

What is the best thing you have learned or discovered on MetaFilter and/or the subsites?

Probably the most common was "MetaFilter itself" or similar. Many, many references to Ask vs Guess Culture, Emotional Labor, privilege, feminism, racism/sexism/homophobia/transphobia, "How to Adult," and media recommendations. A surprising number of references to how to dispose of a body and stand vs sit.

- Rory is now as old as Lorelai was when the show started.
- Cool Papa Bell's "Fight Club" Theory of "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."
- Hands down, the "millennials to snake people" extension
- So much. Most important to me is having my eyes opened about how I view "others" my beliefs that were so ingrained that I didn't even know they weren't facts. I have learned not to make so many assumptions or at least to notice when I'm making an assumption and to recognize that there are many different points of view, life experiences, etc.-- really different. I came to Metafilter think I was an open-minded individual. Have realized just how far I have to go.
- Probably "Jingle Rock Bell" or else things about tax policy.
- The best thing that I have learned isn't any one piece of information; it's that you really can have an online community, (with an emphasis on the word community) where people are real and genuine and really care about each other in real life.
- That the issues I've been having are not entirely unique to me, and that many other members have sought help and are doing much better now.
- Prisencolinensinainciusol
- You can clean out the laundry detergent cup by just including it in the washing machine with your clothes.
- I learned that I was suffering from depression. This is good because previously I just thought that all humans spent all day thinking that they wanted to kill themselves. I've gone into therapy as a result and am managing a lot better now.
- How to react respectfully and appropriately when something I've said or done could be perceived as racist, transphobic, etc. Rule No. 1: Take a deep breath -- it's not all about me. Rule No. 2: Being the target of racism, transphobia, etc., actually feels worse than being *called* racist, transphobic, etc. ALSO: I've begun to develop a thicker skin and have learned how to react to critical comments w/o unleashing a flaming torrent of rage.
- That therapy is nothing to be ashamed of, more normal than you might think, and incredibly helpful.
- People are really sensitive, and I need to be very careful about the words and phrases I use to describe people and situations.
- Understanding people who have not had an easy life - bullying, sexism, abuse, divorce etc.
- I learned that I'm not the only person who can voluntarily contract their tensor tympani muscle. More importantly, I've learned a bit about how to better examine the ways in which my own actions help support systemic racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, etc.

- Mostly how to navigate interpersonal relationships. Ask vs. Guess has become a big part of our household lexicon. The EL thread has transformed the way I view the world, in a very real way. Posts regarding "women's issues" or feminism have been very powerful. I am a woman, and grew up with a single mom, so many comments by the men in the group have given me insight as to the way men think, that I wasn't really aware of in the past.
- jeather's recipe for buttermilk pancakes changed my life
- What it is like to be other than I am. I get a lot of good perspective on how others want to be treated, particularly related to things like trans* issues.
- Lots of experimental, afrofuturist, Japanese fusion and/or otherwise would-have-never-heard-this music linked by a lot of wonderful MeFites on the Blue.
- How to get closer to my ideal of being an adult. Also, using a bowl of fruit to one's advantage while selling items on Craigslist.
- The "what's your 100%" rule, to end arguments. What would make things 100% right for you at this time? Amazingly simple, amazingly effective. Can't remember who posted that.
- That I am more normal than I thought, and that we are all weirder than I thought.
- I literally can't answer this, after 9 years. I feel like MeFi has been my second education, after university. I have had my eyes opened to an incredible range of topics, opinions and viewpoints.
- One thing? One thing only? Ok, you've left this free form, you fools. I shall bury you! But seriously, beyond the ongoing incredible recommendations for movies, books, and TV shows that have really expanded my horizons, probably the best thing I have learned is how Metafilter has opened me up personally to a great deal of difference. I can now have conversations in which I am deeply aware of my privilege and be able to put it aside and listen to what someone is saying and accept it, without giving in to my kneejerk desire to dismiss their experience. It has made me more prepared to accept alternate views and experiences and understand them. I can look at how the media or some commentator is framing an issue and reject it because it is a frame that dismisses or ignores the real experiences of people who have been brave enough to share themselves on Metafilter. And that sharing has made me a better person. I know that is not why they did it - it was not for my benefit, the deep and hard personal things that were shared as people tried to make their voices heard - but it has benefited me. And for that I am grateful and I hope those people who have been silenced and dismissed and are still battling those things every day in their lives know that they are being heard. Change never comes fast enough for those that are suffering, but at least I can offer that - I'm hearing, and it's changing me and I hope I'm able to change others when they talk about/think about these issues.
- QWOP

Describe what you picture when someone references "a plate of beans".

These answers came in one of four flavors.

Literal:

- About fifty baked beans, in sauce, on a white china plate, glistening, viewed from a 45 degree angle.
- Baked beans on a tin (enamel) plate, held by a grubby hobo
- I picture a milky-white cafeteria plate with a messy splay of gross red BBQ beans, not even enough to cover the plate.
- A depressingly literal plate of baked beans, a solitary drop of sauce dripping onto the table.
- A styrofoam plate with some refried beans (always refried) crusted onto it.
- A blue plate with Louisiana red beans and rice on it.
- A very rustic plate of pewter. It's something the early town guilds in France perfected (the plate and the process), with it eventually migrating, as all things French, northwest to England and the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. Modern canned baked beans, however, are de rigeur for the plating of MetaFilter beans, thereby bringing the quaint custom into the 21st century.
- I'm probably overthinking this, but you've got to have a nice white china plate, about 60 beans, all brown and coated with a layer of whatever the juice/sauce that usually comes with beans is. Each bean is about the size of a dime, and they are somewhat uniformly distributed. The beans themselves are all completely pill shaped and there are no deformities present.
- I'm standing in a light, airy kitchen next to a wooden table, upon which sits a round, white plate almost entirely covered with Heinz baked beans. They're very slightly steaming. No utensils are in sight, for whatever that's worth.
- Refrieds, with melty, melty cheese.
- White beans, with chopped parsley, lemon zest, cracked pepper, and lots of richly colored oil, nicely plated on a square white restaurant plate.
- That vampire from X-Files picking beans up off the floor and placing them on a plate one at a time, carefully counting each. Not exactly what it means, but it's a weird association I have.
- A dark pewter dinner plate filled with black beans swimming in a dark sauce.
- The "Mexican Radio" video.
- A light-yellow plastic elementary school cafeteria plate filled to the brim with a pile of navy beans, juices and steam swirling about as if with the intention of a coma victim.
- I see a 16-colour .gif icon depicting steaming baked beans on an old blue enamel plate. Someone is handing them to me. We are on a camping trip. It is night.
- Cartoon Planet used to have a stop-motion clip of baked beans kind of 'dancing' around on a plate - this is what I picture
- The pancake bunny, but with a white plate of beans on its head

Metaphorical:

- Not a plate of beans . . . this is rather embarrassing, but the image that comes to my mind is someone sitting on the pot contemplating their navel.
- Overthinking something that doesn't deserve much thought.
- An overcomplicated analysis of something
- I don't picture anything but I take it to mean navel gazing/nitpicking
- Arguing pointlessly over picayune details or minutiae
- Something that is being over analyzed to an extent that it can't be analyzed any more.
- A group argument over frivolous things
- Someone sitting in a comfy chair over-thinking something REALLY hard.
- Someone hunched over a book with a magnifying glass in hand.
- A dissection into the minutiae of an issue, either with or without fruitful outcome, but certainly with much feather-ruffling by many involved.

I'm at the combination literal and metaphorical:

- Horace Rumpole had a twitter avatar for a while of him actually starting at a plate of red beans, wearing a blue MetaFilter shirt. That.
- A neat little pile of Campbell's pork and beans on a round, white plate sitting on a plain kitchen table. A spoon. The open can, still nearby. A 12-year-old boy standing in front of it, scratching his head, with a puzzled look on his face.
- A bunch of labcoat wearing nerds prodding a pile of kidney beans with some sort of pointer, muttering amongst themselves.
- A toddler, covered in beans, gazing in perplexity at a plate with beans smeared all over it.
- Four bearded men and two women with horn-rimmed glasses standing in a circle around a plate of uncooked Bush's baked beans, staring at it intently, murmuring to one another
- A plate. With beans on it. Sometimes I picture baked beans, sometimes lima beans. Often I picture a person peering at the beans through a jeweler's loupe, prodding the beans and muttering to themselves.
- Honestly, knowing the context, I see Rodin's "The Thinker" with a plate of Heinz Baked Beans in front of him.

And snarky:

- A person with no creativity rehashing a tired old joke.
- A badly-cooked philosophical conundrum.
- People talking way too much about something very simple and obvious. Or do you mean, do I literally picture a plate of beans? I picture a plate of baked beans. Which are gross.
- An annoying person overly fond of in-jokes.
- I don't

I should also add that, for the several people who put something to the effect of how tired and overused an in-joke the “plate of beans” metaphor is, there were as many comments to the effect of “This must be an in-joke, but I’ve never seen it before and I don’t get it.”

What's something you used to think was fictitious but it turned out to be real?

Great answers here, though a number of people said things like “Ghosts” and “Santa Claus” so either they interpreted the question wrong or they know some things I don’t

- Flags everywhere in the US
- Timbuktu
- Stars. I was really blind for a long time before someone noticed I needed glasses
- Narwhals [Many people said narwhals]
- LA's subway system (this is not a joke)
- Berenste(a)in
- I thought Taylor Swift's "You Belong with Me" was about teenage lesbians for a long time, does that count?
- Hootie and the Blowfish
- Danny Devito and Rhea Perlman's marriage
- Giant squid
- Fucking Black Mirror, episode 1. That, and actual fans for the tv show, Crystal Maze
- Edward Fortyhands
- Chincoteague Island, Virginia
- Moonwalk conspiracy theory (I mean, I didn't believe at first that people didn't believe it)
- Cesarean Section delivery
- Buffalo. (Thought they were actually extinct)
- "Who wants to sex Mutombo?"
- Dire wolves
- Probably some weird social/sexual thing I'm better off forgetting
- Human evolution (thank you Christian high school!)
- So many fetishes
- Dolly Parton. I used to think her name was less plausible than Polly Darton, the Muppet version, and thus not a thing, right?
- Love

If you could have one superpower, what would you choose?

These responses were really quite touching. So many people chose healing of others, or world peace, or ending suffering in general.

- Self-regulating body temperature
- Immorality [typo?]
- Eat whatever I want with no weight gain or other consequences
- Able to speak every language
- Quick Save/Quick Load
- The ability to understand both the specific history and the history of the type of object of anything I choose
- The ability to give anyone the perfect gift at any time without making them feel weird.
- Superfarts
- Healing physical and emotional pain
- I would like to be able to know how people feel about me, for sure.
- There was this one lady on Heroes who had the ability to learn any physical skill by seeing it. That would be amazing.
- You know how in an RTS (Real Time Strategy) game like Starcraft or whatever, the player is not actually a person on the screen? In a weird way, the player does not exist within the world and yet he affects it? That's the superpower I'd take.
- To remove / reduce pain and stress from others
- A Bill Clinton-esque ability to remember names and faces.
- Making the entire world safe for female human beings. Alternatively, flying.
- Best at sex
- Godmode
- The ability to get other people to do things the way I want them done, by just knowing.
- Order the best dish at any restaurant
- Ability to summon a dog at any time
- Ability to see the ultimate outcome of any action
- Cock Punch over IP
- Ability to have nothing taken from you if you didn't consent (things, life, etc)
- Some kind of aura that drains away the stress, anxiety and misery from people around me in a huge radius.

Some random numerical data:

On average, MeFites think

- a user with **141.90** posts has made a lot of posts
- a user with **3712.79** comments has made a lot of comments
- users that have given **8982.59** favorites have given a lot of favorites
- users that have received **8090.72** favorites have received a lot of favorites
- users with a user number lower than **35503** are long time users.
- users with a user number higher than **152412** are new users.
- a long MetaFilter thread has **345.88** comments.
- **13.69** chicken wings are a lot to eat at one sitting.
- **5.91** pizza slices are a lot to eat at one sitting.

Users have **1.24** MetaFilter accounts each, and **1.18** MeFites live in their homes.

They joined in **2007** and started reading the site in **2005**.

They were born in **1972** and have **1.71** siblings and **1.45** pets.

They last went to a concert on **April 12, 2014**.

They wake up at **7:29:42 AM** and eat their evening meal at **6:03:43 PM**.

Trying to figure out what time they go to bed is hard, as all the early morning times (12 AM, 1 AM, etc) appear to push the average earlier in the day rather than later. The calculated value is **2:30:33 PM**, but if you know of a better way to calculate that average in Excel, let me know.