

# JUST LET ME EAT

SHOAIB AHMED SAYAM

We already judge people by their weight, height, clothes, the way they walk, and how they talk. What else can we judge them by? Hmm, I know, how they intake nutrients for sustaining life. This is my story of vilification and condemnation.

Like any other human, I have my personal tastes and preferences, and it covers the way I eat food as well. But as always, people don't like others who are different, and I have to live with it. So here's the deal, I can't eat spicy food.

"C'mon, you're in South Asia! We're born to eat the spice, Westerners came to our land looking for spice and took a couple centuries to leave. Are you even a true Bangladeshi?" First off, get your geographic tongue stereotypes out of here. Secondly, we're not born with additional spice defence. Maybe we get accustomed to it because of the extra hot food but I don't want to. And that's the main point, why should I, or anyone for that matter, go through hell to get into the spice squad?

It gets worse when they bring into question my age and gender. "Are you a baby? Can't even handle a little pepper?" The next time you write a Facebook status about how you want to go back to the good ole simpler times when you were a kid, I'll be there in the comments calling you out for being a big whiny baby. You know what, if it makes people happier, sure, I'm a big baby. A big baby who's responsible for his actions and aware of others but just can't have that green chilli. At least the child inside me didn't die. Additionally, what's up with proving your manliness by eating the hottest Naga burger? I'm fine with eating spicy food for a general challenge regardless of gender, but why do men have to voluntarily endure pain to show that the coarse hair on their body is indeed real? Men and women have a lot of physical differences, I don't remember the tongue being one. Even now, whenever I order a *chotpoti* without chillies the vendor double checks just to make sure. Yes, I know non spicy food is bland, my tongue works fine.

I really like sour food. No, I'm not pregnant, or planning on getting pregnant, or capable of getting pregnant. How can a whole freaking taste palate be reserved for women, especially pregnant ones? A lot of amazing food items are sour, do I really have to reject them just so no one can think I'm a girly girl? Ever seen those chutney ads? Majority of the chutney eaters are girls, where's the equal representation of genders? Stop chutney inequality. The same goes for strawberry flavoured food. How people think they're allowed to decide if food is feminine or not by the colour pink is a thing baffles me.

I'm already a sack of skin and bones. People constantly nag me about how much food I eat, and when I finally decide to eat something, they have a problem with that too. Make up your mind, do you want me to eat or not?

Shoaib Ahmed Sayam tortures himself by watching fake sports and Vietnamese cartoons. Send help at [fb.com/ooribabamama](https://fb.com/ooribabamama)



## A cat's guide to table manners

RASHEED KHAN

There are nine things on Earth that insist on a total disregard for humans and world domination: us cats. The former comes around quite naturally. We are designed to ignore our humans' calls, scratch them violently for no reason, and excrete in the unlikeliest places. However, world domination is a different matter and requires our attention and effort.

So, what would you say are good tools for world domination? More cats? Accumulation of nukes? Accumulation of nukes by a greater number of cats? No, fellow felines, it is as the title suggests: table manners. While it might seem silly, remember that despite our vastly superior intelligence, infiltrating human quarters and pretending to be cutesy balls of fluff is only half the battle. The other half is getting on their level, and the best place to start is at their meals. Here's a small guide to table manners for felines.

**Don't break things.** As a fellow cat, I understand the urge to unleash wanton destruction upon all that you despise. It is an inherent trait of ours. But when there's a broken bowl, and soup and smashed wontons on the floor because you pawed it off the table, you'll end up being politely grabbed by the scruff of your neck and thrown into another room.

**Don't sniff the food.** While we have developed the knowledge and the nostrils to smell out poison in the food, the inferior intellect of humans means that they never sniff their food. A classic example of this is expired leftovers and the resulting diarrhoea. In any case, sniffing your food means revealing that you're smarter, so maintain

discretion.

**No persistent meowing at the table.**

Humans prefer to have their meals in peaceful, awkward silence with some small talk to prevent any introspection into regrettable decisions. Examples include: "how was school", "the weather is nice/awful today", "why does the food taste the way it tastes", etc. However, as a cat, you can't really mention any of those or else the conversation would go as:

You: How was school?

Them: Wait, what?

You: Meow?

Remember, *discretion*. Just listen to their conversations and meow occasionally. Also, don't tell them the food tastes weird because you urinated in it.

**No licking.** Don't lick the plate, it will be washed. Don't lick your paws either, sacrificing good hygiene is necessary. But most importantly, don't lick the humans. Apparently, some of them lick back. Nasty, right?

These are the finer points of the whole deal, apart from the other small things that need to be taken into consideration, such as: don't sit on the food, don't eat someone else's meal without asking, don't shed fur on the food, and don't lick the seventh planet away from the sun while at the table (because supposedly it's 'not hygienic' and 'disgusting to look at').

If this all seems too difficult to handle, remember the bigger picture, that it's all for the sake of world domination.

Rasheed Khan is a hug monster making good music but terrible puns and jokes where he's probably the only one laughing. Ask him how to pronounce his name at [aarcvard@gmail.com](mailto:aarcvard@gmail.com)