



Pets & People

Take Your Cat On An Adventure

(NAPS)—Whether it's exploring the great outdoors or within the walls of their own home, cats have a knack for making the ordinary extraordinary.

To help cat owners rethink the ordinary and inspire them to keep the adventure alive with their cats, Purina Pro Plan is partnering with Adventure Cats to proclaim June 15 as National "Take Your Cat On An Adventure" Day.

This day gives cat owners an opportunity to share new experiences with their cats that they may not have considered before—such as leash training. While it's a responsible choice for your cat to live indoors, leash training as part of a safe outdoor experience can be a great way to enrich your cat's life.

It's important to recognize that an outdoor cat adventure is not like walking a dog. Leash walking a cat is about a sensory experience and exploration rather than cardiovascular activity. Leash walking takes patience and practice but can be worth the time and effort. Some cats may never become comfortable with leash walking due to age, personality or lifestyle. If that's the case, there are plenty of creative ways to have indoor adventures as well. For example, you can create a DIY Hideout. Learn how at www.proplan.com/cats.

If you do want to try leash walking with your cat, these five tips can help you get started:

Getting Acquainted: Select a fitted harness and leash (your veterinarian or an associate at a pet store can help you) and leave it out for your cat to smell and investigate. Be aware that the harness may make some new noises, so practice putting it on and taking it off so she can get accustomed to the sounds. Then try attaching the harness to the leash and use them to play with your cat to create a positive association as training continues.

Try It On: Get your cat used to the harness by having her wear it a couple times a day for 15-minute intervals. It's completely normal for cats to freeze up, refuse to walk or walk very strangely at first. She's likely never experi-



(Diane Bondareff/AP Images for Purina Pro Plan)

Gaia displays her true nature in New York City's Central Park to celebrate National "Take Your Cat On An Adventure" Day.

enced the sensation of having something on her back so it's something she'll need to adjust to.

Gain Comfort: Next, increase the amount of time she wears the harness around your home. If your cat resists or isn't adjusting, take a break and try again later. It's important to remember that leash walking isn't right for every cat, so follow her lead and don't rush the process.

Practice Indoors: Start by touring the familiar territory of your house. Reward good behaviors like staying calm after hearing a noise, moving forward and sniffing. Hide toys or kibble around your home and have fun discovering them together. Gradually build the duration of your walks inside. Once she's mastered this skill, you're ready to get outside.

Take It Outside: Before you walk outside, make sure your cat has her recommended vaccinations plus flea and tick prevention. Also be sure that she has a collar and tag, or microchip. Start with a short walk in an area with low noise and activity, perhaps your backyard. As she becomes more comfortable in her new surroundings, try expanding the territory you're exploring.

Get Inspired: Check out other cats' adventures and share your own by using #MyGreatCat and @ProPlanCat on Instagram and Twitter. To find out how to get involved in National "Take Your Cat On An Adventure" Day on June 15 and for more tips on how to adventure responsibly, visit www.mygreatcatadventure.com.