



Photo by Andrew Eccles

# All About Ellen

This funny lady's passion for animals is no joke

By Janice Brown

**It's hard to watch Ellen DeGeneres do anything without cracking up. From her Emmy-award winning talk show to her stand-up comedy specials, Ellen's quick wit and impeccable timing leave audiences wanting more. Lately the star has made headlines for her recent marriage to partner Portia de Rossi, as well as some of her new gigs, including being a CoverGirl and owning interest in holistic pet food company Halo, Purely for Pets. After spending some time speaking with one of America's favorite comedienne, it is clear that there is much more to Ellen than making people laugh.**

**You live with five animals, all adopted with Portia?**  
Yes, we have three cats and two dogs.

**Who gets to sleep in the bed with you?**  
We have Charlie, who always sleeps with us, and sometimes George does, one of our other cats. Chairman, our third cat, I don't know if she was royalty in her last life. She may have been a queen of some country.

**She's a cat, of course!**  
I have never seen such a stuck-up cat in my life. But she's great. She's sweet. And the two dogs sleep in dog beds next to our bed. Wolf jumps up in the morning, and I'm too tired to kick him off.

**I know that animal adoption is important to you. Have all of your animals been rescued?**  
Yes, Wolf was rescued from someone who smuggled him in from Mexico and was abusing him when I found him on the street. That's a long, long story. The three cats are rescues, and Mabel, the newest addition, we've had her for a year now, and she just turned 8 yesterday. She was in a kennel, and she had been a show dog for a short amount of time.

**It's clear your pets are part of the family. Were your dogs in the wedding?**  
With so many servers and caterers around and doors opening and closing, it was too much for them. But we showed them pictures, so they felt like they were there.

**And you had a vegan wedding, correct? You were a vegetarian and recently went vegan?**  
Yes. Portia was vegetarian when I met her. It was off and on for me. I would fall into that trap of "I need meat. I'm not getting enough protein." And then I watched a video called *Earthlings*. I don't know if people will actually sit through it, but if they could, it would be amazing. It's hard to watch. It's literally the treatment of animals on every level of this planet. It's bullfighting and circuses. It's everything. It makes you so sad you want to just roll up in a ball in a corner and cry for weeks and weeks. But you know, once you see that you just can't get that image out of your head. It's just not fair. We eat a million chickens an hour in this country. That's 10 billion animals killed a year.

**Lately, the big news is Proposition 2 (a California ballot initiative to ensure humane treatment of animals raised as livestock). I know that you're a big supporter of that. You've always been a pet lover, but what prompted you to get so political?**  
Well, I think what's sad is that most people don't want to know the reality of what happens before that food ends up on your plate. I did it for 50 years, so I understand. But I think there comes a time where you just have to educate yourself and look at how these animals are treated. Once I did that, I changed the way I eat, the way I dress; I think if you love animals, you love animals. You can't say I love my dog and I love my cat, but a cow or a pig can be treated this way. It's such a modest measure that people are trying to get passed. People get so sad and distressed by puppy mills, and that's nothing compared to the way animals are raised for slaughter. So I don't look at it as being political. I mean you can use that word to describe it, but it's just being compassionate and humane, and I don't think that these animals deserve this.

**Speaking of politics, Barack and Michelle Obama recently announced that after the election they're going to adopt a dog. Any advice you can offer?**  
Um no, but I think he's a smart guy, so I think he's gonna make the right decision. We got him a dog house when Michelle was on the show. We made them a dog house that replicates the White House, and it's big enough that it could take a big dog!

**In a recent video you mentioned one of your mottos: Food. It's for eating. It's obviously important for your pets, too. You put your money where your mouth is when you bought an interest in Halo, Purely for Pets.**  
I am honored to be a part of a company that believes in treating your pets as well as you treat yourself. I think that animals need meat, especially cats, because they're carnivores. People can debate whether dogs can be vegan or not, but I'm not gonna go to that point yet, so my dogs are thrilled to be eating Halo. We mix the dry and the wet together, and the cats love it, and they're healthier.

**I know that you are a CoverGirl spokesperson and that there is some controversy that Procter & Gamble still does animal testing. What are your thoughts on this?**  
Well P&G is a huge company. CoverGirl and Olay don't test on animals. I made sure before I signed on. That was one of the big points before any negotiation. My first question was, "Do they do animal testing?" I called PETA and asked them their thoughts.

**You're pretty hands on when it comes to helping the animals. Do you do any volunteering?**  
Oh god no. I barely have time to take care of my own animals! I think about it all the time. I should go and walk a dog; I should just go and do that. But I know myself, and it's just so hard for me to see a situation, and I think, "I have room, I can help, I can do this." All I can do right now is donate to a lot of organizations and help as much as I can. I have an amazing forum. I have this platform that I can hopefully make a difference and help people open their eyes.

**You are in an American Express commercial in which your office is filled with animals. If one of your pets got to come to work with you, who would it be?**  
I would like Charlie to come with me. We were talking about that the other day, and Portia's like, "I don't know how people can say when you have children that you don't have a favorite, because you have to." We love all of our animals, but her favorite is Mabel, and Mabel adores her. She doesn't even pay attention to me, really. Charlie, I love that cat so much. I think about when I rescued her and how she was looking at me ... really reaching out to me saying, "Please get me out of this place." I couldn't stop thinking about her. We had already come home with two, and we were supposed to go for one. I went home, and I was like, "Oh my god, I cannot stop thinking about that cat." And now she's just so smart. She's such a great cat. She's very dog-like. She has that personality. She's my favorite.

**Did any of them ever get to come to work with you?**  
Wolf used to come once in a while, but now Portia brings them to the barns with her. She is a big horse rider and usually brings Mabel every day, but Wolf is a little bit neurotic. He'll act like he wants to go for a walk, but then he gets outside and freezes and he won't walk. We had to get him a dog stroller. And they sell them; that's the scary part. When Portia bought it, I was like, "You've got to be kidding me." She goes, "I didn't design this. They sell them." And then she's like, "Oh my god, if I'm photographed like this, we are gonna look like cuckoos!"

**When it comes to your animals, what is your wish for the future?**  
Our goal one day is to have a farm and rescue everything we can possibly rescue. 🐾

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