

## Estrela FAQs

Contributed by Administrator  
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- How do I pronounce Cão da Serra da Estrela? And what does it mean? Most importantly: The correct spelling is Estrela, not the Spanish Estrella. It is pronounced "kown da serra d' schtrela." Literally translated it means (a) dog of the mountains of the star. The plural form, in Portuguese, is Cães da Serra da Estrela. (Kaysh, dogs) In English we say Estrela (es-trel-ah) Mountain Dog. · My Estrela won't herd my cattle/sheep/goats!! Estrela Mountain Dogs are pure Guardians. They do not have the high prey drive herding dogs require. They prefer to sit and watch and conserve energy to drive away any intruders. · What is an Estrela Mountain Dog? One of the oldest dogs of Iberian Peninsula, for protection of flocks, classified on 2nd group of the FCI, developed especially through the natural selection. Its origins lie in Portugal, in the Serra da Estrela. The breed has remained pure for hundreds of years, but unfortunately was bred to GSD for a time. Thankfully now the breed is back to its beautiful true type.
- How much space does my Estrela need? The Estrela can live with less space than you think, however they do need a fenced yard. Without a fence they will roam to protect all that is theirs; and if there is no fence they think everything they see is theirs! · Are they Guardians? They will protect all they survey as theirs. They have been a livestock guardian for hundreds of years. They take their job seriously. Proper socialization is a very important part of being a responsible dog owner. · Are they good with other pets? Even an adult Estrela can learn to live in peace with the family cat. · Are they good with kids? Kids and the Estrela are made for each other.
- Can I compete at dog events with an Estrela? Yes! Get out and show off your dogs! You might love it and so might they. In the United States you can show your Estrela in the UKC, ARBA, Rarities, and even in the AKC (companion events only) · What size can I expect my EMD to get to? Males Height: 25½ to 28½ inches Weight: 88 to 110 lbs Females Height: 24½ to 27 inches Weight: 66 to 88 lbs · Is it the biggest breed of Portugal? No. The Rafeiro do Alentejo is taller by approximately 2 cm. · Are they very popular? In Portugal they are one of the most popular of the native Portuguese breeds, being among the Top 10. The long hair variety is more popular than the short haired one. · What happened to this breed in the 1960s? In the 60's the wolves almost disappeared (today happily, they are coming back), and with the popularity of the German shepherd, many of these dogs were abandoned, almost to extinction. However some people knew the value of the breed and continued to breed and preserve them. Since this crisis, this breed has become one of the most popular of Portugal.
- What colors are allowed? Fawn, Brindle, Wolf-grey and Yellow either self-colored or with white markings. A black mask is very highly desired.
- How much grooming is required? One deep brushing weekly is sufficient to maintain an excellent coat on these dogs. The rough hair will not tangle so maintenance is very easy. Mats behind the ears can be common. · Do they drool? Drooling is very rare since the lips are very tight and must remain dry. · What climate is best for them? These dogs have the capacity to adapt to any climate. However, they are very happy in cold climates. The two types of coat have the same resistance to the cold. They also adapt very well to hot climates if adequate shelter from the heat is available. · How should they be fed? These dogs can be picky eaters. When they lived with the shepherd they shared the food that the shepherd ate. They like natural food very much ( raw meat/BARF). They drink lots of water. It can be a challenge to keep weight on an Estrela sometimes. · How much exercise do they need? These dogs need moderate exercise, because they have great vitality. If you live in a small house they must have the chance to take a walk every day. They love to play.
- How long do they live? A Estrela Mountain Dog with a healthy ancestry will live between 12 to 16 years.
- Do they have hereditary illnesses? It is a healthy breed, however as all large dogs to they can suffer from Hip and Elbow Dysplasia . They are a hardy breed and are very resistant to illnesses. Ensure your breeder x-rays breeding stock for HD and ED.
- Do they like to play? Yes, with their family, they love to play. Note that young dogs could be very rough in their games and inadvertently hurt somebody. · Are they agile? Very much so. This is a dog that despite of its size possess great agility, capable to reach considerable speeds and to jump quite high. · What is the best use of an Estrela? There are three responses, and any one is perfectly suitable to the Estrela Mountain Dog. It could be a livestock guardian, a farm or ranch dog, or a family dog. It is not a dog for apartments, it is important to remember they are working dogs. · Are they good family dogs? Yes. Without any doubts. They will adopt and protect your family. They would rather be with their family (pack) than anything else. · They are docile with the family? Yes. They will play with the children and if given the chance will sleep at your feet, or even your bed!
- How do they react to strangers? They are naturally, very distrustful with strangers. If a stranger is invited into their protected area the dog will accept them, but in general it keeps a certain distance. After some time and careful observation the dog may then appear to loose interest in the person but will remain vigilant. It has a special propensity to protect children. If the stranger has bad intentions, or if the dog thinks that they are a danger for his family, the dog may attack. · Are they good with other dogs and family pets? They are very good with other family pets if they are introduced while the dog is a puppy or has been gradually introduced and taught to respect the other pet. In those cases the dog will love their company and will protect them. If the other pet is another dog, the Estrela Mountain Dog may be dominant, or

at least, it will not be dominated. · Are they noisy? When they detect something out of the normal they bark to inform that that territory is guarded. Also during its patrols it will bark marking the territory.

As it can be said, Labs retrieve, Estrelas bark! · Are they good guard dogs? Without any doubts. They are among the best in the world. When something is left under its protection its as safe as a dog can make it. He will give, without hesitation, his life protecting his territory, flock or family. It is extremely aggressive to strangers especially when its territory or protected zone is violated. · Are they candidates for high levels of obedience? They are very independent dogs and can be very stubborn. They can also be slow to respond to your commands. However certain dogs have been subjected do the highest levels of obedience, and were surprisingly successful. · Do they like water? Amazing as it may seem, they do like water. On a hot day they will not hesitate to lie down in a puddle. · Can I have more than one Estrela Mountain Dog? Yes! These dogs although dominant will establish their own pack hierarchy and live peacefully. · Are they good Personal Protection Dogs? Some Estrela dogs, in Portugal, work for the Marines and are excellent in their roles. · Can they be used as hunting dogs? Some of these dogs work as hunting dogs for large animals like the wolf, wild boar and deer. · What is their pain tolerance? They have a very high pain tolerance and will not often show any signs of affliction.

· Why did they have cropped ears? These are livestock guarding dogs and often must confront predators (wolves, bears, stray dogs...), and the ears being a weak appendage and easy target is difficult to heal in an adult. Ears were frequently wounded by predators. The ears were cropped to eliminate this weakness. Cropping was done before 4 months of age. Nowadays dogs with cropped ears are rare. · Do I need a fenced yard? Yes! Without the fenced yard the Estrela Mountain Dog, will be able to run away, patrol your garden and the street (public street!), and considering the street as its property. · Can I walk it off leash? NO! If it is leashed (and the dog well socialized) it will appreciate the walks. · Should a first time owner buy a Estrela Mountain Dog ? No. The Estrela Mountain Dog can be dominant and difficult to control for a person who has never owned a large dominant dog. · Where can I get an Estrela? Check the breeders listing on emdaa.com for links to breeders worldwide. Be sure to ask for HD/ED results! · What kind of training is recommended for this breed? Socialization is absolutely necessary from about eight weeks old and basic obedience is a must as it helps establish your hierarchy at home, and expected behavior when out. · What is the biggest danger that this breed faces ? Being transformed in a big teddy bear.

\*FAQ adapted from <http://caoserradaestrela.do.sapo.pt/faq.htm>;  
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