

Brochure: Adopting a Little Tiger



Congratulations!

You have adopted a cat from the Little Tigers Foundation, thereby rescuing her/him from a hopeless situation. Thank you for giving the cat a wonderful future! In this brochure, we provide you with some additional information about the animal, its background and the adoption procedure.

Where is the cat from?

All cats offered for adoption by Little Tigers are from reliable foreign shelters. Most animals there were dumped on the streets or given to the shelter by their previous owners. In many cases, the animals are malnourished, ill or wounded. Almost always, the cats have been (seriously) neglected by their previous owners when they enter the shelter.



The shelters we work with in (mainly) Spain and Greece cannot be compared to those in the Netherlands. They are often full to overflowing, and there is little time and money. Of course, the volunteers with whom we collaborate take good care of the animals and keep healthy cats separate from sick animals.

All animals are tested for diseases like the feline leukemia and immunodeficiency viruses. Before travelling to the Netherlands, all animals are fully vaccinated, defleaded, dewormed and checked by a veterinarian. Animals who are sick are not allowed to fly, so all cats are healthy when they travel.

The journey to the Netherlands

By airplane

Ideally, the animals travel by airplane because it is much faster than road transport. Still, it is a long and stressful journey. The animals are taken out of their familiar surroundings, put in a pet carrier and taken to the airport by car. In many cases, the animals must be taken out of the carrier at the airport, and transferred to a special carrier in which they will travel on the airplane. This transfer is necessary due to the fact that the travel carrier must first be scanned at customs and, obviously, the animals cannot be exposed to the radiation.



Next, the carrier with the animal(s) is placed in the hold or cabin of the airplane. This is a strange and frightening experience for them. The sound and movement of the airplane must also be terrifying for the animals. After landing, the cats are taken out of the airplane by the airport crew, and transferred to the baggage hall where the flight buddy will collect them. Then, finally, the cats are united with their new owners.



The animals are transferred from the travel carrier to the carrier which their new 'parents' bring to the airport. We always transfer the animals in a secure area, so the cats cannot escape. As a rule, we use the wheelchair accessible toilets at the airports, because these are spacious and can be locked from the inside. Once more, the cats have to be transferred to another carrier, followed by yet another car ride. They arrive in a new house, with people whom they do not know. All-in all, it is quite an ordeal for the animals!



The journey to the Netherlands



By road transportation

If it is not possible to book a flight, the animals travel by car or van. This is usually the case for cats from Eastern Europe. Our partners abroad have selected reliable transportation, via which the animals travel as comfortably as possible. Still, it is an awkward and scary experience for them. The cats travel in a more or less spacious kennel or cage: they are able to move and stretch a little.

The animals have a box or something similar in which they can hide if they want. Also, we always try to let them travel in such a way that they cannot see each other, thereby reducing some of the stress. Of course, during the journey which can last for several days, they are cared for regularly.

Depending on the itinerary of the transport company, the cats either arrive at a central location in the Netherlands or they are literally delivered at your door. At the location of arrival, the cats are safely transferred from the kennel/cage to your own pet carrier. Since the journey is quite long, especially if the cats arrive from Eastern Europe, the arrival time is always an estimation.

During the transportation, many obstacles can occur, like traffic jams or car trouble. Based on the driver's estimation, your Little Tigers contact person will keep you updated about the progress of the journey and the expected time of arrival.



Once at home....



Stress

By adopting a cat, the animal will at last have the golden future which she/he deserves. However, that new situation is very different from what the cat was used to. Therefore, you will have to give your new feline friend some time to settle in and trust that this 'forever home' is going to last. Some cats will know that they are safe immediately after arrival, and they will trust you right from the start. For some cats, it will take some more time, ranging from several days to even multiple weeks. Understanding what most of the animals have been through, you will undoubtedly give the cat the time and space she/he needs to relax.

Please reckon with the fact that, for the first few days or weeks after having arrived at your home, the cat may experience symptoms which are related to stress. Examples are sneezing, diarrhea, vomiting or refusing to eat. In almost all cases, these are not reasons for concern. During and after travelling, animals can suffer from the same stress-related ailments as human beings. And again: normally, these symptoms will disappear quite rapidly.

The move to a new home may reduce the cat's immune system. Therefore, we advise new adopters to purchase L-lysine which boosts the immune system. This product is very easy to dispense: simply break open the capsule and mix its contents with some wet cat food. Since the cat will have to get used to his/her new surroundings, it is not uncommon for the cat's feces to be a bit loose at the start. Should the cat develop diarrhoea, you can first try probiotics before contacting a vet.

We advise against giving both L-lysine and probiotics simultaneously since combining both may hinder their effectiveness.



Once at home....



How to introduce the cat to your home

It is very important that you NOT release the cat from her/his carrier as soon as you get home. A new pet may need up to two weeks to get used to a new home, certainly if there are other pets in the home as well. Please have a (preferably small) room for the cat, in which she/he can withdraw and feel safe for the first period of adjusting to its new surrounding and family. Before the cat arrives, make sure that the 'safe room' has a clean litterbox, a comfortable place to sleep, fresh water, food and some toys. If possible, bring something from the cat's previous foster home or shelter (like a blanket or toy) so the cat will know a familiar smell.

When you have arrived at your home, open the pet carrier in the safe room and let the cat come out when she/he is ready, even if that takes some time; please do not force the animal out. Give the cat a few minutes to inspect the room, and then show her/him where the litterbox is. Leave the room and give the animal some time to get used to the new environment. Return after an hour or so, preferably with some snacks although the cat may not want to eat yet. Talk to the animal in a friendly tone of voice.

This first period of isolation will ensure that the cat is not overwhelmed by the new surroundings, sounds, smells and/or other pets. Despite being in a separate room, it is normal for the cat to be scared for the first couple of days, and to refuse to eat or drink. He/she may also not use the litterbox yet, 'holding up' urine and/or feces.



Once at home....



When there are other pets in the home

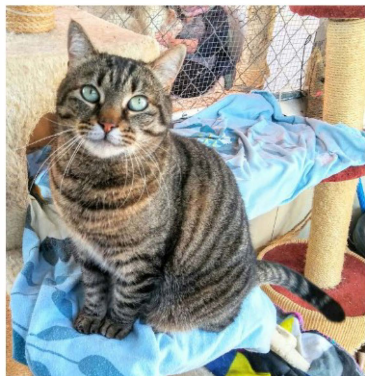
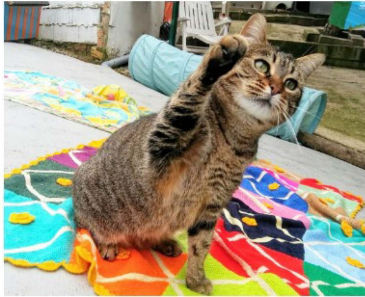
In general, neutered or castrated cats will accept other cats more easily. But, when there are multiple cats in the home, there is a hierarchy (pecking order) in the household. Therefore, you should not rush the introduction period. Over time, most cats will accept each other and may even become best friends. Please be patient and follow the step-by-step plan below.

- Take the new cat to his/her own room, without the other cat seeing.
- Allow the new cat to settle down and get used to the separate room.
- Take the new cat's empty pet carrier to the living area of the other cat, to let her/him get used to the smell of the new cat.
- Take the bed (or pillow, blanket, etc.) of the cat who already lives in your home to the separate room, so the new cat can get used to the smell of the other cat.
- Keep the cat who already lives in your home in a separate room while the new cat explores the house. It is best to go by this room by room, while you are present as the new cat explores. In the meantime, the other cat can explore the room where the new cat is staying.

Continued on next page



Once at home....



**We wish you
and your new
pet joy and
happiness!**

- Introduce the new cat to the other cat, under your supervision only, in a room where the new cat already feels comfortable. If there are multiple 'resident' cats, please introduce them to the new cat one by one. Leave enough physical space between the cats and give them both a snack. Start out with a few minutes of this together time. If things go well, the next meeting can last a little longer. Build it up slowly: easy does it.
- If a cat fight breaks out, try to separate the cats by placing an object between them, like a sheet, towel or a piece of cardboard. Do not use a plant sprayer and do not shout.
- Only leave the cats alone in a room long after the transition period and only after you are confident that they can get along, or can at least ignore each other.
- Do not disturb the routine of the cat who was already living in your home. Give her/him enough attention as well, and reward good behaviour towards the newcomer with small snacks.

Please find more tips and advice on our website (in Dutch):

<https://littletigers.eu/introductie-van-een-nieuwe-kat>

We trust that everything will go well and that your new feline buddy has a bright, happy future ahead!

Do you have questions or would you like advice about your new feline friend? Please contact us through your Little Tigers matchmaker or send us an e-mail: info@littletigers.eu

It doesn't happen overnight...

The 3/3/3 rule is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.



3 Days

To decompress

- Feeling overwhelmed
- May feel scared or unsure of what's going on
- Not yet comfortable to be him/herself
- May not want to eat or drink
- Shuts down and/or hides under furniture
- Tests the boundaries



3 Weeks

To learn your routine

- Starts settling in
- Feels more comfortable
- Realises this could be his/her forever home
- Figures out his/her environment
- Gets into a routine
- Lets his/her guard down; beginning to show his/her true personality
- Behaviour issues may appear



3 Months

To start to feel at home

- Finally feels completely comfortable in his/her new home
- Begins to build trust and a true bond
- Gains a complete sense of security with his new family
- Sets into a routine

