

# Malamute FAQs

## Is the Malamute the same as a Husky?

No, Huskies and Malamutes are two different breeds. They do look similar, but the Malamute is a larger, stockier looking breed and cannot have blue eyes. The Husky also tends to be more hyperactive than the Malamute and is the faster of the two arctic sledding breeds.

## Do they eat a lot?

You would think so, but for a large dog they need surprisingly little food. Being an arctic breed they metabolise their food very efficiently, but because they will eat all they can lay their paws on they are very prone to becoming overweight. They need an owner who is prepared to be strict with their diet.

## Do they need much exercise?

Malamutes were originally bred as working dogs, so they love as much exercise as you can give them. This is not a breed that will run around the yard exercising itself, so Malamute owners must be prepared to take their dogs out for some exercise. The adult Malamute should have at least 1/2 hour exercise a day and preferably be involved in some working activities to satisfy their natural instincts to pull.

## Do they need a lot of grooming?

Malamutes need surprisingly little grooming, except when they are dropping their coat (usually once a year for males and twice a year for females).

The Malamute is a breed that needs little or no washing if the coat is in healthy condition. A regular brushing should be sufficient to keep most Malamutes clean and free of odours, however during shedding of the undercoat they need daily brushing and grooming with an undercoat rake to remove the loose hair. Their coat drop acts as their "spring cleaning" and within a few weeks the new, clean undercoat grows back.

## Do they need a big backyard?

The adult Malamute may not run around the yard on its own so they do not need a huge backyard, however they will need an owner with plenty of time to exercise them, always on lead. The Malamute has a natural instinct to roam over a huge distance if given the opportunity, so the security and strength of fencing and gates is very important.

## What activities can you do with a Malamute?

Being an arctic working dog, the Malamute enjoys any activity that involves pulling in harness. These activities include sledding (mainly done in Australia with the dogs pulling scooters), weight pulling and backpacking. The Alaskan Malamute Club offers these and other activities that Malamutes love, and anyone is welcome to join in.

## Are they easy to train?

No - Malamutes are very intelligent and learn quickly, but also can be extremely stubborn and independent-minded. They have many strongly entrenched survival instincts that won't be overcome completely with training. This makes obedience training a challenging task, but an extremely important one as they need to recognise that you are their pack leader.

## How do they cope in summer?

Malamutes cope very well in all climates as in Alaska it also gets quite warm in summer as well as being extremely cold in winter. They won't be as active in the heat and will need a cool shady place to lie and plenty of cool water. The Malamute's double coat acts as its insulation, just like the insulation in your roof, so the coat should not be shaved or clipped in summer (unless for medical reasons).

## Are they good with the garden?

The answer is definitely NO! Malamutes have a natural survival instinct to dig, which they do in the arctic to make a den or hollow to shelter from harsh weather. They also dig in summer to create a hollow to lie in and keep cool from the temperature of the soil, and some dig just for fun or may eat the dirt. Because they love to excavate, a Malamute can become a one-dog garden-remodelling unit, even moreso if bored! If you love a nice neat, manicured garden, this might not be the breed for you.

## Can a Malamute be walked off lead?

NO! The Malamute has an inquisitive nature and strong hunting instinct and most often will not come back when called. This, coupled with the fact that they may not always be friendly to other dogs, means that Malamute owners need to be prepared always have their Malamute on lead in public places.

## Are Malamutes good with children?

Malamutes love all people, including children, however their size and exuberance can make them unsuitable playmates for children. The Malamute is also very strong and should never be walked by a child - this breed is definitely an adult's dog.

## Are Malamutes related to the Wolf?

No - Malamutes are no more closely related to the wolf than any other domestic dog. They have a wolf-like appearance as they have many of the same physical characteristics that are necessary for arctic survival.

## Are they good guard dogs?

No! Malamutes should love all people and will greet any stranger with delight. Their size and appearance may, however, act as a visual deterrent. They are not a loyal, one-man dog and most would happily go off with anyone.

## Do I need Pedigree Papers for a puppy?

Even if you want a Malamute just as a pet, good health and temperament are still extremely important.

The pedigree papers are the only proof you can get that the puppy you are getting is in fact a purebred Malamute. The pedigree papers are similar to your car registration papers and you wouldn't buy a car without those!

Any breeder who does not offer papers for the puppy is not being responsible, is in breach of the rules of the State and National Canine Controlling bodies (VCA/ANKC) and should be avoided. If you want a nice pet, why not consider adopting an older dog from a rescue organisation? You won't have the inconvenience of the house training or frequent feeds that puppies need, and the vet checks & temperament testing have most often been done for you.

## How much can I expect to pay?

The price of a purebred pedigreed Malamute puppy will vary considerably from breeder to breeder, however you can expect to pay around the \$1000 mark. Some breeders will charge less, some quite a bit more, but purchase price is not the time to try and save money. Spending a few hundred dollars extra to purchase a pedigree puppy from a reputable breeder could save you money and disappointment in the long term.

## What is a "Giant" Malamute?

The term "Giant Malamute" does not refer to a recognised breed, but may be used by some breeders to make an oversized Malamute sound more acceptable to the unsuspecting puppy buyer. The recommended size for the Alaskan Malamute is between 23-25 inches and 34-39 kg as a mature adult so this is a large, but not giant, breed. A reputable breeder would never deliberately breed or promote oversized Malamutes as they cannot effectively do the work the Malamute breed is designed for and can be more prone to health and structural problems. Bigger is definitely NOT better for this breed.