

# Adventure Cats

These cool cats are living the good life

BY SHERI RADFORD

From beach outings and mountain hikes to paddleboarding and playing in the snow, Olaf the cat has a fuller calendar than many humans. He also has an impressive collection of dress-up accessories, including a cowboy hat, bunny ears, heart-shaped glasses and a tiny green top hat. Some of the most popular posts on his Instagram, @toastedmarshmallowolaf, show him in a snowman costume, looking like his namesake, Olaf the snowman from the animated movie *Frozen*.

Shana Gravenor has had Olaf since he was seven weeks old. From the start, Olaf enjoyed car rides, so Gravenor started taking him more places, around British Columbia and even into the United States. She says, "Pretty much it's just evolved to me taking him everywhere with me." Getting young Olaf accustomed to a wearing harness was Gravenor's first task, to keep him safe on outings. Fortunately, he adapted quickly. "It's to the point where now, it's like just an extra skin for him," she says. "It doesn't bother him, and he doesn't try to get out of it." Olaf also swiftly learned to wear goggles, which look undeniably adorable but also protect his eyes. "As soon as I took him outside, he just kind of forgot they were on," she adds. "He'll even take naps wearing them."

Another adventure cat who's spent much time exploring Vancouver and beyond is Tofino, and her globetrotting travels are also documented on Instagram, @tofinothecat. Tofino's owner, Mariko Pickerell, has taken her hiking, snowshoeing, camping—and to Japan, twice. Tofino is comfortable wearing a harness, a lifejacket when canoeing or kayaking and boots in snow. Pickerell started training Tofino to use a harness and leash when the kitten was 10 weeks old. "If you start earlier, that's the easi-



OLAF THE CAT



TOFINO THE ADVENTURE CAT



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PHOTOS: GIBSON CHRONICLES



OLAF THE CAT

est," she says. "But if the cat is older, it's not impossible." The key is to combine training with something the cat enjoys, such as playing or eating a specific treat, and to try different harnesses until you find the perfect fit.

Eventually, it seemed a shame to Pickerell that Tofino could go on outings while her husband's cat, Darth Vader, stayed at home, so Pickerell decided to try harness training the former stray. "When you train an adult cat, it's a bit trickier," she says, but eventually—after much trial and error—she found the right harness. "He's a big boy. He's 21 pounds, so he's using a dog harness instead of a cat harness." All the hard work is worth it, she says. "It makes our bond stronger. They trust us more, and then we trust them more, and then we understand each other." This past summer, Tofino and Darth Vader accompanied Pickerell and her husband on a two-week road trip by van.

Indeed, a harness is the most crucial piece of gear for any aspiring adventure cat. Jill Connolly is the creative director of RC Pets, a Vancouver company that makes pet accessories, and she says the company started noticing a sales uptick for their Moto Control Harness about five years ago. Designed as a car harness for dogs, the Moto was being purchased by cat owners. The company decided to design a cat-specific harness. "Cats can be a little more wiggly when they want to be," Connolly says. "They're just generally a longer, more fluid animal."

The resulting Adventure Kitty Harness has been "a huge success". Buckles at both neck and waist make it easy to put on and take off, and the adjustable webbing ensures a secure fit. Still, the company strives to make improvements, holding regular focus groups. "People who do adventure with their cats are very passionate about it," Connolly says. "They love to tell you about what's working and what's not."

Another necessary piece of gear is a backpack, says Louisa Chan of Bodega Pets in Richmond. It's a safe way to remove a cat from an encounter with a bear, coyote or aggressive dog. And sometimes an adventure cat simply gets tired or doesn't want to socialize anymore. Chan also recommends training a treat the cat loves, to help with training or with soothing a scared animal. But, she says, no cat should ever be forced to become adventurous. "If your cat prefers to stay inside, prefers to stay away from people, then let them be. You don't train them to be an adventure kitty. They choose to be an adventure kitty." She notes, "Not every cat can do this." ▽

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# Festive

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### Ingredients

<b>BATTER</b>	1/2 CUP UNSALTED BUTTER	1 CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
	1 CUP LIGHT BROWN SUGAR	1/2 TEASPOON BAKING POWDER
	1 LARGE EGG	1/2 TEASPOON SALT
	1 1/2 TEASPOONS PURE VANILLA EXTRACT (OPTIONAL)	1/2 CUP OHME! FREEZE-DRIED DRAGON FRUITS
<b>TOPPING</b>	1/2 CUP FINE CHOPPED MACADAMIA NUTS (LIGHTLY TOASTED)	1/4 CUP OHME! FREEZE-DRIED DRAGON FRUIT
	120 GRAM WHITE CHOCOLATE	1/2 CUP LIGHTLY CRUMBLED OHME! FREEZE-DRIED STRAWBERRIES

### Steps

#### BATTER

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a small pan, melt the butter over medium heat and continue to cook the butter until the bubbles die down and the butter turns light brown with a nutty aroma. Transfer to a bowl for cooling.

In a big bowl, add in brown sugar, cooled browned butter, egg and vanilla extract and whisk to combine. Then add the flour, baking powder and salt to the mixture; when it's well combined, add in OHME! freeze-dried dragon fruits and stir until evenly distributed throughout the batter.

Transfer the batter to the 8x8 baking pan (make sure the pan is lined with a strip of parchment paper covering the bottom and two sides), and spread into an even layer. Bake in a preheated oven for 20–24 mins, until the edges are set and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs. Let the blondies cool.

#### TOPPING

Place white chocolate in a big bowl and microwave for 30-40 seconds; then add in OHME! freeze-dried dragon fruits and mix well. Pour the chocolate mixture on top of the blondies and spread into an even layer. Sprinkle OHME! freeze-dried strawberries and macadamia nuts on top before the chocolate sets. Drizzle additional white chocolate on top. Let it cool at room temperature for an hour and cut into squares to serve.