

discuss: Are horse-drawn carriages inhumane?

DEBATING THE WEEK'S REALLY SERIOUS ISSUES

PETA is on a crusade to outlaw hansom cabs in New York. Are these historic relics romantically nostalgic or simply cruel?

“Think about it: These horses live better than many New Yorkers.”



Suzanne Zuckerman

Senior Entertainment Editor, Page Six Magazine

Most animals in Manhattan are treated far worse than the horses queuing up at Columbus Circle: They get dressed in ridiculous clothing, exterminated or served up as entrées. Unlike some of their rural or racetrack brethren, carriage horses spend the majority of their time outdoors and are showered with attention by tourists from Peekskill to Poland. They are fed, cleaned and housed, which is more than we can say for many New Yorkers. They are also one of the rare remaining attractions in this city that link us to our past. PETA would better serve these animals by advocating on their behalf, monitoring their working and living conditions. If carriage horses are banished from New York, how do we know where their owners—now deprived of their livelihoods—will send them next?



Want to go for a ride? PETA will tell you to hold your horses.

“There are many reasons to love New York—abusing animals is not one of them.”



Danielle Pergament

Travel writer, contributing editor, Allure

There was a time when horses were rightfully used as transportation, but you are not Lara and this is not *Doctor Zhivago*. I hate the argument that horse-drawn carriages are a throwback to a more romantic era. Do you also pine for smallpox and Prohibition? Here, in 2008, horses are shod in iron, whipped by drivers and forced to canter on painful concrete, pulling heavy carriages amid honking taxis. Last September, one was even killed in traffic. This cruel practice has been banned in London, Paris and Beijing. Why do we continue? For the tourists, Mayor Bloomberg says. As a travel writer, I know that tourists want to feel like locals; as a New Yorker, I can promise you that no local has ever ridden in a hansom cab unless forced to do so by a visitor. This isn't Vegas. Since when do we need cheesy gimmicks to make people like us?