

Frequently Asked Questions About Vegetarianism

Q. Other animals eat each other. Why can't we eat them?

A. Predators in the wild kill other animals out of necessity. Without doing so, they wouldn't survive. On the other hand, we kill other animals by choice. Our bodies don't need meat at all. In fact, it has been consistently shown that a low-fat vegetarian diet is healthier than a diet heavy with animal products.

Eating animals is not necessary for our survival. Rather, it is a matter of ethics: **Is it acceptable to inflict suffering on countless animals for something that isn't even necessary?**

Q. If you want to be vegetarian, that's fine. But, don't tell me what to do.

A. Imagine saying to someone, "If you don't want to beat your dog, that's fine. But, don't tell me not to beat mine." While we are entitled to believe what we like, we are not entitled to treat others—especially those weaker than we—however we like. **If we are responsible for harming others, people have every right to ask that we stop.**

Q. If the animals are raised to be eaten, isn't that okay?

A. Two hundred years ago in the United States, humans raised other humans to be slaves. The fact that these people were raised to be slaves did not justify their slavery. Similarly, raising animals for the purpose of eating them does not justify their exploitation.

Q. It's impossible to live completely cruelty-free. Almost everything we do causes someone suffering. Why try at all?

A. True, it is impossible to completely avoid causing any suffering in our lives. However, that doesn't justify an "open season" for flagrant animal abuse. **By adopting a vegetarian diet, we can drastically reduce the amount of suffering we cause in our daily lives.**

Being vegetarian isn't about being "pure." It is about doing what we can—within reason—to remove our support for animal cruelty.

Q. Where do you draw the line? Insects? Plants? Bacteria?

A. There are some animals (such as insects) who we are not certain are capable of suffering. It is up to each individual to decide where she or he feels the line should be drawn exactly. **However, all of the animals we raise and kill for food are able to feel pain.** Because of this, they deserve to be free from misery just as much as dogs and cats do.

Also, because of their lack of a central nervous system, brain, pain receptors, and so on, it is certain that plants and bacteria do not suffer.

Q. Humans are the smartest animals and we're the "top of the food chain." Why shouldn't we use our strength to our benefit?

A. The argument that "might makes right" has been used by many to justify countless forms of cruelty and domination throughout history. **Just because we're able to be cruel and violent doesn't mean that we ought to be.**