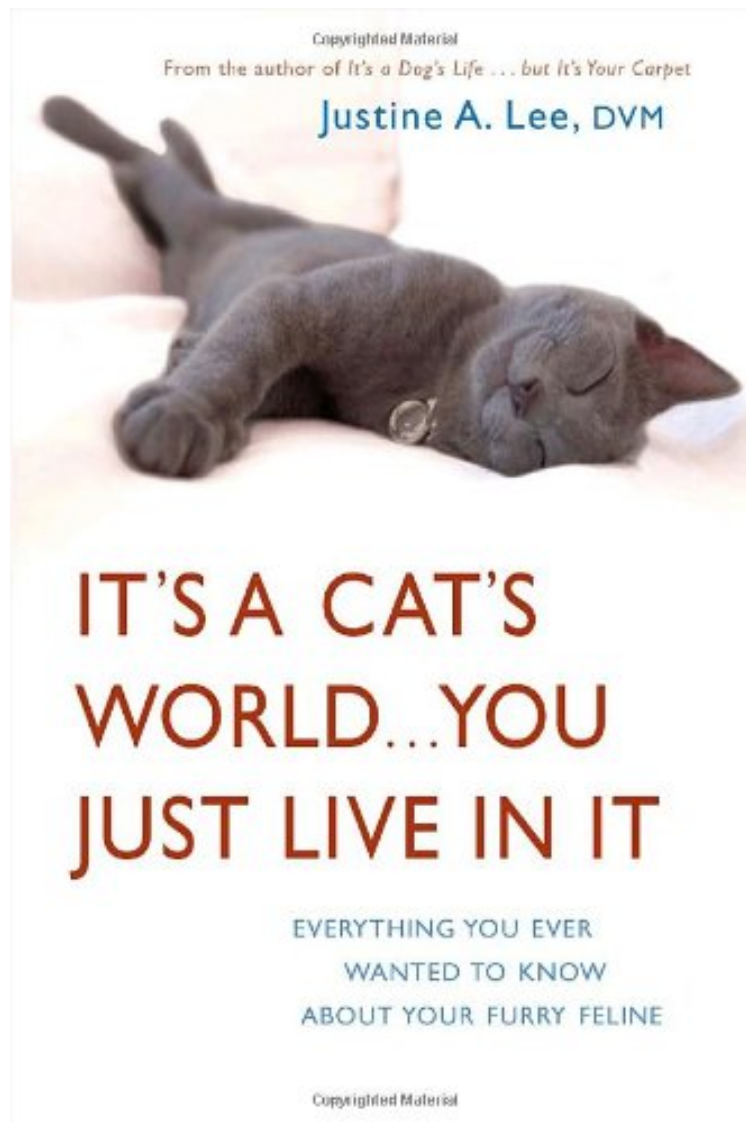


(Mobile ebook) It's a Cat's World . . . You Just Live in It: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Furry Feline

## It's a Cat's World . . . You Just Live in It: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Furry Feline

*Justine Lee*

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**Justine Lee : It's a Cat's World . . . You Just Live in It: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Furry Feline** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised It's a Cat's World . . . You Just Live in It: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Furry Feline:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It's a Cat's WorldBy Patricia W. BarnesI got this book after I had

gotten my very first pet - a Burmese cat. The book was wonderful. Good information and lots of humor. I especially liked the section on How to Pill a Cat. It had me laughing so hard and my eyes were tearing so much that I kept having to stop reading. When my cat need some medication and the vet suggested a pill, I said NO!! and opted for eye drops instead. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book! By Customer I love this book. It is very entertaining and informative. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fun and informative By Sam Dr. Lee's book was humorous, informative, and incredibly fun to read. There is something in there for everyone. The question/answer format makes it very easy to pick it up and look for something specific, but it's also incredibly easy to read it cover to cover (even if that's not your original intent). I highly recommend this book to anyone (even those without cats) as you will surely learn something interesting and have fun doing it.

Finally, the truth about cats is out of the bag! If cat lovers are from Venus, then cats hail from another planet altogether. Mischievous and aloof one moment, affectionate the next, the cat is a confounding creature right down to its question mark of a tail. What cat owner hasn't wondered what goes on inside that mysterious kitty brain? In this companion to *It's a Dog's Life . . . but It's Your Carpet*, veterinary specialist Dr. Justine A. Lee answers your questions about all things feline in this entertaining and enlightening guide. An animal lover with two cats of her own, Dr. Lee combines scientific research with irreverent humor to address questions ranging from the common to the offbeat, including:

- Do cats always land on their feet?
- Can I train my cat to use the toilet?
- Do cats have belly buttons?
- How do I stop my cat from begging for food at 5:45 a.m.?
- Can cats really predict death or cancer?
- How can I make my antisocial cat more social?

Dr. Lee also shares helpful hints on what to look for in a veterinarian. (Helpful Hint No. 1: Find a veterinarian who owns a cat.) She also reveals what every veterinarian wants you to know about being a smart consumer and pet owner. With tips on dealing with kitty's more irksome behaviors (yes, she has some), advice on looking out for her health and well-being, and plenty of laughs, *It's a Cat's World . . . You Just Live in It* helps cat owners love and understand their quirky feline companions more than ever.

About the Author JUSTINE A. LEE, DVM, DACVECC, is an emergency and critical care veterinary specialist and is the associate director of veterinary services for Pet Poison Helpline. She is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care (DACVECC). The author of *It's a Dog's Life . . . but It's Your Carpet: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Your Four-Legged Friend*, she is one of 240 board-certified specialists in emergency and critical care worldwide. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1: CATS RULE AND DOGS DROOL Cats are not small dogs, and any cat owner will kindly tell you that cats rule and dogs drool. At last count, there were 76 million cat owners compared to a measly 68 million dog owners in America, and for good reason. For all you apartment dwellers, cats are convenient--they don't take up a lot of room, they greet you and love you when you come home to that empty studio, they're lower maintenance, you can leave food out for them when you leave for the weekend, you don't have to walk them outside, and most important, they don't drool! This chapter will guide the novice to experienced cat owner through the idiosyncrasies of owning these independent, aloof, but lovable creatures. Never owned a cat before? Don't get one without reading this chapter first, so you know all their lovable feline flaws. (Yes, they do indeed have a few, but don't we all?) On the other hand, maybe you've owned several cats for years, but still aren't sure why they do the crazy things they do. Find out exactly why your cat hisses, purrs, farts, and pukes. Get the answers to your perplexing questions on why cats are, plainly, just cats. As a veterinarian, I obviously love both dogs and cats. But you'd be surprised--there are veterinarians out there that prefer just one species! If you take your kitty to an all-cat veterinary hospital, you can safely bet that your veterinarian prefers cats over dogs. My best friend, whom I love dearly (and want to be reincarnated as her next dog since she spoils them rotten), happens to be a veterinarian who dislikes cats. Don't get me wrong--she'll pet them and cuddle with them, but she just doesn't want to own one (or more specifically, she doesn't want to deal with a kitty litter box). So choose your veterinarian carefully (hint: you want a well-balanced one who loves both dogs and cats if you happen to have multiple pair of four-legged friends at home). Personally, I spend more time with dogs because I like to romp around outdoors in the mud, but I still own and love cats. In fact, I've realized nothing is more stress relieving than coming home after a long day at work to relax on the sofa draped in cat. My first official pet (as an adult) was a cat. I adopted Seamus, a gray and white male tabby, during my internship at Angell Memorial Animal Hospital in Boston. Seamus, a four-week-old kitten at that time, was brought into the ER after being "accidentally" stepped on. He was severely comatose, blind, and partially paralyzed, but after treating him for head trauma and brain swelling, he quickly improved a few days later. I was concerned that this was either a really unfortunate accident or a potential cat abuse case. While I'm grateful the original owners were humane enough to bring him in, they never came back to pick him up (guess they didn't want to pay their \$273 bill), so I ended up adopting him. I like to think that Seamus has found a much better home since. I became his lucky new owner, and he became my "first feline love" from the whole experience. One of the reasons I adopted Seamus (besides his vulnerable, adorable, and helpless state) was because I had never had a full-fledged pet. He was going to be my first "trial" pet, and as a freshly graduated veterinarian, I wanted to make sure that I truly could be a good animal owner too! Don't get me wrong--I had lots of cats and dogs

growing up, but I had never, up to that point in my midtwenties, owned a pet as a "grown-up" (in other words, as a financially, mentally, and emotionally responsible adult, caring for another living creature). As a veterinarian, I purposely thought it was time to adopt a cat so I could understand the idiosyncrasies of cat ownership. I didn't know anything about the day-to-day life with a cat (aside from what I learned in veterinary school). I wanted to know about litter boxes, clay versus clumping options, behavioral problems, and general husbandry of cats (which doesn't mean that your husband takes care of them). Since then, Seamus has grown on me like white on rice. As an "only child" (I can handle only so much responsibility at once, folks!), Seamus was very attached to me--in other words, he slept on my head. We had some feline housemates during my residency, so he had some kitty friends, but he lost his "only child" status shortly thereafter when I rescued JP, an eight-week-old pit bull. JP, named after Jamaica Plain, an up-and-coming (i.e., ghetto) area of Boston, was abandoned at the hospital with parvovirus. Apparently his owners couldn't afford to treat him either and surrendered him for lifesaving care. As a result, I became the lucky owner of yet another wonderful pet. JP and Seamus were instant brothers; they slept together, wrestled together, and romped around chasing each other. Once JP grew out of his puppy stage (i.e., grew to be fifty pounds), Seamus found that wrestling wasn't quite what it used to be. Thankfully, Seamus was appeased a few years later with a more feasibly sized feline friend when I adopted Echo, an all-black, juvenile male stray cat. I first met Echo when I was performing routine veterinary exams at a local shelter. I instantly diagnosed him with a severe heart defect the minute I picked him up to examine him. Echo's heart murmur was so loud that it was vibrating through his chest wall and I could feel it when I scooped him up out of his cage. Unfortunately, he was born with this heart defect, and I was shocked that he had survived anesthesia for declawing and neutering prior to his arrival here at the shelter. I adopted Echo knowing that he'd have a shortened life span, but I wanted to give him the best quality of life before he went into heart failure. So that's how Echo got his veterinary-geeky name: he was named after "echocardiogram," the technical term for a heart ultrasound (I foresaw a lot of these expensive procedures in his near, but short future). Just to prove me wrong, Echo is still alive and kickin', despite my estimate that he'd only live a year or two (which is why veterinarians hate answering, "How long is he gonna live, Doc?"). Thankfully, all three of my pets get on grandly, and I've been the one who has been blessed by adopting these "rejects" that nobody else wanted.

Why do cats purr? Why, oh why, does loud purring have to occur at 1 a.m. just when I fall asleep? Why can't my cat just purr at dinnertime or during evening TV-sofa time? Purring is that unusual vibration that is produced by nerve stimulation to the voice box muscles and the diaphragm (that sheet of muscle that separates your organs in your chest from your abdomen). The frequency and pattern of purring occurs between 25 and 150 Hertz, so it can be loud enough to wake you up when Max is sleeping on your head. Purring can occur during both inspiration and expiration and may look like your cat is breathing harder than usual. The cause and exact mechanism of purring still seems to elude even the smartest scientists and veterinarians (cats would be happy to tell you that they are smarter than humans). While purring doesn't seem to have any evolutionary purpose, I suspect that cats purr for the functional reason of bonding with their loved ones (i.e., you or their kittens). Cats mostly purr when they are comfortable and enjoying human contact, while mother cats may purr during nursing. The rare cat may purr when stressed or really sick (i.e., going to the veterinary clinic), so don't always interpret it as a sign of happiness. Not sure if your cat is purring or having difficulty breathing? It's important to know the difference, especially if you are the owner of a cat with asthma or heart problems. When in doubt, double-check by putting your hand alongside your cat's chest. If you don't feel vibrations, your cat may have difficulty breathing, and this should prompt an immediate veterinary visit. If you do feel vibrations, and your cat looks content sleeping on your pillow after a nice Fancy Feast snack, then this is probably normal, I'm-happy-to-be-near-my-human purring. You should be flattered that your cat is satisfied in your presence.

Why do cats hiss? It might just be a weird veterinary thing, but when I notice two work colleagues arguing in front of me, sometimes I hiss at them. It's my animal way of communicating to them that they're fighting like cats and are being, well, kind of catty. I guess non-animal people would think that's really weird. That said, why do cats hiss? Cats hiss to sound intimidating and to scare away whatever is threatening them. Just like when snakes hiss, other creatures probably know to stay away from this sound, as it's generally not associated with anything good (i.e., you're about to be bitten or pounced upon). By changing the shape of their tongue and pharynx (the tissue right in front of their voice box), cats are able to sharply release a jet of air while spitting some saliva in the process. As a veterinarian, I'm used to hearing that sound frequently (while I'm restraining cats or treating them), and I always proceed with caution. Be aware, cat lovers. If you've just approached a cat (or person) who's hissing at you, get the point and quickly back away.

How well do cats see in the dark, and why do they have vertical pupils? Cats have evolved to become nocturnal hunters and are much more sensitive to light than humans, having "minimum light detection threshold up to [seven] times less than that of humans." In addition, cats have vertical pupils to help finely control the amount of light coming into the back of their eye. Their pupil can become round or oval when dilated to allow more light in during the evening hours, making their night vision more accurate. Likewise, a vertical pupil can constrict down to a tiny, thin slit to prevent too much light from entering their eye during the day. Ever wonder why your cat sometimes gets red-eye in photos? Well, cats have a tapetum, which is that reflective green, blue, or red hue in the back of their eye. This tapetum is 130 times more reflective than a human's. Between having a higher sensitivity to light, a vertical pupil, a hyperactive tapetum, and a retina that has more rod

photoreceptor cells (which helps with visual acuity in low light) than cone cells (which help with color and detail) cats have exceptional night vision to help with their hunting prowess, or to attack your head at 3 a.m. Do cats get cavities? Because cats are strict carnivores, they typically don't crave anything but meat, meat, and meat (interspersed with the occasional catnip or cat grass); this meat is in the form of the star-, carrot-, ball-, nugget-, or fish-shaped dry kibble that you're feeding. Thankfully, cats don't typically want to eat chocolate, sweets, or acidic foods, so they are less likely to have sacchrolytic acid-producing bacteria (in other words, the bacteria that causes cavities) in their mouths. Also, cats are lucky because their teeth don't have to last a century, since they unfortunately don't live as long as humans. (We humans have to make our teeth last until the denture discount kicks in!) Another reason cats rarely get cavities is because their teeth are just physically shaped differently from ours; cats have fewer nooks and crannies in their teeth in which to develop cavities. In fact, their sharp and razorlike teeth are designed to help rip and tear away at meat. This differs from the flat, occlusal surfaces on the teeth of omnivores (which are flat and designed to grind and chew). But, as you'll soon discover when you get Tigger's dental bill, cats develop feline oral resorptive lesions (FORLs) or cervical line lesions that require a lot of veterinary dental visits and teeth brushing at home. Just like how some people are more predisposed to a mouth full of cavities, same with some cats; unfortunately, there's not much we can do to prevent them aside from routine oral care. While these FORLs aren't the same thing as cavities, they're similar--these lesions eat away at the gum, enamel, and dentin of the outside tooth, and make the pulp (the inside of the tooth where the nerves and blood vessels are) exposed and painful, causing Tigger to get more finicky. If you notice redness of the gums, not eating, or severe halitosis, bring your cat to a vet to see if your cat needs dental work or extractions. Unfortunately for your wallet, you can only fix these by having your vet extract 'em, I'm afraid, no matter how much you brush or floss your cat's teeth. Do cats have belly buttons? You may have a hard time finding it under that huge fat pad, but your cat does have an umbilicus. Just like you and me, your cat had an umbilical cord that hooked him up to his mom's placenta for blood, nutrients, and waste exchange. The mother cat chews it off once her kittens are born. This chewing helps tie off the blood vessels, creating a belly button. Because there wasn't an obstetrician there to tie the knot, your kitten won't have an obvious innie or outie. If your cat's belly is shaved, you'll see a thin 1- to 2-centimeter scar, which is the belly button. If you see a fat little pouch (an outie), your cat may have an umbilical hernia that didn't heal right; most of the time, this needs to be surgically repaired and removed so intestines don't slip in the hernia and get stuck. Based on most cats that I've seen, their belly is so big, there's little room for anything but fat to slide in there! Did curiosity kill the cat? The question of why cats are so curious still remains a mystery to veterinarians. They didn't come up with that saying for nothing--curiosity did indeed kill the cat, but satisfaction brought her back. Because of their inquisitive and predatorial nature, cats often, but accidentally, put themselves in harm's way. It's not Chloe's fault that that little chipmunk ran up the tree and Chloe had to chase it, causing the fire department to come rescue her. Nobody told her that glue mousetrap was sticky. It's not her fault that the neighborhood bully didn't come with a warning sign. It's that playful nature that we love about our cats--just know that you may have to rescue them from their curiosity at times.