

SPOTITUDE SAVANNAHS NEW KITTEN GUIDE

GENERAL VETERINARY CARE

Savannahs require the same veterinary care as domestic cats; they do not need an exotic vet.

Savannah cats get the normal FVRCP cat vaccinations and rabies vaccinations.

Your kitten will have the regular veterinary recommended deworming, details will be written on your kittens health record.

Your kitten will have 2 sets of FVRCP vaccinations given at approximately 9 and 12 weeks of age, the exact dates will be written on your kittens health record.

Your kitten will receive a 1 year rabies vaccination from our veterinarian at 12 weeks of age.

Your kitten will receive a general wellness exam from our veterinarian at 12 weeks of age.

FLEA TREATMENTS

Flea treatment (only if needed) the kittens will be given Revolution topical flea drops which lasts for 30 days, so if you want to continue using you would need to wait 30 days so you don't overdose them.

If flea drops are given, the date will be written on your kittens health record.

MICROCHIP

Your kitten will be microchipped. I will scan the microchip when you pick up your kitten so you can personally verify the microchip number. The microchip number will be on your kittens TICA registration paperwork as well.

You will need to register the microchip yourself with your contact info at www.foundanimals.org It is completely free. Be sure to update your contact info should you move or change phone #'s.

SPECIAL VETERINARY PRECAUTIONS

Because of their height vets often judge savannahs to weigh more than they do, so make sure they get weighed at their vet visits. Vets unfamiliar with Savannahs may remark that they appear lean or skinny but a tall and lean serval like body is in fact the breed standard. Read the savannah breed standard here: <https://www.savannahcatassociation.org/tica-savannah-breed-standard/>

Savannahs should not be given the pre-surgery pre-anesthesia sedative Ketamine. Nearly no vets use this sedative anymore as there are better options. The main issue with Ketamine is there is no reversal agent should a negative side effect occur. Many owners have reported problems with Ketamine and their servals & savannahs.

Read more info on savannahs and ketamine here: www.savannahcatassociation.org/ketamine-savannah-cats/

SPAY/NEUTER

I will make every effort to spay/neuter your kitten before it is sent home, it is my preference as it will be much easier for the kitten to quickly recover and much less stress for both you and the kitten. Your kitten will be ready to go home no less than 1 week after the surgery. I will try my best to make the appointment around 11-12 weeks of age so your kitten will be ready to go at around 12-13 weeks of age. **I will keep you informed of the spay/neuter appointment date.**

*Sometimes things do not go according to plan, consider that the kitten has to be above a certain weight to be given anesthesia and vet has to have availability at that time, usually this is not an issue, but if you wish to take the kitten home before an appointment can be scheduled, you would have to arrange to get them fixed at a later date. We can discuss further when the time nears.

FOODS

Please feed the following foods that your kitten is used to for the 1st month.

- Every kitten/cat is different, some love new foods and variety some do not.
- **Sudden food changes will stress a kittens (and an adult cats) digestive system**, (even if they love the new food) this can cause them to get a stomach ache, vomit or have diarrhea.
- Sudden food changes can lead to a kitten becoming a fussy cat that won't try anything new, because they got sick the last time.
- After the kitten is settled in, after the 1st month, if you wish to change foods, (dry food or wet food), do so gradually - mixing together the original food with the new food over the course of 7-10 days.

DRY FOOD - free feed 24/7



Feed either one or both (kittens usually prefer the Purina Pro Plan)

- **Purina Pro Plan Chicken & Egg**
 - Chicken & Egg (**not** Chicken & Rice)
 - available on Amazon or Chewy.com, pet stores usually only have the chicken and rice flavor, don't get the rice flavor
- **Earthborn Holistic Primitive Feline**
 - Amazon or Chewy.com, usually not available in pet stores

WET FOOD - *feed 2x's or more a day*



- **Wellness Chicken or Wellness Turkey**

- Available in pet store such as PetSmart or Petco or online at Amazon or Chewy.com
- This comes in other flavors as well but stick to these 2 flavors only for the 1st month.
- This brand comes in 3.5 oz, 5.5 oz and 12.5 oz
- The kittens usually eat canned food 3 or 4 times a day in small portions, but 2 times a day is fine as they get older.
- I vary the times every day so they're not set in a specific routine.
- Feed as much as they will eat at a time before they wander off.
- Kittens don't really overeat so don't worry about overfeeding them. This amount should increase over time as they grow.
- Remember to pick up and refrigerate the uneaten food after about a half hour to an hour so it doesn't spoil.

RAW FOODS or HOMEMADE CAT FOOD

- **Raw foods** (commercially prepared), are usually not recommended for young kittens due to the possibility of bacterial illnesses, and the fact that kittens often walk in their food dishes and then track the raw food around the house.
- **Be sure to consult with your veterinarian before choosing to feed a raw diet.**
- Be sure to read the labels as some commercially available raw foods are not intended to be a complete diet and are only intended for supplemental feeding and some are not intended for kittens at all.
- **Homemade Cat Food**, I can point you to the correct recipes that are nutritionally complete for cats. Be aware that, if not prepared correctly, with all of the necessary ingredients, nutritional deficiencies can develop, the effects of the dietary deficiencies may not become apparent for several years and sometimes the nutritional deficiencies are irreversible.
- Be aware that like anything, the internet is filled with well-meaning websites and groups that give nutritionally incomplete raw recipes. It really is best to seek advice from your vet and/or a veterinary nutrition specialist prior to feeding a raw diet or making your own pet food.

ADDITIONAL FOODS FOR TREATS

- Cooked, unseasoned chicken, turkey, gizzards, chicken hearts or livers
- Cooked, unseasoned scrambled eggs
- Occasional beef or seafood such as canned or cooked plain fish, salmon, mackerel, shrimp is ok as well but it's not ideal for cats.
- Do not feed raw eggs, raw hamburger or any raw ground meat, or whole chicken bones (both raw and cooked bones splinter).
- It's best to feed these extra meat treats in small amounts, after they eat their regular canned or mix it in really good so they don't get fussy and only want to eat the meat.

WATER

We are on filtered well water. Your kitten will not be used to the smell of chlorinated “municipal/city” water, so they may not want to drink it. If so, start by giving them bottled water, then mix it with tap water until they get used to it.

- Water should be available at all times.
- Savannahs love automatic cat water fountains.
- Savannahs often play in their water dishes and splash the water everywhere.

CAT LITTER

Kittens start out on a wood pellet litter and after a few weeks are transitioned to a clumping litter as well, so that they use both types prior to rehoming.

We use a wide variety of scented and unscented clumping litters sold at Costco, Target or Walmart specifically so the kittens are used to the scents of many different brands



some of the litters we use

LITTERBOXES

Kittens do best with a low sided litter box that is easy for them to climb into. Adults are better off with a tall sided box.

- For the actual litter box they use - it is an extra-large sized low sided box from Walmart (pictured above)
- For our adult Savannahs they use large tall sided plastic totes as it helps keep the litter contained better
- 1 box per cat plus 1 extra and 1 box on each floor of the home
- Place litter boxes in quiet out of the way, low traffic areas where the kitten can feel at ease using them
- Kittens like to use a clean box, scoop box daily, periodically clean the box with bleach
- If you're wanting to use a litter robot, also get a regular litter pan as they are not used to the robot one.
- A kitten running around the house crying can often mean they need help finding the litter box.
- Some kittens "cry" when using the box - just to tell everyone where they're at, I guess.
- Some Savannahs stand up with their paws on the side of the box (rather than sit or squat) when they use the box, this is normal (you'll know what I mean if you see it) - lol, not going to post that pic.

- Your kitten's poop should be solid, like a tootsie roll.
- If your kitten has the runs first consider what they just ate as any new food can cause the runs for a day or two, if so switch back to the original food. Occasionally it can be caused by stress as well. If it persists for more than a few days, please call me asap to discuss.
- If your kitten has an "accident", clean the spot with cold water and an enzyme cleaner specifically labeled for cats. Do not use bleach (bleach attracts cats to pee again) Do not use a steam cleaner (steam and hot water will set in the smell).

SET UP A KITTEN SAFE STARTER ROOM

- It typically takes a kitten a few weeks to settle into their new home, this is normal. Patience is key, every kitten is different so just go at their pace.
- Setup a smaller kitten proof room i.e.: a master bedroom works well. The kitten should be quarantined to this room for a week or two so that they can adjust without becoming overwhelmed or stressed, get to know and bond with you without distractions and so they can maintain good litter box habits.
- A smaller room is better, too big a space or being allowed to free range the entire house will quickly overwhelm the kitten. This can lead to them becoming frightened by the new sights, smells, sounds, or hiding or not using the litter box appropriately because they forgot where it was etc.
- After your new kitten has gotten to know you and is confident in your presence, eating, playing, jumping on your lap and using their litter box then you can bring them out to explore the rest of the house. Go exploring together like you're both on a big adventure, bring along a wand toy for them to follow, then bring them back to their safe room and the litter box. This helps establish trust that you will lead them back to safety.

MEETING YOUR NEW KITTEN

Meeting your kitten for the first time, don't be disappointed if your kitten does not immediately jump into your lap, most do not. Kittens are busy in their own world doing very important kitten things with the other kittens. You will have to distract them into playing with you - a wand toy works well for getting and holding their attention. The key is to spend time playing with them, sit on the floor with them at their level, let them sniff you and get to know you, persistently play with them, make it so that you're so much fun to play with that they just can't resist.

THE RIDE HOME

Your kitten will be used to riding, sleeping and playing in the cat carrier, so traveling should go fairly smoothly. There may be a bit of crying, that is normal, but usually they fall asleep quickly. It's ok to take the kitten out of the carrier to sit on a passenger's lap but do not let the kitten explore around the vehicle as you don't want them to end up either under the seat or under the brake pedal, which (lesson learned) is exactly where they'll head off to.

No need for food, water or a litter box while traveling they never eat or use the box when they're in the car.

Let me know what time you plan to arrive for pick up so I can feed them early leaving them sufficient time to use the litter box.

Bring a cat carrier with you **or let me know well in advance if you want me to provide one for you.**

INTRODUCING OTHER PETS

If you have other pets, cats or dogs, you will want to initially limit their interactions. Let them get to know one another by sniffing through a closed door.

Repeat brief introductions usually work more successfully than just putting them together (unless they're both young kittens).

Younger adult cats usually take a while to warm up to a new kitten, it depends on the cat but it can take days to several weeks. With much older cats it can possibly take months.

Swap their bedding or a blanket with their scent on it every couple days can help them to get used to one another's scent.

After a handful of days. try swapping their spaces so each cat can explore the others territory and belongings.

Introduce them slowly at a distance and watch how it goes. Expect for the face-to-face introductions to take some time and for hissing, swatting at one another to occur, this is perfectly normal cat behavior.

Short interactions are more successful than just putting them together and letting them work it out.

if they are not getting along, give each cat their own private space to retreat back to. If they get along immediately that's great, but keep access to their separate spaces anyways as attitudes can change.

Once the hissing has stopped and they appear to be tolerating one another, play with them using wand toys this will help to direct them to a fun activity they can do together. When playing with them give a little bit more attention to the older cat.

For more long term, (at least a few months after they start getting along), consider having each cat's food dishes and litterboxes separate from the other ones so no one is guarding the food, water or litter box.

When introducing your new kitten to your dog/dogs, it really depends on the dog, of course a barking or a hyperactive dog will overwhelm a kitten, just keep an eye on them, take the kitten back to their safe room if it's too much. Give the kitten a tall climbing post to get away to safety if it feels threatened but still wants to check the doggo out. For the initial introductions try leashing the dog so the kitten can cautiously approach and sniff without fear of being chased. The kittens grew up with and are used to playing with our dog however they will probably still be apprehensive when meeting a new dog.

CAT STUFF

Scratching posts are a must!

Tall climbing towers are a must - Savannahs love climbing so the taller the better!

Cat beds the fluffy grey beds in the picture are favorite of all the cats, it's usually the one they all choose to sleep in. (Shop around as the same exact bed is sold in every price range.)



♥ **Feline Ruff 12"**
Premium 4-Way
Collapsible Tunnel
Cat Toy, Black & Bl...
\$24.99

Dad Spot-A-Kiss aka Spotty on the wheel Tunnel from Chewy.com

Cat wheel www.OneFastCat.com I recommend getting one as Savannahs are very high energy and need a lot of exercise. The kittens usually start playing on them at about 5 weeks of age, but it is exercise so it does take a bit of practice for them to run on it like their parents do. Expect for them to run on it for short bursts of a few minutes at a time throughout the day. Kittens and cats for that matter need to feel safe and secure before they run on the wheel so don't be disappointed if your kitten doesn't immediately run on it in their new home. I sometimes find that some cats are more interested in playing with their humans when they are around and playing on the wheel when everyone's gone and they're bored - which really is the point of it. Meanwhile other cats will wait for you so they can run and show off for you.

Ziggydoo Ferriswheel is another popular brand of cat wheel, it's essentially the same, perhaps a bit sturdier but much more expensive.

Cat tunnels - a kitten favorite! Don't put out the tunnels until after they've used the litter box a handful of times.

Wand toys - an absolute Savannah favorite, ideal for directing them to where you want them to go, I would recommend picking them up when you're done playing so they kittens do not accidentally wrap up in the cord or gut the toy at the end as this kind of a toy triggers a high predatory instinct in cats (i.e.: it's like bird hunting and birds are tasty).

Regular stuffed toys – lots of fun for playing fetch! Not all Savannahs are fetchers but the ones that are it seems to be more of an instinct that something you have to train them to do.

Word of caution with cat toys - it is very important to remember to check their toys regularly, repair or toss out ripped toys. Many a Savannah has gotten over zealous in playing and ingested the stuffing. This can be a huge problem - if they don't throw up the stuffing it can lead to a blockage in the intestines and a scary and expensive surgery to remove it.

I have one Savannah that simply cannot have stuffed toys at all as she guts them and eats the stuffing every time. It usually takes a nerve-racking day or 2 for her to vomit the stuffing back up. The rest of my Savannahs never do this, so fortunately most all cats are not like this but do keep it in mind. Btw this is not specifically a Savannah trait, eating stuff they shouldn't can happen with any dog or cat.

Video Games for Cats (in the Apple store, Android or Google play)

"**Bird watching videos for cats**", YouTube has a bunch of videos featuring hours of birds, mice, squirrels. Make sure your tv is secure as they will occasionally jump at the screen to catch the birds.

"**Music for cats**" also on YouTube does seem to help them be calm and less stressed

Catnip I've found that most kittens are not interested in catnip until they're about 8 months of age or so.

Feliway calming pheromone spray can be helpful in stressful situations such as traveling, a vet appointment, moving or introducing a new pet. *available in most pet stores, Walmart, Chewy, Amazon

CAT GROOMING

NAIL TRIMMING

Their nails should be trimmed anytime you feel they're getting long. Kittens nails grow very fast, I usually trim the kittens' nails about every 2 weeks, adults every month or so. The kittens are used to it, (but they still may squirm or cry about it) - don't let them tell you otherwise. Regular nail clippers work fine. Have a helper scruff them by the neck to hold them still if necessary. Wrap them up in a thick blanket like a purrito burrito if necessary. Watch out for their nail "quick". If you cut the quick use a styptic stick to stop the bleeding.

Do not declaw Declawing is cruel and horribly painful for the cat. It is an amputation of the last knuckle of the cats' feet. Typically, the pain from declawing manifests in biting (because they feel defenseless from lack of claws) and litterbox aversion because their feet are in pain and pawing at the litter hurts.

Cat scratches (on people) should be treated with an antibiotic ointment cream to prevent an infection. Cat scratch fever is real.

If you're concerned about your cat scratching - cut its nails. If you're worried it will claw something it shouldn't the answer is simple, put a sisal rope type scratching post next to it and praise them for using it. I've had both leather sofas and an overabundance of cats & kittens climbing on them without scratching them at all, but I also have a lot of scratching posts...



sisal rope scratching post - a favorite of both kittens & adult cats

BATHS

Cats don't really need baths unless they get into something. Some Savannahs absolutely love water, some don't. Either way, you giving them a bath is probably not going to be their favorite thing - so be sure to trim their claws first. Some Savannahs love to get in the shower, which is a bit easier than a bath.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS

Savannahs are an intelligent, naturally active and curious cat, and they are a bit notorious for their savandalism antics. **You will need to kitten proof your home just like you would toddler proof a home, with a toddler that can climb to any height that is.** Keep in mind you may need to make adjustments to accommodate their adventures, it's just the way it is, observe and adjust if necessary.

Things to watch out for:

- Poisonous house plants: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>
- Poisonous people foods: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/people-foods-avoid-feeding-your-pets>
- Random objects that can fit in their mouth and potentially swallow. I.e.: hair ties, rubber bands, power cords, pen caps, paper clips, small children's toys.
- Drawers and doors they can open
- Open windows with screens they can break thru
- Open doors they can wander out
- Appliances, dishwashers, washers, driers, they can climb in
- Mini blind cords
- Faucets they can turn on (remove the drain plugs)
- Chandeliers they can swing from
- the list goes on...

OUTDOORS

Savannahs are not indoor/outdoor cats. Their high energy plus curious nature tends to lead to trouble. Simply put if they get out odds are they will not readily return. Same as with many types of dogs they should not be left unattended outdoors.

LEASH WALKING

Leash walking is a great option for outdoor time, but be warned it will become a habit that they will insist upon. A cat harness or x-small dog harness works fine.

It takes them a few weeks to get the hang of leash walking. Your kitten has been trained to wear a harness. Initially when putting on a new harness they're not used to they will just flop around on the ground until they get used to it. Do not let them learn they can wiggle out of it, leave the harness on at let them get used to walking around wearing it.

When leash training, start slowly by safely practicing indoors with them walking chasing a wand toy. Once they confidently walk alongside you then you're ready to head outdoors. Make the first few outdoor walks short like just around your yard and bring along a cat carrier just in case, if they get scared put them in the carrier so they can observe the threat and get over it. After a handful of walks they become unstoppable leash walking pros.

CATIOS

A lot of Savannah owners make catios for a safe outdoor experience. A catio can be as simple as a dog kennel with a secure roof and flooring so they can't dig under. It really seems to make a huge difference in their attitude and well being. My cats spend most of their day out in the catios watching the bird feeder.

QUESTIONS?

I'm always available to help. Text or call anytime.

805-801-5510

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