

High Country Alpaca Ranch & Mercantile

GREAT PYRENEES FACTS

HISTORY:

- Also known as the Pyrenean Mountain Dog, they date back to ancient Roman times, and were brought to Spain by the Romans, where the breed became well established in the Pyrenees Mountains on the border between France and Spain.
- They were tasked with of guarding fortresses and protecting sheep from predators; sometimes left alone for days at a time.
- They became the official dog of the court of King Louis XIV of France.
- In the 1930's the breed found its way to the United States.

TYPE OF DOG:

- Great Pyrenees are livestock guardian dogs (LGD) bred for the purpose of protecting livestock from predators.
- LGD's ability to guard their herd is mainly instinctive, as the dog is bonded to the herd from an early age.
- Unlike the often smaller herding dogs that control the movement of the livestock, LGDs blend in with them, watching for intruders within the herd. They stay with the group of animals they protect as a full-time member of the herd.
- The mere presence of a guardian dog is usually enough to ward off predators, and LGDs will confront predators by vocal intimidation, barking, and displaying very aggressive behavior.
- LGDs will attack or fight with a predator to protect the herd, if they are not able to drive predators off otherwise.
- They sleep a lot during the day so they will be awake at night to guard the herd.

PHYSICAL TRAITS:

- Great Pyrenees are large, regal looking dogs that stand up to 32 inches at the shoulder.
- Males weigh in the area of 100 to 135 pounds. Females reach 80-90 pounds.
- They have a dense, double coat, which makes them able to withstand cold and wet weather. The outer coat is long, thick, flat and weather resistant, and there is a dense, woolly, close-fitting undercoat.
- The coat is more profuse about the neck and shoulders where it forms a ruff or mane, which is more pronounced in males so that it may fend off predator attacks.
- The coat can be all white, or white with badger, reddish brown, grey or tan markings.
- On average, their lifespan is 10 to 11 years.
- Reach maturity between 2-3 years of age.
- One singular characteristic of the Great Pyrenees is the unique double dew claws on each hind leg.

TEMPERAMENT:

- The Great Pyrenees is confident, gentle (especially with children), and affectionate.
- General demeanor is of composure and patience and loyalty. Generally aloof toward strangers, their size is intimidating.
- Territorial and protective of its herd or family.
- Independent-minded and fearless in its duties.