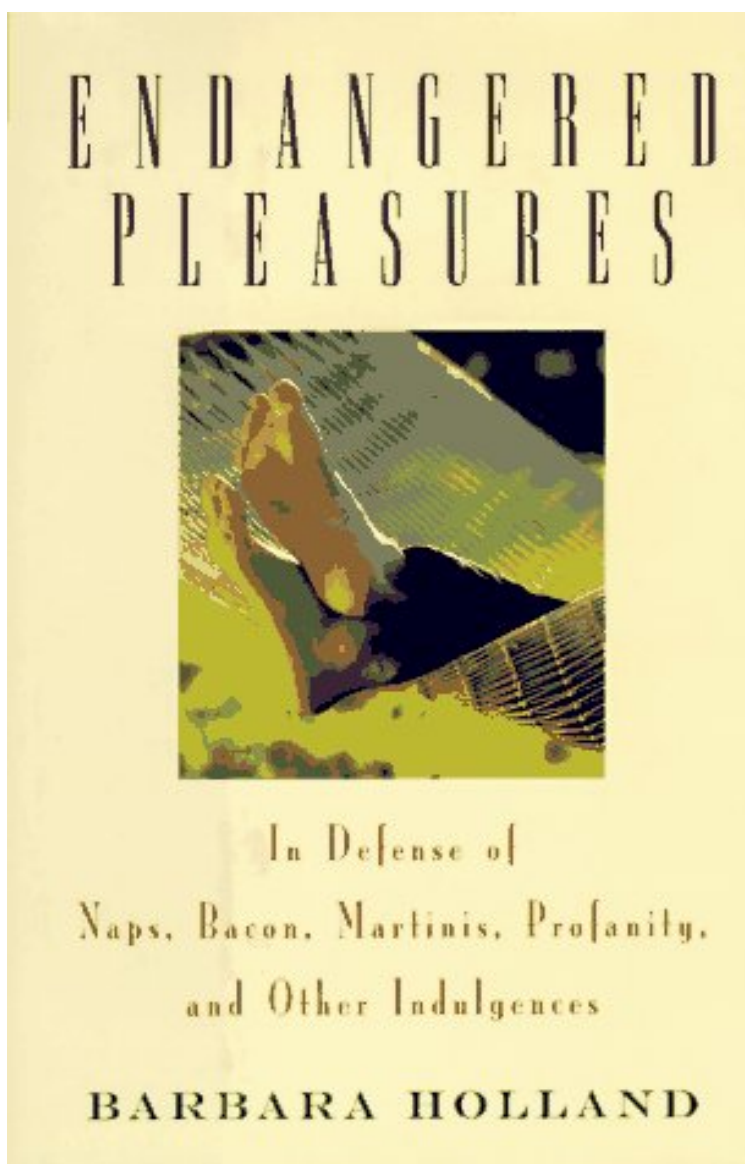


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Endangered Pleasures: In Defense of Naps, Bacon, Martinis, Profanity, and Other Indulgences

Barbara Holland

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. ... Holland book and I can already tell I will love finishing it
By James L. Ball
This is my fifth Barbara Holland book and I can already tell I will love finishing it. If you want an entertaining, pithy, and quick read, order any BH book and you will be greatly entertained. Hail to the Chiefs, The Joy of Drinking, Secrets of the Cat are just a few suggestions. I intend to read her complete works. Saw an interview of her a few years ago and that is what got me started. A profane and no nonsense person who can write about anything and I would enjoy quaffing bourbon with . Do yourself a favor, start buying her books, you will be very glad you did.
9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A talent for recording perceptions
By Mr. Joe
ENDANGERED PLEASURES is perhaps mistitled as it's not credible to think any of the 67 things and activities listed, from the morning paper to cigarettes to bare feet to weekends to gambling to winter to babies, are actually in peril of extinction. "Unappreciated" might be more a apropos term instead of "endangered". The book's subtitle says it all more succinctly: IN DEFENSE OF NAPS, BACON, MARTINIS, PROFANITY AND OTHER INDULGENCES.
Author/essayist Barbara Holland has a remarkable talent for perceiving the small details of life and living. Or rather, a talent for remembering what she perceives and subsequently bringing it to the attention of the lumpish rest of us. For instance, on the "being there" phase of travel: "The hee-haw of the ambulance in the foreign streets sings with a pure and alien glamour, quite unrelated to the irritating scream of emergency vehicles back home." Now, I've noticed that on my own overseas walk-about, but would never think it worth mentioning to the folks back home. And, on a more sobering note, regarding the psychology of crowds: "Face to face with, say, Adolph Hitler at a table for two, we would have jeered at his passions, protested, flounced out in a snit. In a crowd of thousands, all cheering and brandishing fists, we might have stood in the path of the electric current, felt the blood of common cause rise joyfully in our throats, and cheered too ... Deep inside each of us lurks a chained lemming, struggling to break free, and we need to keep an eye on it." I admire Holland's talent for social commentary. She reminds me of Andy Rooney, but without the crankiness. Rooney might like to think he's a national treasure; Barbara truly is.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I've Read This Book 20+ Times
By Jeanette
I first bought this book years ago as I was browsing in a card/book/gift store. I've since bought it five or six times again, one for myself in case I lose my original, and the others as gifts. I'm usually a fiction reader but I keep this book on my bedside table for times when I'm not sure what I'm in the mood to read next. I flip to any essay and dive right in again. I can't say enough how much I adore this book - her writing is superior and the overall tone is relaxing, humorous, and insightful in the way that only comes from living a real life and not criticizing everyone else's choices. In fact the only thing this book really criticizes, and brilliantly subtly at that, is the act of being overly critical and judgmental. The whole collection is so memorable, and certain essays really stick with you. For example, the one about smoking is surprising and lovely. Whether you smoke or not (and she doesn't champion smoking, though she doesn't rail on it either), the imagery of two cigarettes lit after sex saying without words, "I am here," and "I am here too," has been in my mind since the first time I read it. Likewise, her assessment of cats and dogs is insightful and funny. It's clear she prefers cats, and I'm the opposite, but I appreciate her description of dogs as simpler and cats as more complex, like "artichokes." These are small images that leave a lasting impression. Honestly I can't count how many times I've picked up this book, read a few essays, then fallen asleep relaxed and thinking about nothing stressful. Any book that can do that for me is damn near perfect. If it were twice as long, I'd be twice as happy.

The minute the alarm clock punctures our dreams, we go to work. We have convinced ourselves that productivity is the name of the game and that leisure is a notorious sign of laziness. In *Endangered Pleasures*, Barbara Holland insists that enough is enough. It's time to kick back, relax, and relish the truly good things in life. "Delightfully quirky".--The Boston Globe.

.com First cigars and gin topped the list. Then red meat, Cadillacs, coffee with caffeine, and sleeping late all began to edge toward extinction. Barbara Holland makes an impassioned defense of life's little pleasures in a book that will entertain diehard sinners, comfort the secretly licentious, and encourage those who just need a little nudge to abandon jogging and no-fat salad dressing.
From Publishers Weekly "Perhaps it's a good time to reconsider pleasure at its roots," declares Holland (*Secrets of the Cat*), introducing this collection of entertaining, genteel meditations. As the subtitle hints, the author, living in the Virginia countryside, is no sybaritic renegade but a woman who can find happiness in antinomies like "Working" and "Not Working," "Buying Things" and "Saving Money," and "Going Out" and "Staying In." She writes with conversational ease, and some observations linger: To the miserly, "a penny spent is a penny mourned"; mail is "one of life's small recurring pleasures"; sports, "unlike life, are played according to rules." Holland even reveals that she drives without using her seat belt. Illustrations. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist Holland starts off with tributes to sunrise and coffee, moves on to clothing, and then directly into more hedonistic pleasures, such as happy hour, porters, cruises, and gambling, in these to-the-point, frequently wicked essays. The author thumbs her nose at the exercise-prone, cholesterol-conscious, low-impact society she finds herself amid. A refreshing change of pace. Denise Perry Donavin