The spectacular beauty of Afghan Hound dogs caused them to become highly desirable showdogs and pets, and they are recognized by all of the major kennel clubs in the English-speaking world.

Health

Major health issues are [allergies](#), [cancer](#), and [hip dysplasia](#). Sensitivity to [anesthesia](#) is an issue the Afghan hound shares with the rest of the [sighthound](#) group, as sighthounds have relatively low levels of body fat.

Afghan hounds are also among the dog breeds most likely to develop [chylothorax](#), a rare condition that causes the thoracic ducts to leak, allowing large quantities of [chyle fluid](#) to enter the dog's chest cavity. This condition commonly results in a lung torsion (in which the dog's lung twists within the chest cavity, requiring emergency surgery), due to the breed's typically deep, "barrel"-shaped chest. If not corrected through surgery, chylothorax can ultimately cause fibrosing pleuritis, or a hardening of the organs, due to scar tissue forming around the organs to protect them from the chyle fluid. Chylothorax is not necessarily, but often, fatal.