



# THE TANZIE PROJECT

## A GUIDE TO ADOPTING A BOSNIAN DOG

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PLEASE NOTE: BEHAVIORAL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS GUIDE DOES NOT NECESSARILY APPLY TO ALL BOSNIAN DOGS. THIS IS A GUIDELINE TO EDUCATE AND PREPARE ADOPTERS AND TO HELP PREVENT THE NEED FOR DOGS TO BE REHOMED BECAUSE OF BEHAVIORAL ISSUES.

### BACKGROUND

Bosnian dogs are feral animals found in the Balkan country, Bosnia and Herzegovina. They have lived either on the street or in a private shelter (pension), most of their lives, which creates some unique personality and behavioral traits. While people who have adopted these dogs are having success with keeping them in their now "domesticated" home settings, there are many factors to consider before making a final decision.

First and foremost, these street dogs are not being specifically bred to be of any use to humans. They are the unintended consequence of Bosnia's civil war in the 1990s. While Bosnians were trying to survive the war, their pets / neighborhood dogs were left to fend for themselves, which has led to generations of feral dogs breeding on the streets. While many of the dogs may have trace remnants of domestic lines in their blood, they are predisposed, by nature, to be wary of strangers, independent of humans, trust only their own pack mates, and SURVIVE.

Three families have since had their Bosnian rescue dog's DNA tested, and all were designated as "European Village Dog." Embark's DNA description:

*"Village dogs often have short stretches of DNA that match purebred dogs, due to a distant common ancestor or a more recent mating between a purebred and a village dog. Village dogs are the free breeding, free roaming "outside" dogs found around the world living in and around human settlements big and small. They are also known as island dogs, pariah dogs, or free-ranging dogs.*

*Many village dog populations precede the formation of modern breed dogs. They make up about three-fourths (3/4) of the billion or so dogs living on Earth today. They serve as trash cleaners, sentinels, and even sometimes companions while still retaining much of their freedom.*

*In a very real sense, European Village Dog is the actual breed of your dog. Village dogs like this descend from separate lines of dogs than the lines that have been bred into standardized breeds like Labradors and Poodles. If you trace your pet's family tree back, you won't find any ancestral dogs that are part of any of those standardized breeds."*

## PREPARING FOR YOUR PET

A veterinarian examines every dog to be cleared for travel from Bosnia. This information is recorded in the dog's passport, as well as on a health certificate (if required for mode of transport).

**BEHAVIOR** – Your dog will be extremely tired so treat them like they have had surgery and let them rest a lot. Do not over stimulate; they will most likely be cranky, scared, etc. They will be on alert for friend or foe, a survival tactic needed in Bosnia (especially the older animals).

**APPEARANCE** – Please keep in mind, although your dog was approved to leave Bosnia and deemed healthy enough to enter a new country, the dog may show signs of malnutrition, have matted hair, and even have an odor. Dogs are bathed prior to departure, but after months of being in a shelter or on the street, it will take multiple baths to rid of the "shelter smell." Also because of poor diet, dogs may have dry skin, scabs, or other visible skin issue. PLEASE NOTE: Any significant skin issues, such as Demodex, are disclosed during initial stages of the adoption process.

**ARRIVAL PROCEDURES** - Your dog's destination country will determine the arrival procedures. If the dog is going to another European country, the dog is transported in accordance with TRACES ([https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/traces\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/traces_en)). Please keep in mind, these animals are evaluated at each border crossing during transport for illness/injury before being cleared to enter each country.

- **U.K.:** Dogs depart Bosnia via a TRACES-approved Bosnian transporter to be driven to the UK. This portion takes about 1-2 days. The U.K. requires a 2-day quarantine for these animals. The dogs must be deemed healthy and cleared before being released to adopters.
- **DENMARK / GERMANY / AUSTRIA:** Your dog will be transported from Bosnia to the respective country. Trip can take 2-4 days, depending on routes – drivers also transport dogs to other countries on same trip.
- **United States:** Your dog will be arriving by plane. The U.S. does not require quarantine if the animal has had either its initial rabies vaccine or booster more than thirty (30) days before arriving in country. Your adoption counselor will provide you with specific airport information as needed, but some general guidelines are:
  - ✓ Bring water, food, towels, cleaning wipes, scissors, leash, collar.
  - ✓ Have driver's license or ID with address that is the same that you provided us for receiver of animal.
  - ✓ It can take anywhere from thirty (30) minutes to two (2) hours for animals to arrive to you from the time the plane land. This is dependent upon if they traveled escorted (with a flight partner) or as cargo.

## THE FIRST FEW DAYS

You may find your dog is still very skittish or scared, even a few days after being with you. This is completely normal. Remember, this dog has just been completely uprooted from everything he/she knows. You will have to establish trust with them by giving them space, patience, and love. The following guidelines have proven successful in acclimating Bosnian dogs to new homes, but are not a guarantee of successful acclimation.

### FEEDING

- Give bland food with a little dry to slowly get them acclimated to the food. A recommended food is 24% protein and grain free. Higher protein in large breeds can stimulate grow too fast that can lead to joint and hip problems (hip dysplasia and long bone disease).
- If diarrhea occurs add the new food slower.
- Rice, ground turkey and chicken, yogurt, baby food chicken, turkey or beef are usually well tolerated.
- Forti flora is a good product that has probiotics found to help with the transition in food and water.
- If diarrhea or lethargic behaviors occur, take to vet immediately!!
- Vitamin C and B complex are highly suggested to aid their immune system

### VETERINARY CARE

All records will be attached to your dog's crate and they will also have a pet passport. These documents are not always accurate as they are prepared by foreigners trying to write and date as Americans do. Use your best estimate for a birthday, and let your vet guide you in any vaccines or deworming as appropriate:

- Dogs will have been dewormed (Drontal) and given flea-tick treatment (Frontline) before departing Bosnia; however, because there may be different variants of parasites, and some fleas are immune to Frontline, we recommend getting a fecal test done and new flea/tick treatment within a few days of arrival.
- Have your vet administer a new rabies shot/booster -- that will provide a rabies tag needed to register the dog in your county.
- Your country / local requirements may require other vaccines. Provide your pet's passport to your vet, and he/she can make determination as to what other vaccines are needed. This list is not all-inclusive, so please consult your vet for any additional requirements.

### IF YOU HAVE OTHER PETS AT HOME:

- When acclimating to existing dogs in your home, take it slow.
- Do not introduce the new dog to existing dogs right away. Keep the new dog separate in a garage or bathroom with food and water and a bed for a day or two. Gradually introduce household pets to the new dog.
- If you have a dog already, make sure your original dog gets a lot of food and praise. Do not

them eat in the same area or get into a fight. It is always best to introduce them in a park near your home first.

## **LIFE WITH A “FORGOTTEN PET”**

The dog you are about to adopt was born and raised in a country that was at war just twenty (20) years ago, and is still recovering. You are most likely going to face some very serious (and maybe expensive) challenges. You are obligated to provide your new dog with not only food, shelter and affection, but patience, consistency, and leadership twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week for the remainder of its life.

You must willing to make changes to your daily schedule and be prepared to hire a professional to guide you through the steps of introducing your Bosnian dog to its new environment and domesticated life. Most people adopting a Bosnian dog have had some experience with owning and even training dogs beforehand, but please note that even some of the most seasoned dog-trainers have found it challenging, not impossible, but challenging to work through some of the behavioral issues presented by Bosnian dogs. Most of the issues are very commonplace and are exhibited in the homes of domestic dogs as well; however the Bosnian dogs have a tendency to be leery of humans and take a while to adjust to domesticated life.

Also take note that most Bosnian dogs do not respond as well to coercive tactics and will require much more patience, consistency and creative training techniques than the average dog.

## **WHERE YOUR DOG COMES FROM**

Forgotten Bosnian pets come from a variety of living situations:

- 1) *From street to shelter/pension:* Most of the dogs we support in rescuing were once living on the street, but have since been rescued and are living in a shelter or pension. These dogs have lived in small confined spaces, such as shelter kennels, and are used to that type of setting. Additionally, these Bosnian dogs have been socialized fairly well, as often time the shelter owners let large groups of dogs out of their kennels into a common fenced area for feeding/playtime. Once they find forever homes, these dogs tend to be “house broken” – not necessarily from training, but because they have been used to going to the bathroom in an outside setting.
- 2) *From street to home/apartment:* Some of our rescue partners have kept smaller dogs inside of their home or apartment. These dogs are the least leery of people, as they have interaction in a home setting. They tend to be inside most of the day if the rescuer goes to their normal job – that being said, these dogs have been the ones that haven’t come to their forever homes “house broken” – they’ve been used to pottying inside, anywhere. Once rehomed, owners have said these dogs have been relatively easy to train, as long they are given time and patience.

- 3) *Straight from the streets*: Forgotten Bosnian dogs who have either been in shelters for only a short time, or came directly from the streets, can become quite destructive if not given proper exercise on a daily basis, especially in the beginning. Very few dogs are adopted directly from the streets – most of them have either been in a shelter or home environment. Tazie, our organization’s namesake, has been the only Bosnian rescue dog rehomed to the USA to have come directly from the streets. She was extremely destructive in the beginning, did not like to be inside at all, and never laid on any dog beds. She has definitely become domesticated now, which only took a few months in the beginning.

## HOW YOUR BOSNIAN DOG MIGHT ACT

The following is a brief list of the most common behavior issues that are associated with Bosnian rescues thus far. This is not an exhaustive list, and your dog may exhibit some, all, or additional behaviors not described in this list.

- **CATS**: Most Bosnian dogs do not have regular interaction with cats -- there are many feral cats in Bosnia; however, they tend to roam through upper levels of buildings rather than on the ground with the dogs. Although we cannot give any real clear indication of how all Bosnian dogs would react to cats in a domestic environment, some have been living inside our rescuer’s home with cats, and get along fine. Cat tolerance can only be determined with relation so a specific dog.
- **DIGGING**: Bosnian street dogs often dig “cooling dens” large enough for them to crawl into. They have also dug under and jumped over fences when left unattended, and have a desire to roam.
- **SKITTISH TENDENCIES**: Many Bosnian dogs have been used to living on the street and either being ignored or abused by humans. Some have been rescued by citizen animal advocates and placed in private shelters, or “pensions,” in less-than-favorable conditions. Often dogs in pensions are shoved in a dirty, small area with up to four (4) other dogs, which can create some strong pack behaviors, but also lend itself to a mistrust of humans. Bosnian dogs have displayed some very skittish behaviors around humans, but once they become used to their new home and routine, adjust very well.
- **DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR**: chewing and sometimes even ingesting random objects, “shredding” – papers, blankets, dog beds, etc.
- **ESCAPING**: Some dogs have learned how to open doors and fences. Some have gone through screens as well. This is due to their street-dog nature, where they are used to roaming free.
- **HIGH PREY DRIVE**: natural drive to “chase” anything that moves- small animals, children running, bicycles.

- **BARKING:** a tendency to jump up and bark at passers-by, other dogs, bikes, etc. or barks constantly to get what it wants or when left alone.
- **HYPER-REACTIVITY/HYPER-SENSITIVITY:** becomes aggressive or fearful around loud noises, fireworks, thunder, motorcycles, airplanes, etc.
- **OVER-PROTECTIVE:** Most Bosnian dogs usually have a tendency to be very affectionate toward their human pack, and have also seemed to accept “new pack members” fairly readily. However, if not given proper training, socialization, and behavior modification early on, like any dog, they may become overprotective and show signs of aggression toward visitors - even children.
- **FOOD AGGRESSION:** Many dogs did not have ample and adequate access to food and water. They may show signs of aggression toward humans and other animals while eating or if they have a bone.
- **RESOURCE GUARDING:** a resource is ANYTHING the dog considers a high value - could be food, water, toys, another dog, personal space or even a person - dog may become reactive or aggressive when someone or something encroaches upon its space when near this resource.

Forgotten Bosnian pets are incredibly intelligent, affectionate, trainable and willing to perform for you, but only if you make it a necessity for them to do so. If you take a chance on a Bosnian rescue dog, you won't be disappointed – we PAWMISE! ☺

## TRAINING RESOURCES

We absolutely recommend corrective techniques with your pet, but encourage owners to wait until the dog's initial fear/anxiety of being in a new place subsides. You certainly want to train them and teach them proper domestic characteristics, but this requires you to have established trust and for the dog to feel comfortable with you.

Below are some references that have been helpful to some Bosnian parents adjust to their new pet:

**FEAR & ANXIETY:** <https://www.cesarsway.com/cesar-millan/cesars-blog/what-to-do-about-a-fearful-dog>

**GUARDING/POSSESSIVE:** <https://www.snowdog.guru/the-jealous-over-protective-and-possessive-husky/>

**GENERAL ADVICE:** Paws Abilities: [www.paws4udogs.wordpress.com](http://www.paws4udogs.wordpress.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY AND UNDERSTAND THE TANZIE PROJECT (TTP) HAS PROVIDED THESE EXPECTATIONS ONLY AS A GUIDE, AND I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I AM AWARE THAT THE DOG I ADOPT MAY DEMONSTRATE BEHAVIORS NOT DESCRIBED IN

THIS DOCUMENT. FURTHER, I AGREE TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS DESCRIBED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

<b>SIGNATURE</b>	
Adopter Name:	Phone:
Email:	Address:
Signature:	Date: