

GERMAN SPITZ (WOLFSSPITZ/KEESHOND)

A breed standard is the guideline which describes the ideal characteristics, temperament and appearance including the correct colour of a breed and ensures that the breed is fit for function. Absolute soundness is essential. Breeders and judges should at all times be careful to avoid obvious conditions or exaggerations which would be detrimental in any way to the health, welfare or soundness of this breed. If a feature or quality is desirable it should only be present in the right measure. However, if a dog possesses a feature, characteristic or colour described as unacceptable, it must not be rewarded in the show ring.

Most recent changes to this Standard have an effective date of 01/01/2025

ORIGIN

Germany.

UTILISATION

Watch dog and companion dog.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

German Spitz dogs are descendants of the stoneage "Peat Dogs" (Torfhunde) *Canis familiaris palustris* Rüttimeyer and the later Lake Dwelling Spitz (Pfahlbauspitz); it is the oldest breed of dog in Central Europe. Numerous other breeds have been developed from them. In non- German speaking countries Wolfsspitz dogs are known as Keeshonds.



GENERAL APPEARANCE

Spitz breeds are captivating on account of their beautiful coats, made to stand off by plentiful undercoat. Particularly impressive are the strong, mane-like collar round the neck (ruff) and the bushy tail carried boldly over the back. The foxy head with alert eyes and the small pointed, closely set ears give the Spitz its unique characteristic, cheeky appearance.

IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- The ratio of height at withers to body length is 1 : 1.
- The ratio length of the muzzle to length of the skull is approximately 2 : 3.

BEHAVIOUR AND CHARACTER

The German Wolfsspitz/Keeshond is always attentive, lively and extraordinarily attached to its owner. It is very teachable and easy to train. Its natural distrust of strangers and lack of hunting instinct make it the ideal companion and family dog and watch dog for home and farm. It is neither timid nor aggressive. Indifference to weather, robustness and longevity are its most outstanding attributes.

HEAD

Cranial Region:

The Spitz's medium-sized head, seen from above, appears broadest at the back and tapers wedge-shaped to the tip of the nose.

Stop: Moderate to marked, never abrupt.

Facial Region:

Nose: The nose is round, small and pure black.

Muzzle: The muzzle is not overlong and stands in pleasing proportion to the skull (approximately 2:3).

Lips: The lips are not exaggerated, close fitting to the jaws and do not form any folds to the corner of the mouth. They are completely black.

Jaws/Teeth: The jaws are normally developed and show a complete scissor bite with 42 teeth, corresponding to the dental formula of the dog, i. e. the upper incisors closely overlapping the lower ones and set square to the jaws. Strong canines fitting exactly into each other. Pincer bite is permissible.

Cheeks: The cheeks are gently rounded, not protruding.

Eyes:

The eyes are of medium size, almond-shaped, slightly slanting and dark. The eyelids are black.

Ears:

The small ears are set high and relatively close to each other, triangular pointed; they are always carried upright, stiff at the tips.

NECK

The medium length neck is set broadly on the shoulders, slightly arched without dewlap and covered by a thick, profuse coat, forming a large ruff.

BODY

Topline: Merges in a gentle curve with the short, straight back. The bushy, sweeping tail, which partially covers the back, rounds off the silhouette.

Withers: The high withers drops imperceptibly.

Back: As short as possible, straight, firm.

Loin: Short, broad and strong.

Croup: The croup is broad and short, not falling away.

Chest: The deep chest is well sprung, the forechest well developed.

Underline and belly: The chest reaches back as far as possible; the belly has only a slight tuck up.

TAIL

The tail is set on high and of medium length. It reaches upwards and rolls forward over the back, straight from the root. It lies firmly over the back and is covered with very bushy hair. A double curl at tip of tail is tolerated.

LIMBS

Forequarters:

General appearance: Straight, rather broad front with well-developed bone strength.

Shoulder: The shoulder is well muscled and firmly connected to the chest. The shoulder blade is long and well laid back.

Upper arm: The upper arm, which is approximately the same length as the shoulder blade, forms an angle of 90 degrees to the shoulder blade.

Elbow: The elbow joint is strong, close fitting to the chest and turns neither in nor out.

Forearm: The forearm is of medium length in relation to the body, sturdy and completely straight. The back of the forearm is well feathered.

Metacarpus (Pastern): The strong, medium length front pastern stands at an angle of 20 degrees from the vertical.

Hindquarters:

General appearance: The hindquarters are very muscular and abundantly feathered to the hocks. The hind legs stand straight and parallel.

Thigh and lower leg: Thigh and lower leg are of about equal length.

Stifle (knee): The stifle joint is strong with only moderate angulation and is turned neither in nor out in movement.

Hock/hock joint: The hock is of medium length, very strong and vertical to the ground.

FEET

The feet are as small as possible, round and closed, with well arched and tight nails, so called cat feet. The pads are coarse. The colour of nails and pads is as dark as possible.

GAIT / MOVEMENT

The German Wolfsspitz/Keeshond moves straight ahead with good drive, fluidly and springy.

SKIN

The skin covers the body tightly without any wrinkles.

COAT

Hair:

German Wolfsspitz/Keeshond has a double coat: Long, straight and firm standing off top coat and short, thick, cotton-wool-like undercoat.

Head, ears, front side of front and hind legs and the paws are covered by short, thick (velvety) hair. The rest of the body has a long, rich, hairy coat. Not wavy, curly or shaggy, not parted along the back. Neck and shoulders are covered by a thick mane. The backside of the front legs is well feathered, the hind legs have ample feathering from croup to hocks. The tail is bushy. Hair must not look like being modelled.

Colour:

Grey-shaded is a silver-grey with black hair-tips. Muzzle and ears are dark in colour, round the eyes well defined “spectacles” shown as a delicately pencilled black line slanting from outer corner of eye to lower corner of ear, coupled with distinct markings and shading forming short but expressive eyebrows; mane and ring on shoulder lighter; fore- and hind legs silver-grey without any black markings under the elbows or stifles, except slight pencilling on the toes; black tip of tail; underside of tail and trousers pale silver-grey.

SIZE AND WEIGHT

Height at withers:

Dogs and bitches: 49 cm (approx.19”) ± 6 cm (approx. 2”)

Weight:

The Wolfsspitz dog/Keeshond should have a weight corresponding to its size.

***N.B.** Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum. Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.*

FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog, and on the dog’s ability to perform its traditional work.

Severe faults:

- Faults in construction.
- Head too flat.
- Distinct apple head.
- Flesh-coloured nose, eyelids and lips.
- Dentition faults, missing teeth.
- Too big and too light eyes.
- Protruding eyes.
- Missing of distinct markings of the face.
- Faults in movement.

Disqualifying faults:

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.
- Gap in fontanel.
- Overbite, underbite, crossbite.
- Ectropion or entropion.
- Ears not fully erected.
- Definite white markings or spots.

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FCI Standard No 97: DEUTSCHER SPITZE (GERMAN SPITZ) - WOLFSSPITZ/KEESHOND / GIANT SPITZ – MEDIUM SIZE SPITZ – MINIATURE SPITZ / TOY SPITZ/POMERANIAN

FCI Classification: Group 5: Spitz and Primitive types

Section 4.1. European Spitz
Without Working Trial