

Understanding Bengal Cat Colours And Patterns



Jungletrax Prestige photo by Kathrin Schier

Alright, class. Before we look at Bengal cat colors, the first thing you should know about Bengal cats is that there are 2 coat patterns:

- Spotted
- Marbled

A spotted coat Bengal cat is the most popular style of coat. Odds are, if you've seen a Bengal cat or are learning about what a Bengal cat even is, you've seen this cat in spotted form.

The brown spotted tabby was recognized for Championship status (TICA) in 1991.

The spotted Bengal has characteristic, small to medium sized spots all over their coats. Large, random, two-tone rosetted markings are particularly prized. AKA they're the house cats that look like mini leopards.

This pattern style appeared when breeders believed that larger and sparser spots were more desirable. The original spotted tabby pattern found in domestic cats has been modified by selective breeding





The coat is covered in random, diagonally or horizontally aligned spots on the torso, tummy and legs. Large dark spots on a light ground color is usually preferred.

Of course, there are variations to the spotted category and there can be many different types of spots on a single Bengal cat

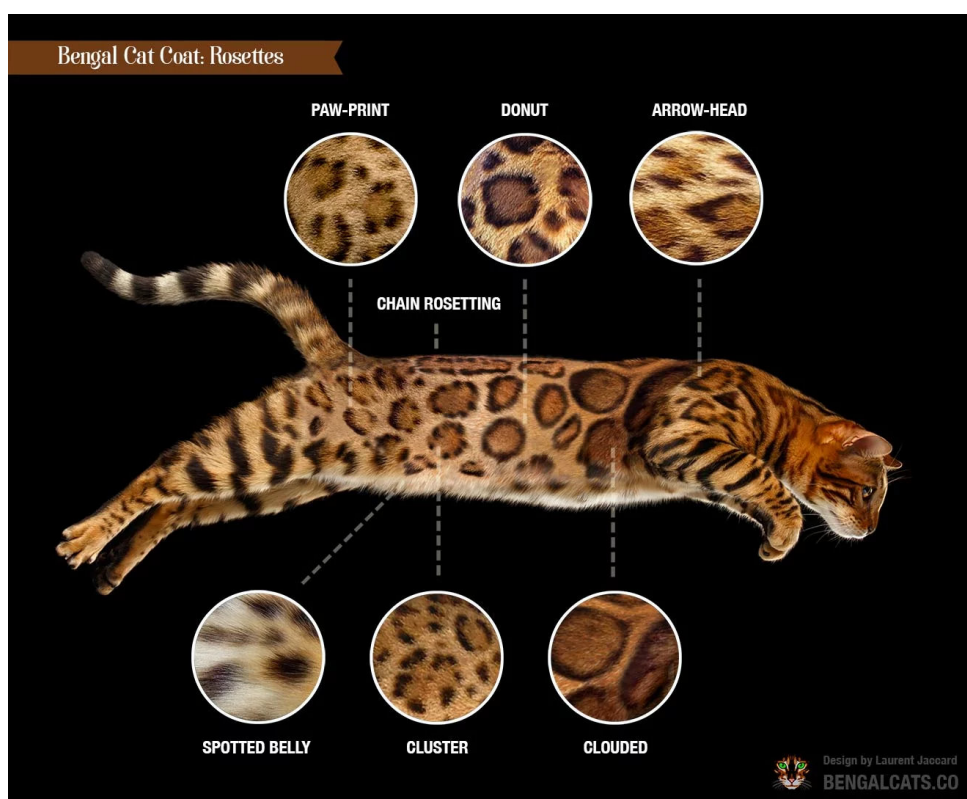
Single-Spotted

Single-Spotted means the spots are monochrome. It's just solid spots splattered in droplets on a contrasting background, similar to those of wild cat like Cheetahs

The most popular spotted coat for a Bengal cat is the "Rosetted Bengal". Spots are called rosettes when the spots are two-toned contrasting colors distinct from the background color. The Bengal cat is the only domestic cat with rosetted spots!

Rosettes in Bengals only started appearing in the early 2000s when some breeders bred shadow spots to shadow spots. The rosette quickly developed.

When you see the evolution of the breed over the years, it is amazing to realize the progress that has been made by some breeders with rosetting in just a few decades.



Arrowhead Rosettes

Arrowheads can be solid and monochrome in the single spotted group or they can be rosetted with different colors fading into the background. Well-defined arrowhead rosettes are rare and sought after by Bengal cat owners and breeders.

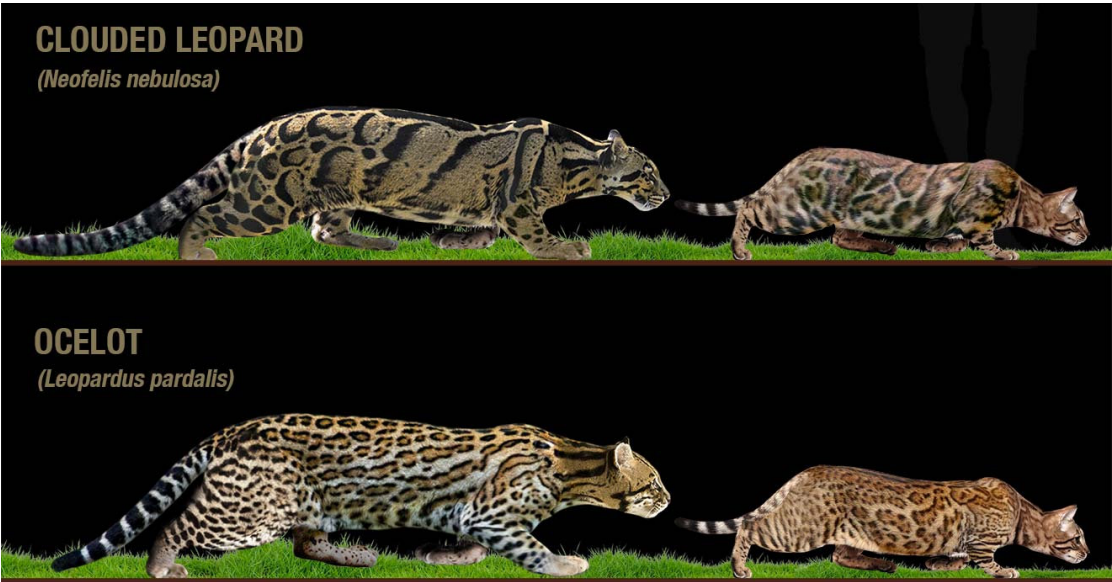
The arrowhead rosette is not the most common one but it is probably the easiest type of rosette to identify. Arrowhead rosettes are shaped in a triangular form similar to the tip of an arrow or a drop, with all tips pointing to the back of the cat.

Donut Rosettes

Donut rosettes are spots that are darker than the background's coat color and outlined with an even darker color.

Inspired by the Jaguar's coat, the donut rosette got its name from it's nearly complete dark outline around a lighter colored center.

It took years of selective breeding to achieve doughnut-shaped rosettes but they are now one of the most popular rosette.



Clouded Rosettes

Clouded rosettes are large, full rosettes that appear to fit together like a puzzle with little spacing (acreage) in between.

Inspired by the Clouded Leopard's coat, this reticulated spotting has an almost snake-like appearance.

Chain Rosetting

Chain rosetting describes a connected row of donut rosettes linked together horizontally and running parallel on either side of the cat's spine.

Chain-rosetting can also be seen on wildcats like Ocelots.

Cluster Rosettes

Cluster rosettes are small spots forming clusters around the center color.

So if you're looking for a Jaguar, Leopard or Ocelot look, for example, you're looking for the rosetted pattern

The Marbled Coat



The marbled coat pattern is derived from blotched tabby stripes that swirl. The ideal marble Bengal cat has a horizontally flowing, random, asymmetrical pattern made up of swirls of two or more colors.

The marble Bengal cat has four official types—reduced horizontal flow, horizontal flow, chaos pattern, and sheet marble patterns.

Now that we've looked at the types of coats Bengal cats have, let's take a look at Bengal cat colors.

Like other breeds of cats, Bengals come in a variety of colors. There are about 6 Bengal cat colors, divided into standard and non-standard by The International Cat Association (TICA).

The standard Bengal colors are:

Brown
Snow
Silver

Non-recognized colors are:

Charcoal
Blue
Melanistic (Solid Black)
Yep, your standard cat colors. But of course, the complex beauty that is the Bengal cat isn't just 6 color options. Nope – there's so much more to Bengal cat colors. But, no matter what the color/tone, the pattern on a Bengal cat should yield a high degree of contrast.

