

First-cat essentials

Have the basics ready. The automatic feeder can survive being a later decision.

Needed before arrival

- ☐ **Toilet.** Accessible litter trays, familiar litter and a scoop. Plan one tray per cat, plus one extra, in separate suitable spots.
- ☐ **Food and water.** Their current food, a food bowl and a separate water bowl. Confirm amounts and routine with the rescue or previous owner.
- ☐ **Transport.** A strong, secure, cleanable carrier that fits your cat. Plan how it will be secured for the journey.
- ☐ **Rest and hiding.** Comfortable bedding and somewhere to hide. A safe box or an existing blanket may already do the job.
- ☐ **Scratching and play.** A stable scratching surface and a few suitable toys. Keep string or wand toys for supervised play.
- ☐ **A quiet starting room.** Set it up before arrival. Use page 2 to plan separate eating, drinking, toileting and resting areas.

Confirm with the rescue or previous owner

Current food, usual amount and feeding routine

Current litter / tray preference and a familiar-smelling item to bring

Written care instructions, medication if applicable and veterinary records

Microchip record / transfer arrangements, vet registration and support contact

Optional later

Automatic feeders, fountains, elaborate cat furniture and extra gadgets can wait unless your cat has a specific need. Buy for the cat you have, rather than the imaginary cat who reads product specifications.

Already have / can borrow / can wait

A quiet room to start with

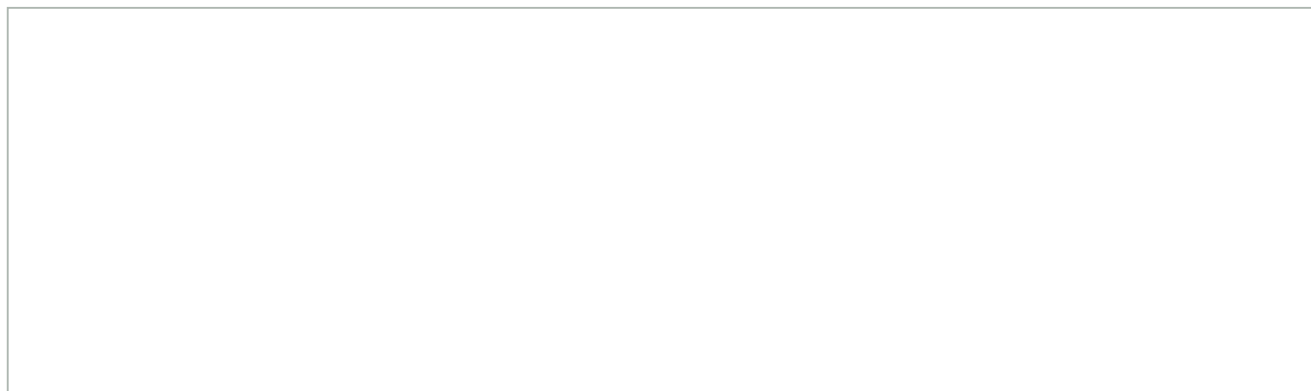
A retreat with the essentials. It does not need to look like a boutique cat hotel.

Starting room / arrival date

- ☐ **Secure the room.** Check doors and windows; remove toxic plants, cleaning products, loose cords and other hazards. Keep other pets and busy visitors out at first.
- ☐ **Separate the resources.** Food and water go in different places. Put the litter tray away from food, water and resting areas, with a clear route to it.
- ☐ **Give them somewhere to retreat.** Provide a hide and comfortable bedding. Add a stable, safely accessible lookout if suitable for their age and mobility; kittens need a secure bed at ground level.
- ☐ **Make arrival calm.** Close the room door before opening the carrier. Let your cat come out in their own time; do not pull them out or force contact.
- ☐ **Let the cat set the pace.** Keep the starting room available as a refuge. Explore more space and introduce people or pets gradually; there is no day-by-day deadline.

Sketch your room

Mark F = food, W = water, T = tray, H = hide, R = rest, S = scratching. Add doors, windows and clear walking routes.



Who handles meals, fresh water and litter care? / household arrival plan

This is a layout worksheet, not a required floor plan. Adjust it for your cat and home. Use the full guide for linked tray-placement, feeding, carrier and play advice.

The first week: notice, don't rush

Record what you actually see. This is a note sheet, not a settling-in scorecard.

Cat's name / arrival date

Vet phone / out-of-hours contact / rescue or previous owner contact

Refresh water, follow the agreed feeding/care routine and scoop the trays daily. Note food and water observations, pee/poo seen, and where your cat feels comfortable. "Not seen" is a useful note; it is not a normal result.

Day / date	Food / water	Toilet: pee / poo	Comfort / notes
1 /			
2 /			
3 /			
4 /			
5 /			
6 /			
7 /			

Preferences noticed / questions to ask

Get help when needed. Difficulty passing urine, straining with little or no urine, or crying when trying to pee needs immediate veterinary advice. Contact your vet promptly about illness or concerns with eating, drinking or toileting; young kittens can deteriorate quickly.

Go at your cat's pace. Seven rows do not mean they must be settled, meeting other pets or going outdoors by day seven.

Guidance checked 6 October 2026: [Cats Protection: preparation, bringing home and kittens](#); [RSPCA: rescue-cat guide](#) (printed pp. 8, 10, 13); [PDSA: urinary emergencies](#). Full references and the HTML checklist: catstandard.co.uk/first-cat-essentials.