

Origins of the Havanese

Distinctive Aspects of the Havanese: ABCs - Amusing, Bouncy, Cuddly, Devoted, Endearing, Fun, Gentle, Happy, Intelligent, Joyful, Kind, Loving, Mischievous, Nimble, Outgoing, Playful, Quiet, Rare, Sweet, Tiny, Unique, Vibrant, Winsome, Xtra ordinary, Young at Heart, Zesty!!

'No matter how little money and how few possessions you own, having a dog makes you rich.'
Louis Sabin

The Havanese is simply the sweetest little family, companion dog. Very teddy bear like, they are full of fun, inquisitive and totally loving, always wanting to please and to be the centre of attention. They are little rush arounds and have their spurts of flying around the furniture doing figure of eights at a great rate of knots. They love other four legged canines in the household and everything is fun. They are quiet little dogs and only persuaded to bark to greet visitors and in the rarest of circumstances. They possess a wonderful innate ability to discern, are intuitively sensitive to their owners emotions whether it be happiness or sadness and haven't a mean bone in their sweet little bodies. It has been said that these little charmers appear to be a reflection of all of Gods good, love and joy. They have a zest for living every one of earths adventures to the fullest, a fascinating happy, and extremely hardy a very beautiful toy dog. It is a joy and privilege to be owned by havanese who make our lives so much fuller and richer.

Let us now enjoy a bit of reflection and take a peek back in time to the evolution of the breed.

We know that our dogs have adapted from the wolf and have the same number of chromosomes. Archeologists found the bones of one now extinct canine called the Japanese wolf which was only 14 inches at the shoulder. This was probably the first domesticated dog. Little is mentioned about toy dogs in history as these dogs were owned by women and until the mid twentieth century, women were always called the second class gender, held inferior to men. These toy dogs became comfort and sweetness in their work-worn lives.

In Ancient China tiny dogs were regarded as treasures belonging to the Emperor. Traders grabbed up the excess and an amulet dated 2900BC is of a tiny dog with a ring tail. Greek, Roman and Egyptian children played with these tiny dogs with their tail curled over their backs possibly, Maltese, Pomeranian and Havanese-like toy Spaniels.

Rome fell and unless the toy dog was held on to by nobles most dogs fell out of favour, were rejected and feared. They formed packs roamed, scavenged and attacked.

Culture returned in the Renaissance and dogs were again treasured. Dwarf spaniels, in particular became beloved pets of nobility. In 1576 in England, toy dogs were so highly favoured that the annual budget for royal dogs was 100,000 crowns. The leading breeders of the renaissance were

the French who cross bred the Maltese with many other small breeds particularly the small Barbet which was developed from the rough water dog brought out from Russia to many European countries. This dog was named the Poodle in France. This shaggy dog was finally sequestered to Portugal and is now known as the Portuguese water dog. One resulting cross between the Barbet and the Maltese was called the Silky Toy Poodle. Breeders then used the Spanish miniatures to form the toys of the Bichon Family. The most popular being the Bolognese, Havanese, Silky Poodle, Bichon, Lowchen and the present day Maltese.





The Havanese is part of many French toy Bichon breeds of which there are four types the Bichon Maltais, the Bichon Bolognais, the Bichon Havanais and the Bichon Teneriffe . The Teneriffe was carried to the Canary Island off Teneriffe, made its appearance in France around 1515-1547. It became the famous Bichon Frise.

In 1492 Christopher Columbus opened up a whole new world when he crossed the Atlantic. In 1503 he landed on Cuba and found a small dog called the Techichi, a heavy boned small dog which seemed mute and did not bark. Cuba soon became New Spain where settlers, traders, merchants settled there bringing their little dogs. The toys mainly Maltese Poodle crosses were kept behind the locked doors of nobility and land owners. Over the 17th and 18th century dogs were unscrupulously bred smaller and smaller to become the White Cuban sleeve dogs for wealthy land owners wives. These wee dogs were interbred and became nasty, unhealthy and vicious until eventually they fell out of favour. This dog was not the Cuban Havanese.

The real Bichon Havanese was developed in Cuba in the 18th century and was the result of matings between the toy Poodle and the Banquito de la

Habana the later being a white dog with long silky hair with a loving lively personality (Bichon Havanese) This dog was not cobby like a Maltese. It was rectangular like the Barbet, and unlike the Maltese and Poodle it had a double coat, the undercoat being wooly. Its other differences were the ears were slightly raised, larger than the Maltese, was stronger of bone, with a noticeably sloping croup and was nimble and quick with a great willingness to please. Its height from the withers is from 21 to 29 cm.

During the mid-20th century, revolutions disrupted the Cubans lives and after 1959 high-bred dogs fell in disfavour. The 1970s, the first American lady of the Havanese breed Dorothy Goodale of Colorado rescued 11 Havanese from enforced obscurity and aided in preserving the breed for all dog lovers.



Our little dogs, like its glorious rainbow colours, have ancestors centuries old. It is a dog of its people who migrated to Cuba from many lands. It lived with the elite, Queen Victoria owned several, and the commoners, adapting to climate, duties and pleasure. IT IS A FANTASTIC BREED.