

The English Cocker Spaniel

Background:

Spaniels are presumed to have originated in Spain, but their exact origins have never been established. What's known for sure is that for centuries Spaniels had been used as a hunting dog. In England two varieties of the Spaniel developed. The first was a large breed used to scare game from the brush. The second, a smaller version of the spaniel, was used for hunting woodcocks. In 1902 the groups were separated as the English Cocker Spaniel and the English Springer Spaniel.

During the 1900's the English Cocker Spaniel gained popularity in America, but American's also started breeding the dog with traits that many English breeders found distasteful. As a result the breed was split again into the American Cocker Spaniel and the English Cocker Spaniel. Outside of America the English Cocker is much more popular and is called simply "Cocker Spaniel."

The English Cocker Spaniel Club of America was formed in 1935 and discourages crossbreeding with the American Cocker Spaniel.

Sizing up:

- Weight: 26 to 34 lbs.
- Height: 15 to 17 inches
- Coat: Medium length
- Color: Black, liver or shades of red
- Life Expectancy: 12 - 14 years

What's the English Cocker Spaniel like?

Finding the right breeder is a very important step in raising a well adjusted English Cocker Spaniel. It's important to do your research and find a breeder you can trust. Once you find the right dog, begin training right away. A well-bred Cocker will be sweet and intelligent so training won't be difficult. Positive reinforcement is important as the Cocker is sensitive and won't respond well to harsh words. As with most breeds you should socialize early and often.

The English Cocker was born and bred for hunting. That doesn't mean you'll need to take up hunting, but it does mean that exercise will be an important part of daily life. He could run all day, but doesn't necessarily need

to, a half hour of exercise twice a day should be sufficient for an average English Cocker. He also loves the water and would enjoy frequent trips to the lake.

Due to the size of the breed he is great around kids. He's big enough to play with but not so big that he might knock children over. Not to mention the affection and love he would offer a toddler. He's also good with cats, although maybe not so good with birds: he is programmed to hunt them after all.

Just because the English Cocker is a hunting dog doesn't mean you can leave him outside. He's an indoor dog and would much prefer to be with the family. He's likely going to have some amount of separation anxiety when you leave.

Health:

Progressive retinal atrophy is an eye condition and has been documented in both American and English Cockers.

English Cockers have long, hanging ears and as a result are at risk for certain conditions:

- Otitis externa
- Ear mites
- Yeast infections

Takeaway points:

- English Cockers are a great family dog, and won't want to be left outside alone.
- English Cockers need to have their ears cleaned regularly.
- English Cockers like the water and must be exercised daily.
- The English Cocker is intelligent and generally easy to train.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.