

The Borzoi: Favorite of the Russian Czars

Once known as Russian Wolfhounds, this Russian sight hound was developed by crossing the extinct Lapp sled dog with the Collie. The **Borzoi** was used as coursing hounds to chase rabbits, foxes, and wolves in packs. His speed, agility, and strength allowed him to range far ahead of the mounted hunter, acquire the prey by sight, run it down, and hold it at bay until the hunter arrived. The first Borzoi was brought to the U.S. from England in 1889. The Borzoi stands 26 to 28 inches at the shoulder and weighs 65 to 100 pounds. He has a lean, leggy, athletic body and a long, silky, shedding coat that requires medium maintenance. The coat is usually white with black, tan, or lemon markings. It was developed to protect the breed from the cruel Russian winter. This breed was once a favorite among the Russian aristocrats and admired by the Russian czar's court. He has the beauty, elegance, carriage, and personality to match his regal heritage. The Borzoi is fast, agile, aloof, and very clean. He is faithful to his owners but cautious with strangers. He is normally intolerant of unpredictable young children and may bite without warning. **The Borzoi needs early training and socialization.** The training should not be overbearing because this breed processes information slowly and will shut down if pushed. Patience and consistency are important. The "Sit" command is difficult to teach because of the Borzoi's bony, lanky structure and lack of body padding. The "Come" command is crucial and must be perfected because his great speed enables him to disappear from sight in seconds. The Borzoi has a high prey drive and will seize and kill small animals before his owner can react. He can also be very dog-aggressive. Similar to all sight hounds, the Borzoi must often be allowed time to be by himself. Do not expect him to be as affectionate as a Golden Retriever. Owners who are used to the mind-set of cats will appreciate this breed, though it would be a mistake to own a cat along with a Borzoi. He needs a bed or a thick blanket to lie on because he does not have much muscle or fat on his body and can get pressure sores if his sleeping area is not cushioned properly. Recommended feeding for this breed is 1 ½ - 2 ½ cans (13.3oz) of branded meaty with biscuit added in same amount or 5 cupfuls of complete dry food. The ideal home for the Borzoi? This breed is not suitable apartment life, although he can adapt to one as long as he is getting plenty of space and exercise. A quiet environment free of unpredictable events and young children is preferred. Small animals may pose a problem due to this breed's high prey drive. He needs to run, and activity that is possible only if you have properly trained him to come when called and if you have socialized him among other dogs and people. **Borzoi owners should be calm, easygoing leaders** who do not necessarily want a dog that is too affectionate. Nervous, hyperactive, and pampering types should avoid this breed. The elderly and disabled may have trouble training and exercising this breed. He should not be left alone in a yard because can easily jump a six-foot fence.

About the Author

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