

Finnish Spitz

Origin and Purpose

The Finnish Spitz is the national dog of Finland, and is the object of intense national pride. It is said that the breed reflects the verve and vitality necessary for survival in the Scandinavian north. Since earliest times it has been used as a natural bark-pointer for hunting small game and game birds.

General Appearance

The Finnish Spitz, with its glorious red-gold coat, bold carriage, and lively expression, presents a fox-like picture. It has a squarish, symmetrical body with no exaggerated features. The pointed muzzle, small erect ears, dense coat, and curled tail denote its northern heritage. The dog's whole being shows liveliness, especially the eyes, ears, and tail. Males should be decidedly masculine in appearance without coarseness. Females should be decidedly feminine in appearance without over-refinement.

Temperament

Active and alert, but reserved and sensitive. Traditionally, the Finnish Spitz is courageous, but, like a creature of the forest, that courage is tempered with caution.

Size

Dogs are from 17-1/2 -19-1/2 inches (44-50 cm) at the shoulder, weighing from 31-35 lb. (14-16 kg). The bitches are 15-1/2 -17-1/2 inches (39-45 cm) at the shoulder, weighing from 22-29 lb. (10-13 kg).

Coat and Colour

The Finnish Spitz is double-coated. On the head and front of the legs the coat is short and close. On the body and back of legs it is coarse, longish, and semi-erect or erect. It is stiffer on the neck and back. Outer coat on shoulders is considerably longer and coarser, particularly in males. On back of thighs and on tail, hair should be longer and dense. Undercoat is short, soft and dense. No trimming is allowed, not even of whiskers. **Colour:** On the back, reddish-brown or red-gold, preferably bright. The hair on inner sides of ears, cheeks, under the muzzle, on the breast, abdomen, behind the shoulders, inside the legs, back of thighs, and underside of tail is of lighter shades. Undercoat is also a light colour, making the whole coat glow. White marking on toes and a narrow strip of white on chest is permitted but not desired. Black hairs on lips and sparse separate black-pointed hairs on back and tail are permitted, even desirable. Puppies may have a good many black hairs which decrease with age (black on tail persisting longer).

Head

The head is medium-sized and clean cut. It is longer than it is broad in the ratio of 7:4. The **forehead** is slightly arched, and the **stop** pronounced. The **muzzle** is narrow; seen from above and from the sides evenly tapering. **Nose** is pitch black. **Lips** are tightly closed and thin Scissor bite. Missing teeth undesirable. **Eyes** are medium-sized, lively, preferably dark, almond shaped with black rims. They are set slightly aslant with outer corners tilted upwards. **Ears** are small, erect, sharply pointed. When alert, the ears should be parallel, upward standing, open towards the front, and very mobile.

Neck

The neck is muscular, of medium length. It appears shorter in males due to the heavier ruff.

Forequarters

The shoulders of the Finnish Spitz are straight when compared to most other breeds. The legs are strong and straight. The slope of the pasterns is 25 to 30 degrees. Feet are tight, round, and cat-like. Long hare feet and splayed feet are undesirable. Removal of dewclaws is optional.

Body

This is almost square in outline. The back is short, level, and strong. Chest is deep. The belly is slightly drawn up. The Finnish Spitz should be in hard, muscular condition; any looseness or sloppiness should be faulted.

Hindquarters

The thighs are muscular. Hocks are of medium length, straight, and parallel. The stifles should be slightly to moderately bent in balance to the angulation of the shoulder assembly. A severely straight stifle, or any unsoundness in the stifle joint (patellar luxation) must be severely penalized. Cat feet as in the forequarters. Rear dewclaws must be removed.

Tail

The tail is plumed, and curves vigorously from its root in an arch, forward, downward, then backward, pressing against the middle part of the thigh. The end of the tail should not hang vertically downward nor should it curl around in a complete circle or corkscrew. When straightened, the tip of the tail bone reaches the hock joint.

Gait

The Finnish Spitz is quick and light on its feet. It steps out briskly, trots with lively grace, and tends to single track as the speed increases.

Faults

1. Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault, and seriousness of the fault should be in exact proportion to the degree.
2. Soft, short, or wavy coat; unclear colour; too much white; muscular or coarse head; undershot or overshot bite; missing teeth; light eyes; runny or weepy eyes; ears set too low or too close together; long or excessive hair inside the ears; weak, pinched, or bowed fronts; weak pasterns; flat, splayed, or long feet; sloppy muscular condition; roached, dipped, or long back; long hocks, cow hocks; severely straight stifle joint; slipping stifles (patellar luxation); unsound hock action; low tail set; too curly tail; short tail.
3. Because the Finnish Spitz is a hunting dog, unsoundness in carriage is to be faulted.
4. Since trimming is a human fault, a dog with any trimming whatsoever should not be disqualified, but should not receive any major award.