

Objection to Foie Gras

At Hurley's restaurant in Portland, Oregon, there's one thing you won't find on the menu: Pate de Foie Gras. In case you're wondering, that's a sort of liver puree, usually from ducks or **geese**¹. Oh, they've got it. But you'll have to have a private word with the waiter and you might want to whisper. Hurley's, like a number of restaurants around the country, has gone into **stealth**² mode when it comes to this gourmet treat.

The reason: pressure from animal rights groups who say the techniques used to produce foie gras are a "cruel and unnecessary practice." They're correct.

Foie gras is created by force-feeding grain to water**fowl**³ in order to unnaturally enlarge their livers. Afficionados say they're simply taking advantage of a duck's natural ability to store fat. Last time I checked, there was no natural tendency on the part of ducks to **shove**⁴ stainless steel tubes down their throats and pump in huge amounts of half-cooked corn. That's how foie gras is made.

Now, I'm not a **vegetarian**⁵, mind you. It's just that I have this funny objection to torturing small animals no matter how **scrumptious**⁶ their body parts might be.

And it's not just ducks and geese, is it? Our food industries are equal opportunity abusers: cows, chickens, pigs, and a special mention to those little **calves**⁷ who for their short, miserable lives are locked into **crates**⁸ too small to allow movement just so we can eat veal.

Our mistreatment of these creatures is no reflection on their intrinsic worth, but it does reflect the state of our humanity. The picture is, to say the least, unattractive.

I know we're carnivores. Things die so that we can live. But simple decency requires that, whenever possible, we minimize the suffering of the beings under our control.

I've tasted foie gras. Yes, it's quite good. But not good enough to justify abusing animals.

I won't harangue you anymore - I know this subject makes folks uncomfortable. But here's a suggestion: next time you tuck into your foie gras and marvel at how rich and delicious it is, take a look in the mirror and remind yourself how it got that way.

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Direct link : <http://www.animalsvoice.com/PAGES/writes/intros/ducks.html>



VOCABULARY

1. a **goose/geese** : une oie.
2. **stealth** : to do something quietly and carefully so that no one will notice what you are doing.
3. A **fowl** is a bird.
4. **to shove** : to push something somewhere quickly and carelessly.
5. a **vegetarian** : someone who does not eat meat or fish.
6. **scrumptious** : that tastes extremely good.
7. a **calf/calves** : young cow.
8. a **crate** : large box used for transporting or storing things.

QUOTATIONS FOR FURTHER DEBATE

« **The question is not, « Can they reason ? » nor, « Can they talk ? » but rather, « Can they suffer ? »**

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), was an English gentleman, jurist, philosopher, and legal and social reformer. He is best known as an early advocate of individual and economic freedom, including the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, animal rights, the end of slavery, the abolition of physical punishment (including that of children), the right to divorce, free trade, and no restrictions on interest. He supported inheritance tax, restrictions on monopoly power, pensions, and health insurance.

“In a contemporary agricultural context, the role and value of animals are defined in terms of their economic efficiency and productivity (and the prices for their products). In this valuational context, animal welfare (and its study) is restricted to what has an effect on production and price.”

Bernard E. Rollin, Professor of Physiology, Philosophy and Biophysics at Colorado State University, in his book, *Farm Animal Welfare: Social, Bioethical, and Research Issues*.

“Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight.”

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), German theologian, musician, philosopher, and physician. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.

“It doesn’t bother me. We’re no different from any other business. These animal rights people like to accuse us of mistreating our stock, but we believe we can be most efficient by not being emotional. We are a business, not a humane society, and our job is to sell merchandise at a profit. It’s no different from selling paper-clips or refrigerators.”

Henry Pace, owner of a livestock auction yard.

“The thinking [person] must oppose all cruel customs no matter how deeply rooted in tradition and surrounded by a halo. When we have a choice, we must avoid bringing torment and injury into the life of another...”

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), German theologian, musician, philosopher, and physician. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.