

PREDATORS TO PETS

Domestic cats originated from the Near Eastern wildcat (*Felis lybica*) roughly 10,000–12,000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent, transitioning from wild pest-hunters to human companions as agriculture developed.

They spread via shipping lanes to Egypt (honoured by 4000 years ago) and Europe, evolving into specialised, pampered pets over millennia. Alley Cat Allies Alley Cat Allies +4 Chronological History of Cats ~10,000–12,000 Years Ago (Fertile Crescent):

Agriculture attracts rodents, drawing wildcats (the ancestors of all modern domestic cats) to human settlements, beginning a mutual partnership. c. 7500 BCE (Cyprus): Evidence of a cat buried with a human suggests early companionship and transportation of cats by boat. c. 4000 Years Ago (Egypt): Cats become highly revered, mummified, and associated with the goddess Bastet. c. 1000 BCE–500 BCE (Mediterranean): Phoenician and Greek traders carry cats on ships to control pests, spreading them to Europe. 31 BC–AD 400 (Roman Empire): Cats are introduced to Roman life and spread across the Roman Empire. Middle Ages (Europe): Cats are unfortunately linked to witchcraft, causing population decline. 17th–18th Centuries: Cats regain popularity and are favoured as pets and pest control in homes. 19th Century:

The first organised cat shows and formal breed recognition begin in Victorian Britain. 20th Century–Present: Cats become largely indoor pets and a beloved global companion. Alley Cat Allies Alley Cat Allies +5 Key Takeaways
Ancestry: All modern domestic cats share ancestry with the Near Eastern wildcat. **Spread:** Their migration was largely aided by agricultural growth and maritime trade. **Relationship:** They moved from pest control specialists to household companions.