

# THE COSTS OF OWNING A CAT

There's nothing quite like a cat's purr to melt your heart. Having a feline friend around can help make a house a home. However, everything comes with a cost, and keeping a cat healthy and happy involves expense and long-term financial commitment as cats typically live for around 18 years.

Before getting a cat, it's important to consider the costs associated with taking care of a cat. We estimate the typical annual cost of a cat to be around £1,500 per year.

Item	One Off Expense	Monthly Costs	Annual Costs
Equipment			£145 - £190
- Cat carrier	£25		
- Scratch post	£30 - £50		
- Toys and puzzle feeders	£40		
- Litter tray	£10 - £25		
- Grooming tools	£10		
- Food and water bowls	£10 - £20		
- Cat bed	£20		
Cat Flap	£40 + installation		£40
Microchip	£20 - £30		£25
Food		£20 - £55	£240 - £655*
Litter		£20 - £30	£240 - 360*
Routine Health Care (Fleas, Worming, Vaccinations)		£10	£120
Annual vet check			£60
Insurance		£24	£285
Pet Sitting			£140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£260</b>	<b>£74 - £119</b>	<b>£1587</b>

\* In calculating this total, we've assumed an average of £447 per year for food and £300 for litter

## GETTING STARTED

Before you bring your new cat home, you'll need to buy a few essential items. These include a cat carrier, bedding, food bowls, water bowls, a litter tray and scratching post. These will also need replacing from time to time.

Some cats will require additional items such as Feliway (approximately £30 for diffuser and one month refill) to help them settle, or during stressful times. Items such as litter trays can also vary hugely in price. Some cats have a strong preference for a different litter tray or type of cat litter so will require specific items, and it is important to understand a cat's needs prior to making the decision that they are the right match for you.

A cat's needs and requirements will also change as they age and therefore costs can change year on year. For example, vet visits and medication or special diets may be needed as your cat enters their senior years, so these are important financial considerations to take into account when rehoming a cat.

### A Cat Flap

Access to the outdoors can provide a huge amount of positive stimulation for your cat. Most cats benefit from having the freedom to come and go as they please especially if they're young and you're regularly out.

We recommend a microchip cat flap. These only open for your own cat, ensuring you don't play host to any uninvited guests. As well as the flap, you'll also need to factor in the cost of installation. This will vary depending on where it's being fitted in your home. For example, installing a cat flap in a double-glazed window will be more expensive than a wooden door.

### Food

Cats need their own food to ensure they get all the nutrients they require. Costs will vary significantly by brand, the size of your cat and their lifestyle (e.g. how active they are) but a typical adult needs 2 pouches of wet food per day and around 20g of dry. Your cat might start on a basic, less costly diet but may later require a specialised diet due to health or age-related issues.

### Litter

Although some cats prefer to go to the toilet outside, we always recommend providing a permanent indoor litter tray. This will need daily scooping to remove any soiled material and a complete wash and change at least once a week. Like food, cat litters can vary significantly in price.

### Routine Health Costs

Annual vaccination protects your cat against a number of common but serious cat diseases. To keep them free of parasites, you'll need to treat for fleas and worms regularly, following the advice of your vet.

### Insurance

Just like us humans, pets also have accidents and illnesses. Many people choose to insure their cat rather than be faced with a large and unexpected bill. We recommend looking for policies which cover your cat for the lifetime of any illness rather than a fixed period of time

### **Pet Sitting**

If you go away, it's important to make sure your cat will be looked after. In many cases it may be possible to ask a friend or neighbour to help, but for longer breaks, you may require a professional pet sitter.

### **Microchipping**

If you rehome from Battersea the initial costs of microchipping will be covered. However, there is sometimes a charge if you need to amend your registration details in future, for example if you move home and need to update the chip details to reflect your new address.

At Battersea we also cover the costs of neutering. However, this is something to bear in mind if you get your cat elsewhere. Prices range from approximately £50 to £100.