

Austria: Vienna's Cat Café

Café Neko

Since this article was originally written, a large number of further cat cafés have opened outside Asia, in Europe and elsewhere, and a summary of these, collated in 2014/15, is appended further down the page. By 2019 the number of cat cafés around the world had become much too large to keep track of!



The first cat café – 'Cat Flower Garden' – opened in Taipei, Taiwan in 1998, and word soon spread to Japan where the first opened in Osaka in 2004, and by 2012 there were nearly 40 in Tokyo alone. The idea is for a themed café where patrons pay a fee so as to be able to watch and interact with cats while taking their refreshment. Their popularity in Japan arises probably because so many apartments in the overcrowded cities forbid pets, and because cats provide relaxing companionship in what can be a stressful and lonely urban life. Some cafés concentrate on a particular kind of cat, such as black cats or stray cats, or a certain breed. There are strict rules in order to conform to animal-welfare and health-and-safety laws, and so that the feline residents are not, for example, pestered by unruly children or disturbed when sleeping.

In May 2012 the first cat café in Europe opened in the centre of Vienna, Austria's capital city, and is called *Café Neko* (*neko* means 'cat' in Japanese). It was opened by long-time Vienna resident Takako Ishimitsu, a 47-year-old woman originally from Nagoya in Japan, who had gone to Vienna some 20 years previously. She said she decided to open a cat café in order to introduce some aspects of Japanese culture to Vienna — but she had to spend three years negotiating with city officials over hygiene issues before it was allowed to trade. Said Ishimitsu, 'Showing unknown Japanese concepts is good for Austria. I had various ideas, and the cat-café project was the least difficult one to realise. And at the same time, I can do something good for the Vienna animal shelter that I've been supporting for years.'

Customers could stroke and interact with five feline hosts when it opened, named Sonja, Thomas, Moritz, Luca and Momo; all were quite young and they all came from city animal shelters. They roamed freely about the café and took naps when they choose. The 50-seat establishment was an instant hit with locals and tourists alike. 'Surprisingly, more than 99 per cent of the reactions were positive,' said the owner. 'One of our goals is to provide some happiness to people who cannot have cats on their own, because of their jobs or because family members suffer from allergies.' It's less surprising that there's a strict 'no dogs' policy!

Links

- ❖ Café Neko: [Facebook](#). (active, November 2024)
- ❖ BBC News, May 2012: video clip - [Vienna cat cafe with strict no-dog policy](#)
- ❖ BuzzFeed, May 2012: [Vienna's First Cat Cafe](#). (available, but no images)

- ❖ Daily Mail, May 2012: [The cafe that will leave you purring with pleasure](#) (archived copy – good photos, no video)
- ❖ YouTube has several clips, but [here's one](#).(2013)

Café Neko, Vienna, Austria



Sonia

Luca

Café Neko
Vienna, Austria



Thomas >>



Moritz

Thomas & Sonia >>



Café Neko
Vienna
Austria

<< Moritz

More cat cafés — a growing phenomenon

Since the above was written in 2012, the idea of cat cafés has caught on much more widely; here, in no particular

order, are a few of the earlier ones. With the welfare of the cats in mind, some have limits on ages of children allowed in, or even don't allow kids at all. The details were collated during 2014/15.

There's a very good summary of cat cafés around the world at [Wikipedia](#).

Paris, France

Le Café des Chats opened in September 2013 in the smart Marais district with a dozen cats, and became very popular. The animals themselves are abandoned and stray cats adopted from pet-rescue centres. Manager Margaux Gandon says that animal welfare is paramount and customers are prohibited from subjecting the cats to undue stress. She is prepared to evict any customers who fail to play by the rules, although she admits she is more lenient with the animal residents: 'Cats are cats,' she says.

[NBC News \(July 2013 – archived copy\)](#) | [The Neighbor's Cat](#) Neither [Twitter](#) nor [Instagram](#) used recently
Still going March 2026. Website [here](#).

Budapest, Hungary

The *Cat Café Budapest* has 13 cats, '15 kinds of tea, 15 kinds of coffee specialties, quality wines and delicious cakes'. A [YouTube video](#) leads on to a second, longer one. The Budapest café has an active [Facebook page](#), begun in February 2013 — some posts are in Hungarian but with English translation.

Still going March 2026. Website [here](#).

London, England

It was surely only a matter of time before there was a cat café in London, and on 1 March 2014 *Lady Dinah's Cat Emporium* opened; it was situated in Bethnal Green in the east of the city, but closed in mid-2025 because of 'uncontrollable debt'. However, it was hoped to reopen it under new management and in new premises, and in early 2026 the website was declaring 'Lady Dinah's is back!' and it's now in Greenwich. Reservations must be made in advance. A [Facebook page](#) has many thousands of Likes.

[Lady Dinah's website](#) | [Catster \(Sept. 2014 – archived copy\)](#) | [BBC News](#) (Jan. 2013)
[Instagram](#) active and website good, March 2026.

Totnes, Devon, England

Pre-dating Lady Dinah's London café by nearly a year, the small Totnes *Cats Café* opened in June 2012, after thousands of residents of the town signed a petition opposing the opening of a Costa branch there, causing the coffee giant to withdraw. The café had just six cats that belonged to the founder and owner, Liz Dyas, who is very experienced with animals and had run a wildlife hospital for years; they lived with her and travelled to the café each day from Tuesday to Saturday each week. The café was very popular and was commercially successful — but unfortunately, perhaps partly because of all the travelling back and forth with baskets of cats, Mrs Dyas' health started to cause concern and so the establishment closed in May 2014. There are pictures of Rolo, Lilac, Glee, Jet, Felix and Mango on the [Facebook page](#), and see also the [Daily Express \(July 2013 – pay wall\)](#) for more about what the café was like.

The café reopened in 2018 in a new location near Newton Abbot as the 'Cool Cats Café. See new [Facebook page](#); still active November 2024. However, by early 2026 the café had apparently closed again, and there's only the Cool Cats Cattery..

St Petersburg, Russia

The Cat Republic began as a branch of the Vsevolozhsk Cat Museum located just outside St Petersburg, but is now a separate entity in the city, consisting of several rooms that house a café, a library, a mini-cinema, an exhibition gallery and a souvenir shop, all based around a cat theme. The walls of the cats' domain are decorated with fanciful murals and wall paintings on cat themes. There are generally about 60 cats in residence, and a number of them originated in the band of felines that patrol the [Hermitage Museum](#). The stated goal of The Cat Republic is to educate the public on proper cat care. In addition to a variety of events and master classes, meetings with felinologists and zoopsychologists are held regularly. There is one simple rule for visitors: they should never try to interact with or pet a cat if it seems unwilling to engage or is not interested.

There's a good account of the opening [here \(Dec. 2016 – archived copy\)](#), there's an active [Facebook](#) page and a 10-minute [YouTube](#) clip (2019). By 2020 there seemed to be other cat cafés in the city too.

Seems to be still going, Marcg 2026; see, for example, [here \(undated – archived copy\)](#). Altoug I couldn't find a dedicated website. There's an active [Instagram](#) account, though.

Montreal, Canada

Montreal's *Café des Chats* opened in September 2014 and was home to eight cats, all from the local SPCA. This claimed to be the first permanent cat café to open its doors in North America. However, In late 2017 it seemed to be having difficulties and I think ultimately closed – the last FB post was in November 2017. [Facebook](#) (in French/English).

Another establishment, *Café Chat l'Heureux*, opened in late September 2014, and in late 2024 was still going strong. [Facebook](#) (French/English) | [website](#) | [Instagram](#) **Still open in March 2026.**

Toronto, Canada

As with San Francisco, in September 2014 preparations were under way for the opening of the *Kitty Cat Café*, with a Crowdfunding campaign, BUT ... it seems to have been difficult to get a lasting cat café going in the city. There were no posts on Kitty Cat Café's FB page after Oct. 2016, and it's no longer available. There was the TOT Cat Café, but in Nov. 2017 that too closed down – it had been billed as the city's first. Then there was the Meow Cat Café, where the six cats belonged to one of the Korean owners and were not up for adoption. In August 2018, however, that also closed after disputes with wheelchair users. The one remaining café that's still going is the **Toe Beans Cat Café**; see their [website](#), [Facebook](#) page and [Instagram](#) account. Their cats are available for adoption. **Still going March 2026.**

Vancouver, Canada

There's a cat café here known as Catfé, which in October 2020 appears to be thriving. They seem to have a large number of cats – 30 or more – that are available for adoption. [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GlobalNews.ca](#) (April 2014). **Website and Instagram both good, March 2026.**

New York City, USA

New York had its first cat café in late April 2014, opened by pet-food company Purina One, but that was a 'pop-up café' open for just four days; see article at [Columbus EMP](#) (May 2014). However, in mid-December of the same year the permanent *Meow Parlour* opened on Manhattan's Lower East Side, with seven felines, later increased to twelve. The cats came from a local rescue centre and all were available for adoption. The Meow Parlour Patisserie is open nearby so that customers can buy macaroons and jam cookies shaped like cat faces and bring them to the Meow Parlour, thus complying with city health regulations. **In March 2026 the café appears to be thriving.** [Meow Parlour website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [TIME magazine](#) with video clip (Dec. 2014) | [Life with Cats](#) and clip (*Dec. 2014 – archived copy*) | [Inhabitat](#) - opening day article (*Dec. 2014 – archived copy*) | [Instagram](#)

San Diego, California, USA

By Christmas 2014 Southern California's cat café, called simply *The Cat Café*, had been open for coffee and snacks, with 'guest cats' visiting on some days, but in early January 2015 it opened officially and proved very popular, with several of the adoptable cats quickly being successfully homed. [Cat Café website](#) | [Facebook](#) **Website and Facebook both good, March 2026.**

San Francisco, California, USA

Plans were well advanced for a cat café called *KitTea*, but finding a suitable — and affordable — location proved more difficult than expected and an opening in 2014 became impossible. However, the Facebook page indicated at the end of January 2015 that construction and fitting out were under way. In the meantime Bay Area cat lovers could go to Oakland (see below). By 2020 KitTea was open and operating. [KitTea website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [BBC News](#) (Oct. 2015) | [Instagram](#) **Website and Instagram both good, March 2026**

Oakland, California, USA

The *Cat Town Café* in Oakland was the first permanent cat café in the United States when it opened in late October 2014, although by the end of 2014 it had been joined by others in New York City and in San Diego. It is an adoption centre as well as a café, and has a variable number of cats, up to 20. [Cat Town website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [San Francisco Eater](#) (*archived copy – July 2014*) | [Instagram](#) **Website and Instagram both good, March 2026.**

Portland, Oregon, USA

Purrington's Cat Lounge opened in January 2015, and cats were available for adoption. Shortly after opening, following

several incidents of children not being properly supervised by parents, to the detriment of the cats, Purrington's initiated a requirement that children be a minimum of 10 years of age. The café closed at the end of November 2018, as the owners were moving. 600 cats had been adopted in 4 years since opening in January 2015. The business was sold and in January 2020 reopened with new owners and following a renovation. At that time there were no cats (virus restrictions), but the café was running and more cats would be taken in when possible.

[Facebook](#) | [Purrington's website \(archived copy\)](#) | [The Neighbor's Cat](#) (June 2017) | [Wikipedia](#)

Purrington's closed in November 2022, owing to 'unforeseen circumstances'. It had been hoped to transfer ownership, but by late 2024 it didn't look as though that had happened and so Purrington's remained closed: a shame, as it had good reviews. There doesn't seem to be a cat café in Portland in early 2026

Seattle, Washington State, USA

There are two cat cafés in the city, They are [Neko: A Cat Café](#) and [Seattle Meowtropolitan](#). (The King Cat Café is not one, has no cats and is open only to Amazon employees.) [Neko at Facebook](#) | Neko on

[Instagram](#) | [Meowtropolitan at Facebook](#) | Meowtropolitan on [Instagram](#). **Both cafés operating in March 2026; Instagram and websites good. Neko also has a branch in Bellingham.**

Munich, Germany

Although Katie's Blue Cat Café in Berlin apparently does not have cats, a cat café opened in the Bavarian capital of Munich in May 2013. Called *Café Katzentempel*, it has six young cats — all rescued animals; they have their own 'quiet room' they can retreat to when they wish, and plenty of high ledges so they can gaze down on customers when not feeling sociable. Animal welfare is emphasised, and a portion of profits each year will be donated to animal charities. The café serves vegetarian and vegan meals as well as coffee and pastries and opens daily except Mondays.

[Café Katzentempel website](#) In early 2026 there are Katzentempeln also in 18 other cities throughout Germany, as well as a second one in Munich. Details of all can be found on the website.

[Facebook](#) (for the Munich café) **Website and Instagram both good, March 2026**

Melbourne, Australia

The cat café movement has reached 'down under', and Australia's first one opened in Melbourne in August 2014, being called simply *Cat Café Melbourne*. As has become usual, the cats, ten of them, were all from shelters; there were 11, but Burma, the oldest, following a bout of illness when he went to live with a carer to recover, seemed unhappy when he returned and so was rehomed permanently where he will be the only cat. The café had fairly strict 'rules of engagement' to ensure the cats' welfare, and in fact visitors, who could not be under 8 years old, had to book in advance to arrange to go there.

The café seems to have closed around June 2022, with all the cats being rehomed. The website said a new site was being sought and by November 2024 the café had reopened, with an active website and Instagram account. [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | *Guardian*, Aug 2014: [Melbourne's cat cafe – like AA, only for cat owners](#)

Madrid, Spain

La Gatoteca in Madrid opened in October 2013 and was more than just a cat café: it was the HQ of an animal rescue organisation, and the cats there — all from shelters in the city — were available for adoption. Unfortunately the café had to close at the end of August 2020; the reasons were given as 'complicated and uncertain', but it isn't clear what they were. It was possible a site might be sought elsewhere in future, when the virus scare was over. **By December 2023 it seems the café was operating again. The links below were all good in March 2026.**

[La Gatoteca website](#) (in English) and further information at their page [here](#). [Website in Spanish](#) and at [Facebook](#).

Brussels, Belgium

Belgium's first cat café, *Le Chat Touille*, opened in November 2014 in the Saint-Gilles district of Brussels. There were just five cats: Fripouille, Noël, Coca, Simba, and Chiquita. As with most cat cafés they originated from a local shelter, and all were adoptable. Entry here is free. From 2020 the name was changed to Le New Chatouille. **In March 2026 it wasn't clear whether the café was still open or not, as links to the website didn't work. There's another cat café in Brussels and others in Antwerp, Leuven and Ghent; details [here](#) (April 2025).**

[Website \(archived copy\)](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Traveling Cats](#) - lovely photos of the five original residents (Nov. 2014 – archived copy) | [Metro](#) (Oct. 2014 - café photos).

Copenhagen, Denmark

This *Café Miao* — owned by a Chinese lady actually called Miao — opened at the end of July 2014 with just three cats, later increased to six. It was in the city centre, not far from the world-famous Tivoli amusement park. However, owing to 'economic reasons', it closed in July 2017 after just 3 years.

[Café Miao website](#) (*archived copy*) with page for [the cats](#) and a [gallery](#) (*both archived*) | [Facebook](#) (*page not used since closure*) | [Short video clip](#) (2015) | [Duo Diaries](#) - review and good photos (undated).

In March 2026 there's a cat café called VikaLikat in Copenhagen, I think opened in mid-2025.

[Website](#) (in Danish) | [Instagram](#)

Long Island, New York State USA

Among the many cat cafés that have sprung up all over the place by 2023, I think this one deserves a special mention: The Shabby Tabby Cat Café in Sayville, Long Island. There are some superb photos in the [article](#) from July 2013. [Café website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) **Website and Instagramgood, March 2026.**

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