

Kitty wants some #trending treats

Meow! Give cats something yum and fun,
but functional and low cal, too. **BY ARDEN MOORE**



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Never underestimate the spelling prowess of your cat. Or the power of his nose. I'm betting that whenever you say the word, "treat," the ears of your cat perk up, and he may even vocalize a meow that strangely does sound like, "Now, please."

And the feline nose knows that you have grabbed a cat treat even if the two of you are in separate rooms.

Rusty, my orange tabby, is a no-apologies feline foodie who outraces the rest of the cats and dogs in my home when he hears the treat word or detects the aroma emitting from a just-opened treat container.

And, speaking of cat foodies, there is good news for cats who dig treats. In recent years, creating healthy and nutritious treats has been a fast-growing trend among pet food manufacturers. Creativity in the types of ingredients is also on the rise. And, even so-called finicky cats or felines with selective taste buds are begging for the new treats that are available.

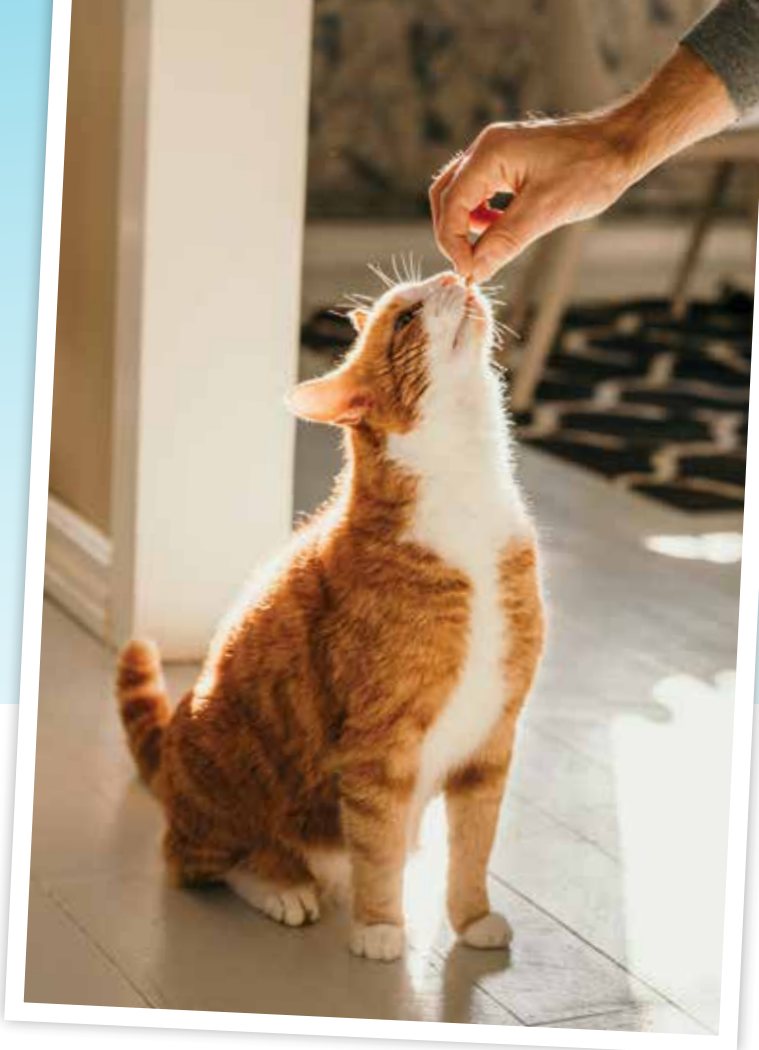
Oh, wow — they're low cal

Dr. Ernie Ward, a leading veterinarian in pet nutrition and founder of the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, recognizes that about 60% of American cats are pudgy or even obese.

"My top food trend for cats is — and always will be — lower calorie foods and treats," says Dr. Ward, author of *The Clean Pet Food Revolution*. "We're beginning to see cat food manufacturers offer lower calorie formulations while maintaining the tastes and textures finicky felines demand."

Putting the fun in functional

Rebecca Rose, a biochemist and founder of InClover, conducted 14 months of palatability testing on three key cat populations — discerning cats, shelter cats and in-home cats — before formulating and launching



a line of feline functional soft chews. They contain such distinctive, healthy ingredients as dandelion leaf, kelp, blueberries and even green tea. Each of the four treat packets focuses on a different mission, ranging from dental health to combating hairballs to aiding nutritional needs of senior cats to improving urinary tract health.

Welcome to the new age of functional feline treats. The trending ingredients showing up in cat treats include:

- ❖ **Coconut** for improving digestion and helping promote a healthy coat and skin.
- ❖ **Honey** for its anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal properties.
- ❖ **Turmeric** for aiding in allergy relief, digestion and inflammation.
- ❖ **Dandelion root**, which is rich in vitamins and iron, to help with urinary and liver function in cats.





What makes kitty come running?

So, what's a new type of treat that your cat goes cray-cray for? *Catster* reached out to cat parents on Facebook. Here is a sampling of their cats' treat preferences:

Peggy Miller-Stephens, a professional cat sitter from Oak Harbor, Washington, says, "My kitties, Joey and Madison, are super picky, but they are addicted to (Friskies) Lil Soups and Inaba Churu (Lickable Cat Treats). Lil Soups are mostly liquid, and the Inaba Churu is like a paste. Their favorites are seafood flavors."

Melanie Simmons is a fan of Pure Bites freeze-dried treats for her cat who is diabetic. "I can't give any treats that are carb-heavy, so I give Pure Bites. I also have whole minnows that all three of my cats love."

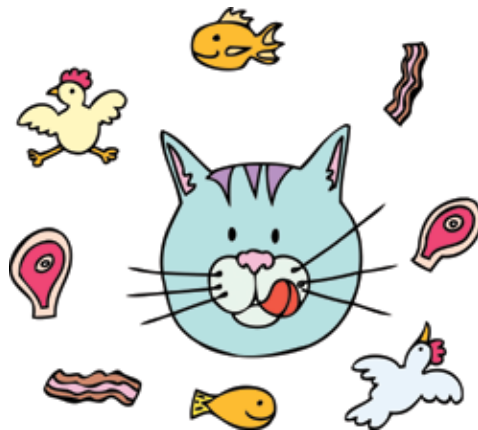
Tracy Bennett is a professional pet sitter who says the Inaba Churu lickable treats are the perfect treat option to give her cats, Bubba and Ollie,

before they need to take medications. "Bubba takes fluoxetine, and Ollie is on clomipramine. I'm buying the tuna and chicken flavors for them."

Julia Newton of Dallas scrutinizes the ingredients on food and treat labels for her senior cat, Mikey, who is 15. "Since I started giving him Sleek and Flow (treats made by InClover), he has had fewer hairballs and he has no issues using the litter box. Both contain prebiotics as well."

Sharon Melnyk, a pet author in Berkeley, California, relies on giving Morrchik, her 7-year-old cat, Vital Essentials freeze-

dried Rabbit Bites twice a day before he gets his needed insulin for controlling his diabetes. "As a diabetic cat with a history of pancreatitis, this high-protein treat containing rabbit suits him."



Satiety Feline Treats
Less than 1 calorie per treat, perfect for overweight cats. High protein content. \$6.99. Royalcanin.com



Wholly Fish+
Digestive Health Chicken-free treats, salmon or tuna recipe. Includes ginger root and turmeric to support digestion and reduce inflammation. 2 calories each. \$5.15. Emeraldpet.com



Inaba Churu Lickable Cat Treats
No grains, rich in moisture, includes Vitamin E and green tea extract. 6 calories per tube. \$49.99/50 tubes. Chewy.com



Sleek
Supports skin and coat; helps with hairballs; includes menhaden fish oil, biotin and coconut. 3 calories per treat. \$7.49.2.1-oz bag. InClover.com



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Homemade still makes the grade

Colorado holistic veterinarian Dr. Jean Hofve notes that two at-home ingredients win purrs among some cats: chopped-up anchovies and scrambled egg yolks. She says that anchovies are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins. Scrambled egg yolks are packed with a key amino acid known as taurine that cats need. (Added bonus: Eggs are free of any carbohydrates).

“Just make sure not to add any salt or other seasoning to your cat’s scrambled eggs, and do it occasionally as a special treat,” she adds.

New age of treats

Dr. Joseph Wakshlag, DVM, PhD, Professor, Sections of Clinical Nutrition and Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation at Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine in New York, says it has never

been a better time to be a cat when it comes to treats.

“Pet food companies are realizing that they need to continually improve their products, evolve or lose their loyal customer base,” he says.

Worried kitty might turn up her nose if you offer her a treat that’s not only good for her but low cal? Rebecca says, “When cats are comfortable, well-socialized and happy, they are more apt to try new foods and treats.” 🐾



Arden Moore is a pet behavior consultant, author and master pet first-aid instructor who often teaches hands-on classes with her cool cat, Casey, and very tolerant dog, Kona. Each week, she hosts the *Oh Behave Show* on Pet Life Radio. Learn more at ardenmoore.com and follow Arden on Facebook and on Instagram at [@ArdenKnowsPets](https://www.instagram.com/ArdenKnowsPets).



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