

Featuring Felines: Cats' Adventures & Travels 35 (2023)
(page checked May 2026)

Cats' Journeys

In 2014 **Sasha** went missing from his home in Portland, Oregon in the USA, and as time passed his human, Viktor Usov, gave up hope of ever seeing him again. But when a cat was found wandering the streets of Santa Fé, New Mexico in 2019 and was taken to a vet's and scanned for a microchip, it turned out to be Sasha, 1200 miles from home! How he got there is a mystery, but Viktor thinks he must have 'hitched a ride'. Upon hearing the story, American Airlines flew the cat back home at no cost and said it was 'honoured to be part of the reunion and glad to have provided a happy ending to Sasha's long journey'.
[BBC News](#) (Nov. 2019)



A similar story to that of Sasha (*above*) took place in Australia, when Himalayan cat **Clyde** disappeared from his home in Tasmania in 2006. Three years later, in 2009, a veterinary nurse in the remote town of Cloncurry in Queensland, 2400 miles away, had been caring for a few months for a cat that had been hanging around – but then she had to leave town. The cat was scanned for a microchip – and it was Clyde! How he got there, including a crossing of the 185-mile Bass Strait, is not known, but he must have been transported there in a camper van or something like that. He was flown back to his overjoyed owners (*left*) at no cost by animal-transport company Dogtainers.

When Dan Bouchery had to move from her home in Calvados, Normandy to Grasse in Provence for three months in January 2013, for work reasons, she took 3-month-old **Cookie** with her. But Cookie didn't like being confined to a hotel room, with only occasional trips to the garden; and in March she disappeared. Dan did all she could to find her, but had to return home without her. But in July 2014, after a journey of some 750 miles that she must have made on foot, she was back in Calvados. A woman in Orbec took the exhausted cat in and would like to have kept her, but a trip to the vet revealed a microchip and her real owner. Dan and Cookie were finally reunited in mid-October..

[The Local](#) (Dec. 2014 – *archived copy*)





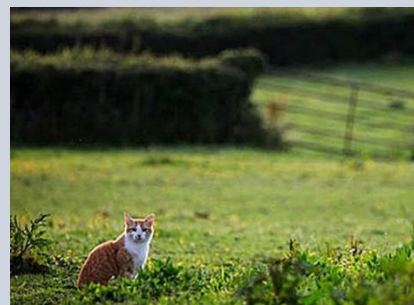
The Hicks family of Adelaide in Australia had a three-year-old Persian cat called **Howie**, an indoor pet who enjoyed a comfortable life and was particularly bonded with teenage daughter Kirsten; when she wasn't at school they were practically inseparable. During 1977, though, the family was due to take an extended holiday abroad and Kirsten was very concerned that Howie should be well-looked after. Eventually it was decided that he'd go to her grandparents, who lived over 1000 miles away on Queensland's Gold Coast, but were also very fond of Howie, so it seemed a good solution.. I don't know how he travelled there, but Kirsten bade him a tearful farewell, and the grandparents assured her he'd be fine.

But when the Hicks's came back from holiday and returned for their cat, they found that he'd gone missing. The grandparents said they'd done all they could to find him, but he'd just vanished. Her parents tried to console Kirstie with the offer of another cat, but she refused; she could think only of Howie, lost and alone in a strange environment. She didn't think he could survive.

The months went by, and soon it was a year since Howie's disappearance. And then one day a dirty, scrawny cat turned up at the Hicks' home while Kirstie was at school; he was hungry, had bleeding paws and was very thin. Taking pity on him, Mrs Hicks took him in and fed him, thinking that perhaps Kirstie would like to look after him instead of Howie. But when the teenager got home, she took one look and shouted in excitement, 'Howie!' Underneath all the grime, there was no doubt it was him. He recognised his humans and was purring. Somehow Howie had travelled more than 1000 miles, crossing mountains, barren plains and rivers, and managing to escape all the dangers along the way, such as dogs, snakes, scorpions and other wild animals. How he did it, no one knows; but he was able to recover and resume his comfortable lifestyle!

[Animal Intuition](#) (undated -archived copy)

When 82-year-old Alfonse Mondry had to go to hospital in France, his cat **Misèle** missed him so much that she decided to take matters into her own paws. Walking across fields of cattle, rock quarries, forests and busy roads, she found her way to the hospital. She went in, found Alfonse's room – although she'd never been in the hospital before – and when nurses went in they found him resting comfortably with her purring on his bed!





Ginger cat **Sandi**, from Lee-on-Solent in Hampshire, southern England, didn't return home as usual one morning. Four days later his humans received a phone call to say he'd been found on the vehicle deck of the *Pride of Bilbao* car ferry when it docked in Bilbao, Spain! Luckily he was microchipped, so his owners could be identified; they felt he must have been 'catnapped', as he wouldn't have found his way on board on his own. He was given a £266 luxury cabin to himself on the return voyage, and was fed fresh salmon and grilled chicken! However, as he'd left UK waters, even though he hadn't gone ashore in Spain, he was subject to six months' quarantine on his return. His humans planned to appeal the decision, but I don't know the outcome.
[UPL](#) | [BBC News](#) (both Dec. 2009)

A Florida couple from West Palm Beach took their tortoiseshell cat **Holly** on holiday to Daytona with them in their motor home. One day some fireworks were set off nearby, scaring the cat so that she ran out of the door and disappeared. Her humans spent days handing out flyers in the area, and working with local authorities, but Holly couldn't be found. Eventually they had to return home without her.

Over two months later a thin and emaciated cat was found in a Palm Beach garden; she was very weak. Taken to a vet, she was scanned for a microchip – and it was Holly! She'd managed to travel almost 200 miles back to her home, and was successfully reunited with her family.
[Love Cats World](#) (undated)



Nine-year-old Swedish cat **Glitter** would quite often be gone from home for a day or so, but when he disappeared altogether in autumn 2015 his owner Sammy Karlsson feared he'd been lost for ever. That is, until one day he received a phone call from Nimes, in France, some 1150 miles away! The caller asked Sammy whether he owned the cat, who'd been identified by a microchip. At first Sammy thought he was joking, but when sent photos he saw that it was indeed Glitter. He must have been transported there in some way; but now his return could be planned – after he'd gained a pet passport and received the necessary vaccinations.

[Life with Cats](#) (Nov. 2015 – archived copy)

In 1951 the Woods family were moving from California to Oklahoma by car – but their Persian cat **Sugar** was terrified of being in the car and became distressed. So they thought it best to go back and leave her with a trusted neighbour, before setting off again, sadly and reluctantly, without her. Two weeks later they received a letter from the neighbour saying that Sugar had disappeared, and despite frantic searches she hadn't been found. The Woods mourned her loss and feared the worst.

More than a year later, in Oklahoma, a dishevelled cat scrambled through an open window and jumped on Mrs Woods' shoulder. Overjoyed and astonished, she identified the cat as Sugar by an unmistakable old scar on a hind leg, the result of an earlier road accident. She had travelled some 1500 miles over desert and mountains, crossing terrain that even a mountain lion would have found challenging, to get to a place she'd never been before and to be reunited with her family.



In early June 2024 Benny and Susanne Anguiano arrived at a camp site in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, USA with their motor-home and two cats, **Rayne Beau** ('rainbow') and his sister **Starr Jasmine**. Not long after they arrived, something spooked Rayne Beau and he ran off into nearby trees. They put out his favourite treats and toys, but he didn't return. After searching for him unsuccessfully for four days, and notifying the park rangers, they reluctantly returned home to Salinas, California. His sister Starr Jasmine was missing him too.

During August they received a phone call from a shelter in the town of Roseville, California, saying they had Rayne Beau. Doubtful at first, the Anguianos asked for a picture to be sent, and it did look like their lost cat. Apparently a kind woman had seen him wandering the streets of Roseville, had fed him and managed to trap him and take him to the local SPCA. Rayne Beau had managed to travel well over 800 miles on what was presumed to be his way back to his home in Salinas. He'd lost nearly half his body weight, was malnourished and his paws were dry and cracked – but he was otherwise all right. The family was overjoyed to have him back, and he soon regained his health and strength at home.

[Independent](#) | [LBC News](#) | [Sky News](#) (all archived copies – all Sept. 2024).



Tuxedo cat **Filou** escaped from an open window in the family's camper van while they were at a motorway rest area near Girona during a trip to Spain in August 2025. They searched extensively, notified the authorities and animal-welfare group, and even returned to Spain to continue their search – but to no avail.

In January 2026, however, a woman in Homps, near Filou's home town of Olonzac in the south of France, came across an emaciated, dirty and coughing cat, which she took to the vet's. It was Filou! Somehow he'd travelled some 250 km. (over 150 miles), crossing rivers, highways and towns to make it home,. His humans were overjoyed, and with suitable care he made a good recovery from his ordeal.

[Bluewin](#) | [MSN](#) (both Jan. 2026)

How do they do it?

Cats' ability to find their way home seems to depend on navigation using the Earth's magnetic field. Researchers found that cats placed in an enclosed maze, with exits pointing to the different points of the compass, generally picked the exit that faced directly towards their home. But when powerful magnets were attached to their collars, it disrupted their biological compass and they could no longer tell which exit to choose. But that doesn't seem to explain how some cats have found their way back to their families who've moved to a place they've never been before, such as Sugar (*above*).

Here are some more tales of cats making astonishing journeys; some are quite old, there aren't any pictures and for some there aren't any links to back them up, but I thought them worth including.

See also [Columbus Direct](#) (May 2015) | [Pets4Homes](#) (March 2022) for more travelling cats.

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- ❖ In 1939 ship's cat **Sidney James** pulled off a very clever trick when he was accidentally left behind at Bootle, near Liverpool in England, with his ship bound for Buenos Aires in Argentina. When they arrived, they were astonished to find Sidney waiting for them! Finding himself abandoned, he had boarded a fast mail-boat leaving the same night for Buenos Aires, but which arrived six days earlier than his own ship!
- ❖ In 1981 **Minosch** the cat became separated from his human at the Turkish border when he was returning home for a holiday after working abroad. Eventually he had to return home to northern Germany without the cat. It took Minosch just 61 days to cover the nearly 1500 miles back to his home, so he surely must have hitched some rides along the way!
- ❖ A cat, name unknown, from the Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk went looking for his family when they moved to another town in 2009. They'd had to move in a hurry, and somehow the cat had become separated from them; he'd lived with them for five years and the children were very upset to lose him. However, although it took him three months to cover the 40-odd miles

to the new home, to the family's surprise and joy he made it! He was skinny and very tired, but was pleased to be back. His journey became well-known in the town and he received a lot of visitors – but preferred thereafter to stay indoors!

- ❖ Another Russian cat, named **Kuzya**, two years old, made a much longer journey across Siberia to reach home. In 2004 the Efremov family took him with them from their home in Olenyok to Yakutsk for the summer. At some point Kuzya ran away; after weeks of unsuccessful searching they concluded he must have been killed, and returned to Olenyok at summer's end. But three months and some 1300 miles later, he turned up on their doorstep! He was tired and rather thin, had some bite marks on his tail and his claws were worn away, but otherwise he was healthy. However, he was nervous about going outside and often seemed to be looking for somewhere safe to hide – a legacy, surely, of his epic journey.
- ❖ Barbara Paule lost her cat **Muddy Waters White** in 1982 when he escaped from her van while she was driving through Ohio. 450 miles from her home in Pennsylvania. And she had to return home without him. Three years later, Muddy turned up at his home! His distinctive markings and an unusual leathery lower lip enabled the local vet to determine that it was indeed Muddy.

See also the story of **Semyon**, a Russian cat who made an epic journey from Moscow to his home in the northern city of Murmansk: [Featuring / Statues & Monuments 6](#).

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