



# ATLAS MOUNTAIN DOG (AIDI)

(Chien de Montagne de l'Atlas – Aidi)

**Group 1: Shepherds and herding breeds**  
**Without working trial**



**ORIGIN:** Morocco

**UTILIZATION:** guarding and protecting his master's flocks and belongings.

## BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Atlas dog has existed since time immemorial in the mountains and on the plateaux of North Africa. At present it can be found in large numbers in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the country which holds the breed standard. The Atlas Mountain Dog is closely linked to the semi-nomadic pastoral populations of the mountaneous regions and has the clear role of defending its masters' tent and belongings as well as protecting the flocks from wild beasts which might attack them. There are no sheepdogs in the Atlas region. The Moroccan dog which lives in our mountains has never guarded flocks in the European sense of the world (herding flocks).

## GENERAL APPEARANCE

Solid, very hardy dog, noted for its power and mobility; it is well-muscled, sinewy, strongly built but not cumbersome and possessing a thick bushy coat which protects it equally from the sun and from the cold of its native mountains. This fleece provides a protective armour in the fights which the Atlas dog has to undertake against jackals and other predators. It has a lively, direct and decided gaze as befits an alert dog always ready to fulfil its guarding role. In some regions of Marocco it is customary to crop the ears and even dock the tail of working dogs.

## IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS

- Length of body (point of shoulder-point of buttock) / size (height at withers) 10 : 9
- Depth of chest / size (height at withers) 1 : 2
- Length of muzzle / length of head 11 : 24
- Length of skull / breadth of skull 1 : 1

## BEHAVIOUR / TEMPERAMENT

Very faithful, affectionate and docile with its owner and family members, the Atlas Dog displays inherent guarding and remarkable protective behaviour. Always alert, it instinctively measures the gravity and proximity of any danger and fearlessly provides an appropriate and efficient response.

## HEAD

A strong, broad head, well-proportioned in relation to the whole body, its general shape is conical; the head is free from wrinkles and has no prominent muscles; the cheek-bones are not chiselled and link the skull to the muzzle on the same plane without a break.

### CRANIAL REGION:

**Skull:** The skull is flat and broad; a slight frontal groove appears and the occipital protuberance, although present, is scarcely perceptible.

**Stop:** Only slightly pronounced.

### FACIAL REGION:

**Nose:** Black or brown in harmony with coat colour, it is reasonably broad with open nostrils.

**Muzzle:** Conical like the rest of the head; it is appreciably less long than the skull; the stop is sloping and not very defined.

**Lips:** Thin, tight, black or brown according to coat colour. **Jaws:** Strong, armed with well-set, powerful, white, regular teeth

**Teeth:** The bite is pincer (edge to edge incisors). Scissor-bite or reverse scissor-bite without loss of contact between the incisors is tolerated.

**EYES:** Moderate size, dark shade, varying with the coat colour, from dark amber to golden brown. Slightly oblique and well-pigmented, the eye-lids appear painted on light-coloured coats. The gaze is very alert, attentive and scrutinising.

**EARS:** Medium length with slightly rounded tips, the ears are set obliquely so as to leave the skull clear; they are carried half-dropped, raised forward when alert and sometimes carried back when in repose.

**NECK:** Powerful, well-muscled, without dewlap.

**BODY:**

**Topline:** The topline must show a slightly dipping profile, without being sway-backed.

**Back:** Broad, well-muscled back of reasonable length, followed by powerful, very muscled and slightly arching loin.

**Croup:** Harmoniously sloping.

**Chest:** Adequate width, long and well let-down, reaching at least as far as the elbows, slightly rounded rib cage.

**Underline:** Rising behind the false ribs without being whippet.

**TAIL:** Long, reaching at least to the hocks, it is set on the extension of the line of croup, carried low, scimitar fashion in repose. The tail is very bushy and the richness of the plume denotes pure breeding. On the move, the dog carries its tail much more gaily. The tail should never be permanently carried curled over the back.

## LIMBS

**FOREQUARTERS:**

**Shoulder:** Oblique, withers distinctly defined, scapulo-humeral angle of about 100 degrees.

**Upper arm:** Strong upper arm, muscled, oblique and close to chest.

**Forearm:** Straight forearm, solidly constructed and moderately well muscled.

**Metacarpus (pasterns):** Short and almost vertical.

**Forefeet:** Practically round, with solid pads and strong nails whose colour depends upon coat colour.

**HINDQUARTERS:**

**Hips and thighs:** The iliac wing is very pronounced, the thighs are well-muscled without being overloaded and quite well let-down.

**Lower thighs:** The angles at stifle and hock are obtuse, which raises the croup and gives this dipping appearance towards the withers.

**Hind feet:** Practically round with solid pads and strong nails whose colour depends upon the coat colour.

## GAIT / MOVEMENT

Walk, trot, gallop: no hackney action and with sufficient reach. Natural gait: Short, fast trot, single-tracking. At this pace the Atlas Dog seems tireless.

**SKIN:** Supple and resistant.

## **COAT**

**Hair:** Thick, rather harsh, half-long, about 6 cm long apart from on the face and ears where it is short and finer. On the neck and under the throat, it forms a mane, especially in males. The breeches and tail are covered with well-furnished and very long hairs.

**Colour:** The coat colour is very variable.

- Fawn: From washed sand to deep red. These coats can be brindled, with black overlay or carrying a mantle of any hue. This mantle can be widely spread.
- Brown: From beige to burned bread shade. The lightest tones can have a deeper brown mantle.
- Black. All these coats can be spotted with white, the spots can go from a few discreet marks to a complete covering (white coat). The lips and nose must always be strongly pigmented black or brown (depending on coat colour). Harlequin, blue, isabella are not acceptable.

## **SIZE**

52 - 62 cm.

## **FAULTS:**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

- Cobby appearance.
- Fleshy head.
- Narrow skull.
- Ears short or too long.
- Lack of or excessive stop.
- Shifty, wild or expressionless gaze.
- Dudley-nosed or lack of pigmentation on eyelids or nose.
- Poor upright stance.

## **ELIMINATING FAULTS:**

- Aggressive or overly shy.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities.

- Pointed muzzle.
- Hawk eye – bird of prey eye.
- Ears permanently pricked.
- Undershot or overshot jaw with lack of contact.
- Tail permanently curled over.
- Insufficient plume.
- Short coat.
- Colour: Harlequin, blue, isabella.
- Cryptorchid mono or bilateral.

**N.B.**

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.