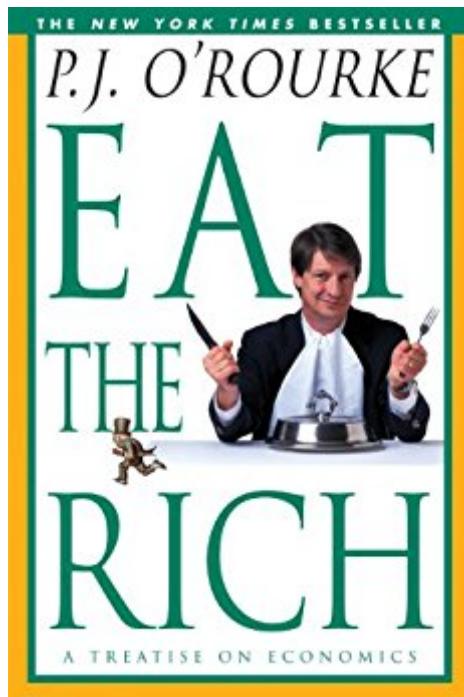


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Eat The Rich: A Treatise On Economics



Synopsis

In the tradition of his contemporary classic *Parliament of Whores*, the man who *The Wall Street Journal* calls "the funniest writer in America" is back with *Eat the Rich*, in which he takes on the global economy. P. J. O'Rourke leads you on an hysterical whirlwind world tour from the "good capitalism" of Wall Street to the "bad socialism" of Cuba in search of the answer to an age-old question: "Why do some places prosper and thrive, while others just suck?" With stops in Albania, Sweden, Hong Kong, Moscow, and Tanzania, P.J. brings along his incomparable wit and finds hilarity wherever he goes.

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Customer Reviews

I got hooked on P.J. O'Rourke through his work in "RollingStone." Each of his books have usually just been expanded versions of his gonzo-style of journalism. He is definitely the sicklove child of Hunter S. Thompson (another "Rolling Stone" family member) and Dave Barry--of course with a twist of RushLimbaugh's conservatist flare. His dry wit is interlaced with a keeneye for the bizarre. He has attacked politicians and Congress in "Parliament of Whores" (still his best book to date) and the "hawks" and "doves" in "Give War aChance" (enjoyable though not as memorable). This time he

takes on economists who apparently win Nobel prizes simply by boring the most people. However, he does this by actually bouncing around the globe, from Wall Street to Havana. And Albania to Hong Kong. And several other points in between. He gets deep into a country. Immersing himself within society itself to develop his theory of why a country's economic ills are what they are. This is usually done by attending the local watering holes. If anything else is redeeming to an O'Rourke work, it's certain that you will always walk away with an unquenchable urge to have a stiff drink--or maybe four. O'Rourke examines and compares several societies and countries that exhibit the most free of the free market (Hong Kong) or the country with "good" socialism (Sweden) and "bad" socialism (Cuba) and several other nations like Tanzania, Albania and Russia. As well as the U.S. and Shanghai.

I have never met P. J. O'Rourke, though I've always wanted to. (We probably wouldn't get along, as I don't drink much and wear a hat.) So I have no reason to say this other than the fact that it's true: He is the funniest man on Earth. It's my contention that humor that is *about* something is far funnier than humor that is nothing more than a grab-bag of exaggerations and incongruities, Dave Barry style. Dave Barry is good--I have all his books too--but every time I get another one, I have this feeling that I've heard all these jokes before. Only the words are different. P. J. O'Rourke's books are almost always about something--*GIVE WAR A CHANCE* was about the Gulf War, mostly--that matters. War matters, even dumb wars like Vietnam, though they don't all matter the same way. *ALL THE TROUBLE IN THE WORLD* was about a lot of things that matter in a hurtful sort of way, though the king on that throne is bad government. The significance of the subject matter is what makes the humor so pointed--the absurdities of the Gulf War are far funnier than talking about pigeons letting go on some slob's head. So in his latest volume P. J. takes on economics. This matters more than anything else on Earth, pretty much, because life on Earth is about work and wealth and what's for supper. I never learned economics because it's taught by men who are basically mummies without the wrappings. The books are unreadable, the graphs devoid of any connection to the real world. Finally, 25 years after getting out of school, I find an economics book by a guy who's still breathing. Furthermore, it's so painfully funny that two days later it's etched so firmly in my head I can still remember nearly all the points he made. Many of these points are made in the course of P. J.

As supply increases prices fall; the demand curve moves in inverse proportion to supply; and economics is as dry as the bleached bones of Adam Smith. At least that is what you were lead to

believe by that stringy-haired Marxist who taught ECON101. In his humorous, pointed and informative treatise, "Eat the Rich", P. J. O'Rourke has contravened at least one rule of economics - He has established that it is by no means boring. Indeed he has elevated it to a spectator sport. In "Eat the Rich" O'Rourke builds economic theory from keen observation of various governmental, social and economic systems. He begins with the bustling center of American capital, Wall Street, where he vividly describes the chaos inherent in the capitalist system. In the course of his exposition of the money capitol, he notes that he found the one thing he never expected to find, "Transcendent Bliss". Yet transcendent bliss does not seem so far out of line when one considers that John Locke, an eighteenth century political philosopher, concluded that the right to property was the guarantor of liberty, and Thomas Jefferson took the notion a step further equating it with happiness. While O'Rourke clearly expounds such economic truisms he manages to avoid the ponderous philosophic explanations constraining most commentators. From Wall Street "Eat the Rich" visits Albania, Sweden, Russia, Tanzania and Cuba. The description of each country is on-the-mark. In his description of Moscow, for example, he notes, "The traffic signals are timed to let three battalions of crack airborne troops and a hundred missile launchers through before the yellow caution light comes on.

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