

Living with a Northern Breed Dog

What is a Northern Breed dog?

Northern Breed dogs, also called Spitz dogs, are characterized by pointed ears and muzzles (the word “spitz” in German means pointed), long, thick fur, and a feathery tail that often curls over the dog's back or droops. Smaller breeds resemble foxes, while larger breeds resemble wolves. All of these features help keep them warm for the arctic climates they originate from, so these dogs are ideal if you live somewhere with long, cold winters. Those heavy coats require a lot of maintenance, though, and are not recommended for those who can't stand shedding!

Common Spitz breeds:

- Akita
- Alaskan Malamute
- American Eskimo Dog
- Chow Chow
- Keeshond
- Norwegian Elkhound
- Pomeranian
- Samoyed
- Shiba Inu
- Siberian Husky



American Eskimo Dog & Samoyed



Akita & Shiba Inu



Siberian Husky & Alaskan Malamute

What were these dogs bred for?

Don't let their cute, fluffy coats fool you -these dogs have working backgrounds and are not always ideal for new dog owners. They were bred for a wide range of tasks, from helping hunters find game to hunting moose and bear, to pulling sleds with heavy loads, and even herding reindeer! These dogs can be loyal, intelligent, and affectionate, but they can also be very independent and bold.



Common behaviors seen in Northern Breed dogs:

● Roaming

Malamutes and huskies have a reputation for escaping yards and roaming great distances. It is always recommended that if you are going to own a dog like this that you have a tall, secure fence if you plan on keeping the dog outside and unsupervised for any period of time (and most of these dogs enjoy their outside time). Electric/invisible fences will not be 100% effective in stopping these dogs from escaping!

● Vocalizing

Malamute and husky owners will tell you their dogs like to talk! It's speculated that they are so vocal because they were bred to live and work in large groups, and needed plenty of communication techniques with both their fellow canines and their human handlers. Whatever the reason, these dogs have quite a range and can be entertaining or a nuisance, depending on your preferences for noise.

● Boldness

Their brave nature enables them to make lots of fellow canine friends if they are bred and raised right, but they are not afraid to stand up for themselves if there is conflict. Don't be surprised if your spitz gets into a scuffle or two (or several) in their lifetime; they're not afraid to let other dogs know when they've had enough!

● Pulling

Remember, many spitz type dogs were used for hauling sleds, meaning they are going to be strong on the leash. It would behoove you to start teaching your dog to walk on a loose leash right away, using a harness made specifically to deter pulling. Some harnesses make pulling *easier* so do your research before you buy!

● Digging

If these intelligent dogs are bored or too warm, don't be surprised if they dig themselves a nice, deep hole in your yard. This is a smart way to get some energy out and stay cool. Providing these dogs with a cool resting place, bringing them inside when it's warm out, and keeping them entertained with games and training, should help stop or prevent digging.

