

What is Possible?

A Look at Breeds, Colors and Patterns

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There are two considerations when determining whether a color can be found in a breed. Breeds are limited both by the color genes present (what is possible) and by any restrictions placed by the registry (what is permissible). The Tennessee Walking Horse registry, for example, does not restrict the colors for that breed. In theory, a Tennessee Walking Horse could be "any color". In practice, the breed does have some restrictions because there are some colors not present in the gene pool. The breed is limited by what is *possible*. In contrast, it is quite possible for a breeder to get a loud splash overo Appaloosa; the genes are there. However, the horse could not be registered under Appaloosa Horse Club rules. In this case, the breed is limited by what is *permissible*.

The charts presented here focus on what is possible within each breed. Present color restrictions have been noted, but it should be remembered that the changing climate regarding horse color has led many registries to question such rules. Some have relaxed or even eliminated restrictions, while other have more clearly defined or even instituted new restrictions. Permissible colors, therefore, can and do change. (Recent changes on the charts are in red.)

Finally, for the sake of consistency and clarity, the charts classify colors based on currently accepted genetic nomenclature rather than terms used by each registry.

{Note: For those breeds that do allow specific outcrossing, those colors listed include what is possible based on the genes present in "legal" outcrosses.]

Categories

Definitive: When all registered horses are a color or that color is considered a defining point of the breed, it is listed as Definitive.

Common: These are the colors most closely associated with the breed, and could be considered most typical of the breed.

Present: These are colors that are found within the breed, but may not be as frequently seen, or may only be found in specific bloodlines or breeding groups.

Rare: Rare colors are those considered extremely unusual for the breed, but that have been confirmed as present.

Suspected: When evidence suggests that the color may be found within the breed, but no solid proof has been found, it is noted as Suspected.

Not Present: Colors not thought to exist in the breeding population are listed as Not Present.

Prohibited: This indicates that the color is specifically barred from either registration or consideration in the show ring. Unless noted, this refers to the breed as it exists in the United States. Foreign registries may have different rules.

Restricted: This generally refers to those patterns of white that are found in the breed, but are restricted in some way by the registry. In some cases, this might mean that there are gender restrictions, or that only minimally marked individuals can be registered while more obviously patterned horses are denied papers.

Extinct: Extinct colors are those known to have once occurred in the breeding population, but are thought to no longer exist.

Unknown: When information is not available to prove or disprove the existence of a color in the breed, it is listed as Unknown. (This does not mean the color is unknown in the breed - only that this author does not have definitive information.)

Base Colors

The building blocks of horse color are the base colors: chestnut, black and bay. Whatever other colors and patterns are present on any given horse, he will also be one of these three colors. If one of those colors is missing in the breed, then all the colors that are built from that base will

Breed	Chestnut	Black	Bay	Modified
Arabian	Common	Present	Common	Sometimes
Akhal-Teke	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
American Cream Draft	Definitive	Not Present	Not Present	Always
Appaloosa	Common	Common	Common	Always
Andalusian/Lusitano	Rare	Common	Common	Usually
Bashkir Curly	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Belgian (American)	Common	Rare	Rare	Sometimes
Belgian (Brabant)	Present	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Caspian	Common	Present	Common	Sometimes
Clydesdale	Rare	Common	Common	Always
Criollo	Common	Common	Common	Usually
Cleveland Bay	Rare - Prohibited	Not Present	Definitive	Never
Dales	Not Present	Common	Common	Rarely
Dartmoor	Rare	Common	Common	Rarely
Connemara	Rare	Common	Common	Usually
Exmoor	Not Present	Not Present	Definitive	Never
Fell	Prohibited	Common	Present	Rarely
Friesian	Rare - Prohibited	Definitive	Not Present	Prohibited
Haflinger	Definitive	Not Present	Not Present	Never
Hackney	Present	Common	Common	Sometimes
Highland Pony	Rare	Common	Common	Usually
Icelandic	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Lipizzan	Extinct	Common	Common	Usually
Miniature Horse	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
MFT	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Morgan	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Mountain Pleasure	Common	Common	Present	Usually
Noriker	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Norwegian Fjord	Present	Rare	Common	Always
Paint	Common	Common	Common	Always
Paso Fino	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Percheron	Rare	Common	Unknown	Sometimes
Peruvian Paso	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Quarter Horse	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Rocky Mountain	Common	Common	Present	Usually
Saddlebred	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Shagya	Present	Present	Common	Sometimes
Shetland (American)	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Shetland (British)	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Suffolk	Definitive	Not Present	Not Present	Never
Shire	Rare	Common	Common	Sometimes
Standardbred	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Tarpan	Not Present	Definitive	Not Present	Always
Tennessee Walker	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Thoroughbred	Common	Present	Common	Sometimes
Welsh Mountain Pony	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Welsh Pony	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes
Welsh Cob	Common	Common	Common	Sometimes

Chart 1 - Base colors found in popular breeds.