

A Purebred Heinz 57 (Mixed or Cross Breeds)

Also referred to as mixed or cross-breeds, mongrels and mutts, the Heinz 57 group comprises nearly half of the world's dog population. Each of these canines, however, is truly one of a kind; and like their purebred cousins they are loyal, friendly, protective, beautiful, gentle and obedient. So why do mixed breeds comprise 80 to 90 percent of the canines surrendered to shelters? Whether he's a schnoopooweiltese or she's a labollshundachtzu, here are some points to ponder before making your choice.

All dogs are individuals, and should be judged as such regardless of their pedigree status. Although it is true that purebreds conform to specific "breed standards," and your chances of getting what you expect are greater, it is also true that papers do not guarantee anything other than that the dog comes from a particular lineage. Any dog, mixed or pedigreed, may inherit the worst of the worst traits, or the best of the best traits. To find a mixed breed dog that is compatible with your family and/or lifestyle in its size, appearance, or temperament, work with a knowledgeable shelter. It would be beneficial to have at least a recent history of the dog's health.

Cross breeds do tend to inherit the personality type of one of their dominant parents, not both. So don't assume that a jack Russell / Bernese mountain dog mix will be a nice balance between hyper and relaxed.

Mixed breed dogs require a smaller initial cash investment. Unless you're intending to show or breed your dog, why pay extra for a fancy label, when the cost of a pound puppy can be up to 90% less? In addition, most shelter dogs will have been vaccinated and de-wormed, and quite possibly already neutered. If not, most shelters will offer a veterinary discount toward the procedure.

Go green. You probably never thought of it this way, but when you adopt a shelter dog, you're recycling! Not only are you giving a mixed breed a new leash on life (pun intended), but you're gaining a truly unique friend.

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