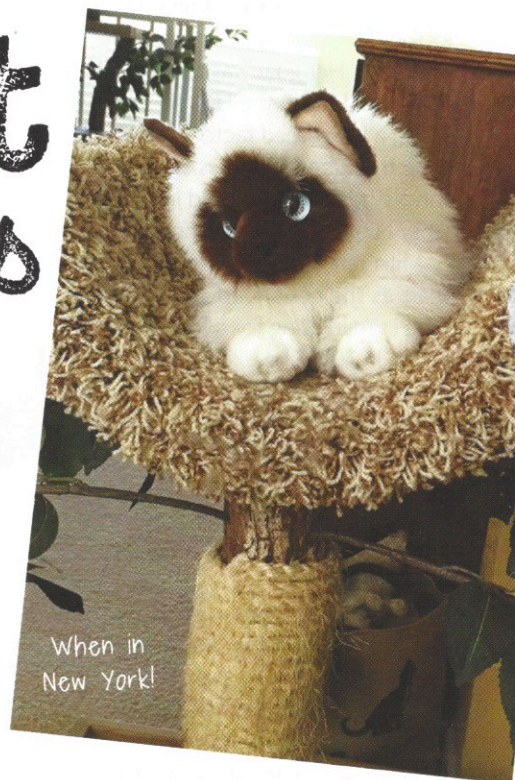




Must-Get Cat Souvenirs

Egyptians were history's greatest cat lovers.



When in New York!

If you're an ailurophile like me, chances are that when you travel you're always on the hunt for cat-centric merchandise to take home for yourself or as gifts for your kitty-loving friends. I've put together a shopping guide of some fun feline souvenirs you can't leave without.

→ When in Cairo

The ancient Egyptians were perhaps history's greatest cat lovers, pampering and adorning felines, honoring them in art, even treating them as gods. The Khan el-Khalili market and the Ashor Bazar in Cairo are both popular tourist destinations and great places to shop for statuettes of the goddess Bast (also known as Bastet). The statuettes are available in a variety of colors and sizes; materials range from granite to plastic. If you buy the right size, they make great bookends!

→ When in New York

If you book the Friends of Matilda accommodation package at New York's famous Algonquin Hotel, not

only will the resident cat afford you a generous discount on your accommodation, she'll welcome you with a personalized letter and send you home with the ultimate souvenir: a plush toy in her Ragdoll likeness. For information, visit algonquinhotel.com/hotel-special-offers.

→ When in Amsterdam

It's not only about tulips here! Cats & Things on Hazenstraat is a feline emporium that prides itself on having every feline-themed gift idea imaginable, from a quirky and fun tea cosy to hats and beautiful artwork. There are gifts for your cats back home, too. And the store has resident felines, so you can get a fur fix while you shop.

→ When in England

If you have Yorkshire highlighted on your itinerary, The Cat Gallery on Lower Petergate in York is worth a stop to shop. From tabby

IGOR SOKOLOV/SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY: ALGONQUIN HOTEL

cat socks to umbrellas to duvet covers, this store has it all — as well as great jewelry.

→ When in Key West

The Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum is a world-famous feline destination. The gift shop is fun to visit because the cats lounge around here and “help” you check out at the register. One of the most popular souvenir items is a bowl designed by Hemingway’s second wife Pauline. It’s a general utility bowl, but many visitors purchase it as a cat bowl for their favorite feline back home.



COURTESY ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOME AND MUSEUM

→ When in Southern California — or Orlando

Mention the word Disney, and it conjures up images of a variety of cats: Marie from *The Aristocats* or the wonderful purple-and-pink Cheshire Cat from *Alice in Wonderland*. The feline-related merchandise in these theme parks features everything from plush toys to socks, hats, T-shirts, and ornaments.

A good place to shop for cat-themed souvenirs is at the larger general



DANNY SMYTHE; CATS MUSICAL; KOJIKU/SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY DISNEY



WHEN IN JAPAN

The popular Japanese Maneki Neko lucky cat statues are easy to find all over Japan. The original tri-color cat with a raised paw is modeled after the popular Japanese Bobtail and believed to be a symbol of good luck, wealth, and prosperity. More recently, a slew of different-colored cats have become available, all with different meanings.

- **WHITE:** purity and happiness
- **BLACK:** safety (they’re also supposed to ward off evil and stalkers)
- **GOLD:** wealth and prosperity
- **RED:** protects children against illness and evil
- **PINK:** luck in love and romance
- **GREEN:** success in education and studies

Even the cat’s physical appearance has different meanings.

- Cats with a right paw raised are said to bring good fortune and money to business.
- Cats with a left paw raised are said to invite customers or people.
- Many of the cats have other adornments. Those statues with a coin, for example, are supposed to bring wealth and abundance.

Disney stores like the Emporium on Main Street USA in Disneyland in Anaheim, California as well as Downtown Disney. Also browse the World of Disney store at Disney Springs in Florida. If there’s someone you forgot to shop for, the Disney parks have a mobile app that lets you shop afterward and have your merchandise mailed.



→ When in London, New York, Amsterdam, Paris, or Perth ...

You can catch a production of the award-winning musical *CATS*. There’s wonderful merchandise sold on-site at the theaters in the form of T-shirts, mugs, plush toys, key chains, and headbands with cat ears. And, if you enjoyed the show but didn’t purchase any souvenirs at the time, you can always shop online when you get home. Check the official website catsthemusical.com to see where productions of this hit show are currently being staged before you even set off on your travels.



Ziggy and his adopted sister Tory “work” as feline muses for Sandy Robins, an award-winning multimedia pet lifestyle expert and pet-industry personality. Ziggy has helped write four

books, including *The Original Cat Bible* and is teaching Tory how to lie on Sandy’s desk to block the computer screen, throw files on the floor, and create hairballs for book marks. They both like to play fetch with wand toys and direct food operations in the kitchen. Learn more about Sandy at sandyrobinsonline.com.