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Here, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty

Is it legal to eat your cat?

By Brian Palmer

Posted Thursday, Aug. 12, 2010, at 5:32 PM ET



Is it legal to eat your cat?

When police in Western New York pulled over Gary Korkuc for blowing off a stop sign on Sunday, they found a live cat in his trunk, covered in cooking oil, peppers, and salt. Korkuc told authorities that his pet feline was "possessive, greedy, and wasteful" and that he intended to cook and eat it. Korkuc has been charged with animal cruelty. Is there a legal way to cook and eat a cat?

Maybe in some places, but not New York. Few states have specific laws barring the use of pets for food. The ones that do typically ban the

slaughter or sale of dog and cat meat. The state of New York expressly prohibits "any person to slaughter or butcher domesticated dog (canis familiaris) or domesticated cat (felis catus or domesticus) to create food, meat or meat products for human or animal consumption." It's not clear whether the eating itself is outlawed or only the butchery. If you managed to buy dog or cat flesh from someone else who broke the anti-slaughter law, you might be OK. The law also doesn't cover ferrets, gerbils, parakeets, or other less familiar pet species. (Although the general anti-cruelty law might protect exotics.)

California's anti-pet-eating law has a broader reach. It bars possession of the carcass, so having bought your cat steaks from someone else wouldn't be a useful alibi. The California law also protects "any animal traditionally or commonly kept as a pet or companion," rather than just Fido and Fluffy. The statute is somewhat untested, though, so no one really knows which animals are included. Pigs are not, even though they are commonly kept as pets, because they are farm animals. Horses are specifically covered by a different section of the code. There's no precedent on iguanas, goldfish, or boa constrictors.

In most of the country, the legality of pet-eating would come down to the specific language of the general animal cruelty statute and how a judge interpreted it. Some states, such as Virginia, bar the unnecessary killing of an animal, with a specific exemption for "farming activities." In those places, it's very likely that killing a cat for dinner would get you in trouble, because the killing wouldn't be necessary, and cats aren't commonly associated with farming.

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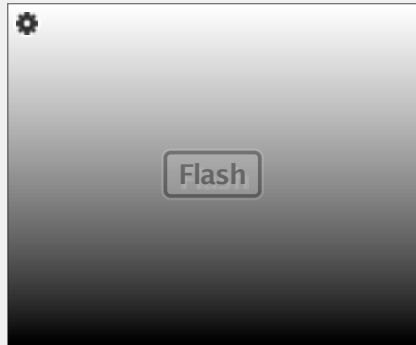
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On the other end of the spectrum are states like Missouri, where very few restrictions are placed on when, why, and how an owner can kill his pet. In these areas, it would be difficult to lock up a cat-eater, unless his chosen means of slaughter were particularly inhumane.

Authorities won't have any trouble prosecuting Korkuc, the Western New Yorker who was marinating his cat in the trunk. Whether or not he really intended to eat his feline, keeping a companion animal in a motor vehicle without proper ventilation is illegal.

Rubbing the cat with chili-infused oil, while not specifically addressed, is also a violation of the state's general cruelty law, which prohibits



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farmer is allowed to do to his cattle. *Dahlia Lithwick reviewed the Supreme Court's recent animal cruelty decision. Christopher Beam mocked Glenn Beck's fear of animals having their own lawyers one day.*

torture. Worldwide, cat and dog meat seem to be at a crossroads. China pulled dog meat off the market for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and is considering a law barring it permanently. South Korea, on the other hand, has inched toward explicitly legalizing

the widespread and officially tolerated dog-meat trade.

Got a question about today's news? [Ask the Explainer.](#)

Explainer thanks *Debora Bresch of the ASPCA, David Favre of Michigan State University College of Law, Adam Parascandola of the Humane Society of the United States, and David Wolfson of Columbia University.*

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Brian Palmer is a freelance writer living in New York City. He can be reached at explainerbrian@gmail.com.

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viv I think we should simplify things a bit: if a cat tries to bite a man, he would be allowed to harm it to defend himself. It's only fair that if the man attempts to bite the dog, the same rights should be afforded to the cat.

Sorry, but it's a two-way street - if you're allowed to injure them with no recourse, they should be allowed to injure you with no recourse. In most cases, I bet the animal's patience runs out in dealing with a stupid human. Note how patient most animals are with young children.



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viv

Sorry that should read:

" It's only fair that if the man attempts to bite the cat, the same rights should be afforded to the cat."

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Scott

This nut says his cat was "possessive, greedy, and wasteful". Yep, and proud of it too! Dude, did you know what a cat was before you got one?

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Alex Kim

I wonder where rabbits and guinea pigs would fall under these laws...

You know those domesticated European rabbit breeds like the lop, the angora, the dutch, the lionhead? They were bred specifically for their meat and fur. Now, I would much rather have a rabbit as a companion than for dinner, but people have eaten them for centuries, if not millenia; a farmer would often do the deed by smothering the rabbit with his own hand while the rabbit emits a horrific shriek.

Likewise, guinea pigs were domesticated more than a thousand years ago in the Andes for their meat. For centuries, they were an important food source who converted vegetable scraps into protein.

Also, in their native regions, medicine and divination has often involved splitting a live guinea pig in two and studying the entrails. Black-furred piggies are preferred.

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Andrew Power

Kit-kat. Hot dog.

We're slowly being prepared for the The Road.....

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Michael Ratcliff

I would like to eat a smurf.

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Liked by Nasochkas viv



Molly Knudsen

All animals qualify as a potential food source, be it by other animals or scavengers. The only difference between them and humans is that humans appear to have distinctions between "food" and "useful creature" honestly....if it tastes good, let people eat it. Though it is rather rude for a human to buy a pet and season the poor creature while it is alive.....

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Andrea Norman

Just a note to the author and editor:

When writing scientific names, the genus name is capitalized and both the genus and species names are italicized.

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GG1000

I wouldn't care to eat a cat because the flesh of carnivores is usually unpleasant but it's stupid that you can kill and eat a pig but not a cat. Cats and dogs have no more inherent value than pigs and cows – it just depends on your culture. Some cultures value cattle as sacred and won't eat them, and some people find dog a natural food. We should either give up eating animals altogether or accept that people can kill and eat animals if they care to.

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Hřišnik

We share a common (relatively recent–10,000 years or so) evolutionary and important bond with dogs. Eating a dog is foul unless necessary for survival, like eating a human for survival. The cat is similar even though they are a bit aloof. We domesticated these critters as pets and companions, not a food source.

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
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
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 **GG1000**
 Who's "we"? Some people of Asian culture would argue that their people domesticated dogs as a food source – so what's the big deal? It depends on your cultural point of view.
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






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 **GG1000**
 Sorry still don't agree. Being able to understand the "pointing" command is not to me any type of determining line as to an animal's value. You are arguing culture and making my point for me – humans determine what animals are of what value to them based on relatively meaningless, subjective criteria that often involve a big dose of anthropomorphism.


 Dogs are pigs are actually quite similar and have similar intelligence levels. They have adapted to humans differently because of the different roles we have assigned them, that's all. Objectively, if you're willing to eat a pig, you should be willing to eat a dog (leaving taste of the meat out of it – I suspect dogs taste disgusting).
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

 **Leslie B**
 I absolutely agree--and that's why I became a vegetarian!
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 **Jesus R Torres**
 I want to ASK this..... person; why they don't marinate his Mother an eat it.....?
 Is only Curiosity.....
 Thanks
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
 **Marc Rohde**
 This guy must be crazy! Who ever herd of trying to marinate a cut of meat though its fur? The flavor will never get into the cat that way!
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 Liked by  Tracy Chabala  Charlie Long  Hříšník  John smith  funpaul
 Michael Ratcliff  James Baugh

 **mark**
 I should clarify something. My Filipino friends do not eat there pet dogs.They go to someone who raises dogs for meat.
 Yesterday, 10:43:14 AM GMT+09:00 – [Flag](#) – [Reply](#)

 **mark**
 Filipinos eat dog and yes they eat it in the U.S.A. the closest thing I have come to eating dog was at a Chili cook off where a contestant was using coyote meat in his chili and yes it was good. In the 1940s in Yuma Arizona there was a taco stand that an older gentleman ran. His tacos were very popular with the locals. When the owner of the stand passed away they tore down his stand and guess what the found under the stands floor boards ?? If you guessed cat skins you are right.People that would lose cats in the area just figured someone found or some coyote ate there beloved kitty. Oh yeah I belong to PETA {PEOPLE EATING TASTY ANIMALS}
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 **magda santoyo**
 why should it be legal to eat animals like cows, fish or pigs and not legal to eat cats or dogs e.t.c it should be illegal to eat any animals....
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 **A Berlin Vegen**
 I agree! People are so hypocritical. And to think some people wear fur that was really mislabeled dog or cat fur.
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 **Molly Knudsen**
 the people who dislike eating meat are entitled to their own opinion, I however, am a hunter. I am not wasteful at least, and every part of those I kill is used, including bones.
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 **Violet Pucsek**



Jerry, your post has too much information, but it is sort of weird, funny. Shouldn't anyone who is marinading cats be taken in as crazy person? I couldn't help myself and came over to this article. I love cats and the thought of eating them is totally repugnant.

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Liked by Ashley Sabra Yaghoubian



Jerry

I was against it until something happened to me this morning. I left the house with my work clothes under my arm this morning because Mary was freaking out, and James and I couldn't take it anymore. Only problem was I had go No. 2. I dropped James off at his school and drive to a restaurant and dropped my deuce. There was no toilet paper -- only napkins.

Then, I got to work and changed my clothes in my car. I forgot a tie, though. I thought I might get away with it but was called into a meeting so I had to run to the drug store to get a tie -- one of those weird-old man-skid row-polyesther ties. I was running late, and the woman in front of me at the cash register was going too slow to pick up her bags and let me pay for my tie. I said, "Jesus Christ" too loud and she gave me a nasty look. I put on the tie on my way to the meeting. No one noticed.

I figure after that I should try to eat a cat.

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Anja Folss

The creature that causes the most environment problem is the human. Why do most people think that our life is more worth than the tiniest cell on earth? Just because we appearantly are the most intelligent beings on earth doesnt mean we have to torture other mammals, birds, fishes and so on. We're all the same. To put it simple: We ARE destroying nature. If we don't do something, then one day, all the prettz things we were able to see out there will be gone. Vanish. Dissappear. POOF... Just like that..

But, whatever, in the end, Nature ALWAYS wins.. and there is absolutely NOTHING we can do about it.

It IS true that there are too many stray cats and dogs and that they are spreading constantly this instant as we type, but i think every female & male on this planet should atleast expirience the "joy" of bonding.

heard from biologie teacher & then thought everything through :D

PS: i myself cannot say i'm perfect (nobody is :D) since my dad never let our female dog bond.

PS2: I might be a nature freak, but im still not less worth or more worth than all of you other people out there..

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Liked by Anja Folss



Gabriella

cats are not good to eat.. they carry to many diseases .. especially cancer thats why in china theres so many people with cancer.

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Robert Davison

Yes, I'm sure that's why there is so much cancer in China.....

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Liked by ilovejersey magda santoyo Nasochkas



Robert Davison

I was being sarcastic in case anyone wonders

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John smith

This made my day... Also eating cats caused the Haiti earthquake. (Totally true guys, cause my professor said so.)

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David P Levine

Please note that many cancers are associated with viral infections. In addition, a parasite that humans can get from cats causes mental problems– see the article 'Crazy cat lady'.

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Cindy Koepfer



People should take responsibility and get ALL cats neutered or spayed before any litters are born. So many people put the blame on cats and dogs because there are so many in our world, BUT the fault lays with PEOPLE. If there are feral cats around your neighborhood, rent a live trap and take them to a spay & neuter clinic and get them fixed. Do you people think these females enjoy constantly having babies & having to take care of them when there is not enough food for them. FARMERS are to blame for all the cats out on there property and for miles around. To CHEAP to get the cats fixed instead they hurt and kill them. Everyone that hurts and kills animals should have to pay. I think the LAW should be in all countries _____AN EYE FOR AN EYE>>>>

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Anja Folss

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PS: i myself cannot say i'm perfect (nobody is :D) since my dad never let our female dog bond.

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Liked by Anja Folss



Double Prime

Anja, you do know that male cats' penises are covered in barbs which cause pain to the female, right? I mean, if you're into that, that's fine, whatever, do what you want, but please don't force it on the animals.

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Lucy

Magda, cats and dogs don't know or care which body parts they have, and I'm sure if they could choose they would rather undergo a simple operation than be homeless or put to death in a shelter. People like you are the reason we have pet overpopulation.

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John smith

Its true! I have a cat named Stumpy, well did :\ sadly he passed, aaanyhoo he got around just fine and dandy with three legs and no nuts. For pets to live truly free is just stupid, feral cats and dogs do not live long at all. Why a feral cat's average lifespan is what, two maybe three years? While a house can can live up to 24 years old, happily with a belly.

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Jed Rothwell

Palmer wrote: "cats aren't commonly associated with farming."

Yes, they are. Many farmers depend on cats to reduce rats and other vermin in barns.

Feral cats can be a nuisance to farmers. They kill chickens. I knew a Japanese farmer who shot and drowned several of them. That's legal in Japan. I don't know about in the U.S. but it would be crazy to object. As JD points out, feral cats cause other environmental problems. In cities, they are reduced by capture and killing and by putting out catfood laced with RD-486 abortifacient.

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A Berlin Vegen

That's why people should spay and neuter their pets, or look for a place that does it for free.

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Sheilah Kring

I was thinking the same thing when I read it. I don't know of a farm that doesn't have like 20 cats.

Also happy to see that other people bring up the same crazy things I thought when I read the story. Like... regardless of whether it's illegal to kill the cat, he could get arrested for torture for having peppers in the marinade, and the whole idea that it's kind of stupid to try and put something in a marinade over the fur and all, since it wouldn't actually do anything.

This story kind of makes me happy I'm a vegetarian with a dark sense of humor.

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Steve Poddy

Are you sure Sarah Palin don't eat pets?
She hate wolves,that are just wild dogs....

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John smith

No she just eats lost and stolen children. And wolves aren't dogs, they are the base of building a dog... Its a bigdamndog >.>

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