



Dr. Mayim Bialik, star of new Fox sitcom, "Call Me Kat." Photo by Storm Santos



By Jen Reeder

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Mayim Bialik, Star of "Call Me Kat," Once Flew Across the Country With a Mini Cat in a Full Body Cast

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Cat lover Mayim Bialik is starting 2021 with a bang—and for feline aficionados, it's a big one.

The star of beloved sitcoms "Blossom" and "The Big Bang Theory" kicked off the year with the new TV series "Call Me Kat," in which she plays a woman who quits her job as a math professor to follow her dream of opening a cat café in Louisville, Kentucky.

In the show, Dr. Bialik, who also happens to have a PhD in neuroscience, wears cat-centric shirts with sayings like, "The future is feline" and delivers lines such as, "You scared the cat out of me!" Naturally, we reached out to her to learn more about the show and her love of cats.



Congratulations on the launch of your new sitcom "Call Me Kat" on Fox! Of course, we love that your character owns a cat café. Does that reflect your

personal love of cats? Are you a fan of cat cafés yourself?

Huge cat lover here! Always have been. I've never been to a cat café. I was planning to go for research for the show and then quarantine hit! I love working with cats on our set—it's honestly the icing on the cake of this job!

What else excites you about the show?

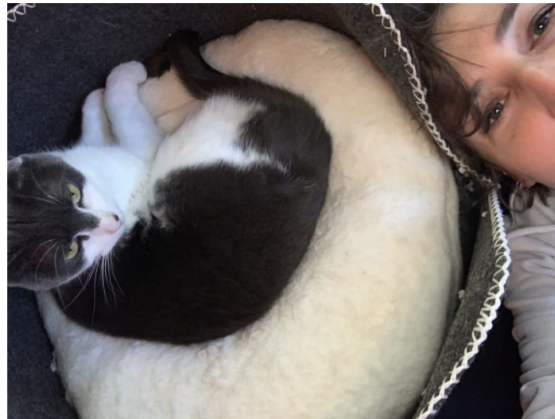
I love playing a "real" woman—she's goofy and awkward and socially anxious and fun and comfortable in her body. Our supporting cast is dynamite. From TV legend Swoosie Kurtz to the phenomenal Leslie Jordan to Broadway star who routinely steals my heart, Cheyenne Jackson, to veteran comedienne Kyla Pratt and Groundlings alum Julian Gant. We all are so excited to play together and make America laugh if we can!

Are feline characters like Firework specially trained for TV work? It's been said to "never work with animals or children" in film or TV—and we all know what it's like to "herd cats." What has your experience been like working with cats on the show?

I am proud our cats are not tethered or drugged. However, this means they sometimes behave like real cats. Their trainers (I call them their moms and dads) are loving and patient and we all work with the cats very respectfully, giving them breaks and space as needed. All of these cats are "professional" cats but truth be told, Piper (Firework's real name) was a particularly grouchy girl and she needed some space to be her grouchy awesome self. Many cats we have on set are the Ragdoll breed which is a breed known for being docile and happy to just sit and chill out.

In the pilot, your character, Kat, retorts that she's not afraid of being a "sad cat lady" because she's going to be a "rad cat lady"—woohoo! Do you consider yourself a rad cat lady?

Ha! I am a rad cat lady. I think pet owners have had a real Renaissance in the past years; we are seen as dynamic loving and active parents of fur babies and I think it's about time!



Bialik's special needs rescue cat, Adamantium, aka Addie. Photo courtesy of Mayim Bialik

Can you tell us about your three rescue cats and whether they might make guest appearances in future episodes of "Call Me Kat"?

My cats would hate to be on set! Our work cats have been raised around people and strangers and sounds and movements that would terrify my babies for sure!

I lost my beloved Shadow during COVID, but his baby brother Nermal (the runt!) has taken over my lap and the house. Nermal is tiny—he never really grew past toddler cat size—and loves turning any blanket into something to suck on to fall asleep. He's 4, as is Adamantium—aka Addie—who is my special needs rescue. She was born without a pectoral muscle and needed special surgery (which was performed by [ShelterChic in New York](#)). She and I flew from NY to our home in LA with her in a full body cast. She also never grew much but is thriving and seems to function just fine! She and Nermal play all day and annoy Frances, my 12-year-old tabby who hates kittens, which I didn't know until I got them. She hides out in my bedroom and lives her grumpy life with me, mostly.

Those are my fur babies.



Frances, Bialik's own grumpy cat. Photo courtesy of Mayim Bialik

As a mom of two boys, do you think it's important for children to spend time with pets?

Absolutely! They learn so much. Everyone has that cuteness button which gets pushed and I think especially for boys who are often told to "toughen up" in our culture, I love that my boys cuddle and care for our kitties so sweetly. It's also an opportunity for them to learn responsibility for an animal. They feed them and change the litter and hold them when I have to trim nails.



One of Bialik's three rescue cats, four-year-old Nermal, who never grew past "toddler cat size." Photo courtesy of Mayim Bialik

You use your celebrity to support a variety of good causes. Do you have any favorite animal organizations? What are they, and why?

[Best Friends Animal Society](#) has been a part of my life for so many years. I visited their sanctuary in Kanab, Utah and my younger son is raising money for them for his Bar Mitzvah project. They essentially have psychiatric care for animals who have been abused and they give animals the dignity to live in peace. As a vegan, I support [Farm Sanctuary](#), [Gentle Barn](#), and all of the organizations seeking to make the world safe for animals.

You've written several books, including the cookbook [Mayim's Vegan Table](#).

Why do you advocate adopting a vegan diet?

I never liked eating animals, even before I knew what veganism was. I kept cutting things out and finally realized that the way to not wonder if I was being cruelty-free was to just...be cruelty free. I don't wonder if free range is free range enough, for example. I also significantly reduced seasonal allergies, since dairy was activating that. I am hardly ever sick the way I was as a kid and teenager. I also love my digestive system now that I don't eat meat and dairy!

You also write for the website [Grok Nation](#), which you founded in 2015 to promote deeper conversations about contemporary issues, and launched the mental health podcast [Mayim Bialik's Breakdown](#) this month. Do you ever sleep?

GrokNation is no longer, but I have a podcast on mental health that just started on January 12! I am using my neuroscience PhD and my personal experience to chip away at the stigma surrounding mental health. Our website is [Bialikbreakdown.com](#) if people want to learn more!

Call Me Kat airs on Fox Thursdays at 9/8c and can be streamed online at [fox.com/call-me-kat](#)

Further Reading

- [How Your Dog Can Help Your Mental Health](#)
- [20-Year-Old Rescue Cat Spends Golden Years With the Perfect Family](#)
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Award-winning journalist Jen Reeder is former president of the Dog Writers Association of America. Her work has appeared in Family Circle, BBC News, Best Friends Magazine, the TODAY show's website, The Daily Beast, Happy Paws Magazine, AKC Family Dog, Modern Cat, and many other publications.

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