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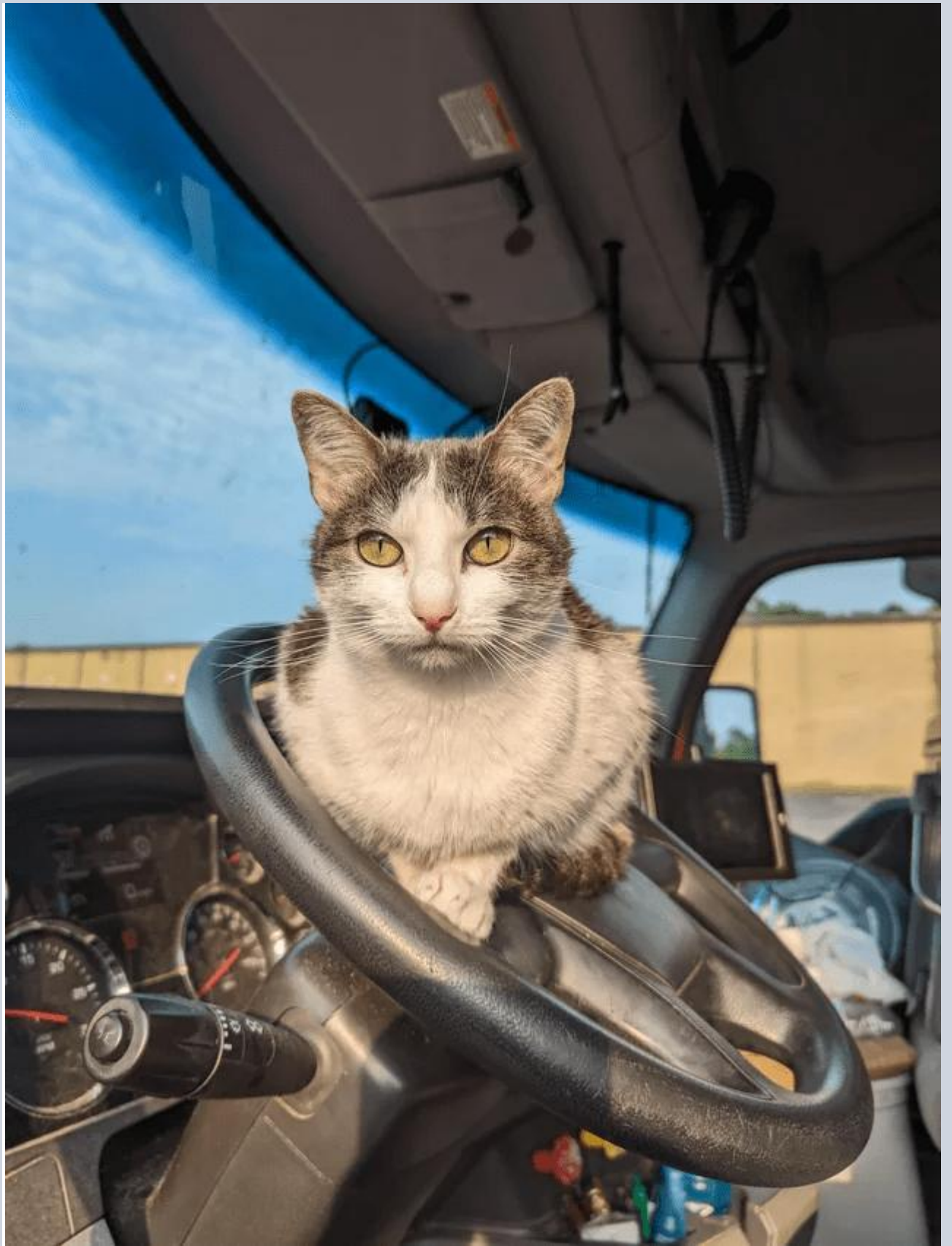
CATS AND RESPECT ©

Cat truckers *(page checked January 2025)*



It's no joke, there are cat truck drivers, or perhaps we should say that there are truck drivers who travel with their cats. No one is surprised to see a dog get out of the cab of a huge truck, but... a cat? Well, for a start, they don't get out of the cab unless they're wearing a harness; as we'll tell you later, more than one truck driver has gone crazy looking for a cat that has escaped at a stop.







Many truck drivers travel hundreds of kilometres alone, sleeping in car parks, some more comfortable than others, but there are not always showers or a cafe nearby. For this reason, some alleviate the loneliness with a four-legged friend, a dog or a cat. We are sure that the most common companion is the dog, but according to many truck drivers, the cat has advantages: it takes up less space, does not require so much attention, and can be left alone in the cabin for a few hours without it getting desperate...







But not all companies allow animals to travel with them. Cats who drive across borders must have a valid passport and some countries will put up more obstacles than others to let them in, but for Sylvie and **Filou** it doesn't matter. They have been travelling around Europe for 14 years on board a 38-tonne truck

and the borders don't matter much. Spain, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and often Italy are familiar sights for both of them. Sylvie won't go into a restaurant if they don't accept Filou: "Wherever I go, he goes," she says. And she adds, laughing: "Nobody asks me how I am, but how Filou is." He doesn't need a harness, he is a very calm cat and sleeps on the dashboard, in the passenger seat or in his bunk.



Sylvie and Filou

From France we move on to Turkey, where Samet Ayyuldiz tells how he found his little companion: "I saw someone throwing something from a car window; I don't know why, but I braked and stopped. I saw a tiny cat meowing. I took him to the nearest vet; he was too small to eat and I bottle-fed him for a couple of weeks. We are now inseparable, I don't go anywhere without him."



Samet Ayyuldiz and his cat

We continue north and arrive in Russia. Danila Borodin, who is based in Kemerovo, Siberia, 3,600 km from Moscow, is travelling with only **Ev** (short for **Evgeni** or Eugene). Danila initially thought of a dog, but by chance he saw an advertisement for a cat looking for a home. It only took a few days for the kitten to get used to living in the cab and he keeps a close eye on the load and the road. He also runs a very popular blog with Danila about the life of truck drivers.



Danila and Ev

It's time to cross the Atlantic and arrive in Chile to meet Joaquín and **Chikitita** (who has more than 42,000 followers on TikTok). Joaquín admits that Chikitita is a very spoiled cat. In the cabin there is everything, water, food, a litter box, even reflective vests for her safety and vests to protect her from the cold. After a year of traveling together, Joaquín admits that he cannot imagine taking a trip without her.



Joaquín and Chikitita

But as you might expect, trucking cats are most prevalent in the United States. Jay Jones and his cat **Maggie** spent more time aboard the huge double-truck than at home. On January 11, 2013, Jay stopped to buy food in Florence, Kentucky; when he got out, the truck was gone. Not only had he lost his clothes, computer, camera and quite a bit of money, but also Maggie, with whom he had been traveling for four years, since she was a kitten.



Maggie

Back in Clanton, Alabama, he began calling all the shelters in the area and the media in hopes of finding Maggie. He didn't yet know that the cabin had already been found about thirty miles away; the police didn't see Maggie despite looking for prints, etc., and the cabin was taken to Rushville, Indiana. Jay didn't find out until four days later, his company didn't tell him. The tow truck drivers found Maggie and took her to the Rushville shelter. When he finally got word, Jay rented a truck, drove all night, got to the shelter at five in the morning, and waited for it to open. As soon as she saw him, Maggie went crazy and jumped into his arms meowing. Luckily, the thieves were interested in the cargo, and Jay not only got Maggie back, but her belongings as well.



Maggie

Another love story is that of Abdirahman Abdul and Aisha. The truck driver had just loaded his vehicle, a small truck. Already on the highway, a car overtook him at full speed and ran over a cat that was crossing with her kittens. Abdirahman stopped, the cat was dead. He started looking for the kittens, but only found one, **Aisha**



. Andirahman and Aisha

Since then, they have been travelling companions. “She keeps me company,” he says. “We need each other. I need her, she needs me, we are a team.” Aisha goes wherever Abdirahman goes. She has become accustomed to wearing a harness with a leash, and the two eat together at highway cafes, even going to the toilet together.



Aisha

We'll end with a rather incredible story, that of **Percy** the cat. One morning in late February 2017, Paul Robertson, who was not feeling very well, decided to stop in a parking lot on a highway in Ohio. He lay down on the bunk with Percy at his side. A few hours later, he was awakened



by the cold: a window was down and Percy had disappeared. Paul Robertson y Percy

It wasn't the first time Percy had opened the window, he had learned which button to press. Paul drove around the truck shaking the bag of dry food while calling him. Nothing. He searched the parking lot, the surroundings, nothing. To make matters worse, a storm was forecast. Several people joined the search without success. It started to rain, it was cold. Despite the delay, Paul spent the night there hoping to find Percy in the morning. He couldn't wait any longer, he was carrying a load that had to be delivered on time: "I felt like I was abandoning my son." Percy had a chip; everyone promised to call him as soon as they found him. Paul made his first delivery; by the second he had already gone 600 kilometers without his great friend. He left the office towards his truck and saw a cat come out from under the vehicle. And he recognized him, it was Percy.



Percy

It had travelled more than 600km in winter, hidden under the truck. It stank of diesel, was dirty, wet, frozen, but it recovered. Paul thinks it must have found a gap above the gearbox or between the fuel tanks.



Percy

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