

WRITER, DAVE BARRY, VISITS ISRAEL...  
AND WHAT DID HE HAVE TO SAY?

NOTE: The Yiddish words meaning, "This is my first visit here" are "Dos iz mein ershter bazuch do."  
The Yiddish word for "tourist" is "turist."

by  
MARJORIE GOTTLIEB WOLFE

According to Rabbi Peretz Rodman ("Travel to Israel," MyJewishLearning.com), between one and two million people visit Israel each year. Some are Christians who come to walk in Jesus' footsteps. An increasing number come to do business ("geshefts"). Others come to have a good time in a country that offers scuba diving at the Red Sea, or wind surfing on the Mediterranean. The largest segment of visitors, though, are Jews coming to Israel because they are Jews and Israel is the Jewish homeland.

Best-selling author, Dave Barry, has a new (2014) book titled, "You Can Date Boys When You're Forty." The book is dedicated to his [Jewish] children, Rob and Sophie, who, against all odds, turned out sane.

Barry, his wife, Michelle, and children flew to Tel Aviv and toured Israel with other members of their synagogue, Temple Judea, of Coral Gables, Florida.

What did Barry have to say about his experiences as a "turist" in Israel? Grab a #2 pencil and let's see how well you can choose the Dave Barry quotes.

1. RE: AIRPORTS/SECURITY

- A) "I flew on an El Al airplane. The signs read: "No Smoking." "Fasten your seat belts." "Eat, eat, look how bad you look!"
- B) "Tel Aviv airport is still the only airport in the world where each passenger is met by ten relatives."
- C) "No terrorist has ever boarded a domestic flight with more than 3/4 ounces of toothpaste, as far as we know."
- D) "So we were wondering whether the Israeli trip was a wise move, especially when we got to the El Al check-in area at JFK and saw a uniformed man carrying a large military-style rifle, wandering among the passengers as if prepared to obliterate anybody violating the three-ounce limit on carry-on shampoo."
- E) "...the ALBU (Airplane Lavatory Blockade Unit) is "a highly trained group of operatives who travel on every overseas flight I have ever been on. They wait until everybody else is asleep, then they go into all of the lavatories and close the door, and they do not come out for the remainder of the flight. I don't know what they do in there. Possibly their income tax."
- F) "The in-flight movie on El Al Airlines is always Yentl, Fiddler on the Roof, or

The Chosen.”

- G) “Leave prayers written on paper in the cracks between the seats [on El Al] and God reads them when your plane climbs over 10,000 feet.”
- H) “There is no Gate #1 at any airport.”

## 2. RE: BREAKFASTS/FOOD

- A) “...an Israeli-style breakfast buffet, is a vast array of fresh salads, fruit, vegetables, fish, breads, cereals, cheeses and on and on and on.”
- B) “After a hearty traditional Israeli breakfast, we have our stomachs pumped and board the bus, which takes us to Masada.”
- C) “Probably the most common Israeli food, falafel, is a deep-fried vegetarian dumpling. The Israelis are obsessed with breakfast cafes.”
- D) “The wifi is abundant and the food is excellent; the falafel should win some kind of Nobel Prize.”

## 3. RE: TEL AVIV, etc.

- A) “Tel Aviv turns out to be a lot like Miami. It has condos, palm trees, beaches and drivers who do not believe the traffic applies to them personally.”
- B) “This is a country where to deposit money, the bank charges you.”
- C) [in Tel Aviv] “Look around you; everyone wears cotton and denim.”
- D) On a crowded bus (in Israel), a mother was speaking to her son in Yiddish. An Israeli woman reprimanded her. “You should be speaking Hebrew. Why are you talking to him in Yiddish?” The mother answered, “I don’t want he should forget he’s a Jew.”

## 4. RE: The DEAD SEA

- A) “We walk right up to the Dead Sea and we smear Dead Sea on our bodies because...We don’t know why! But all the other tourists are doing it. If they are stuffing Dead Sea sand into their nostrils, we’d do it, too!”
- B) “An old Jewish grandfather was taking care of his two young grandchildren. One of the children asked him how old he and his grandmother were. The grandfather looked at the grandson and sighed, “We’re so old that when we were your age, the Dead Sea was only sick.”
- C) “My wife called in the Dead Sea. She was at ‘der sheynkayt’ (beauty parlor) shop for two hours. She got a mudpack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.”
- D) “An Israeli was fishing from the rock in the Dead Sea. He had a fishing pole, a

bell and a hammer. An American “turst” (tourist) walked by and was very curious about the hammer and the bell and how the guy can catch fish in the Dead Sea. The Israeli told him if he gave him \$5, he will tell him how he does it. So, he gave him \$5 and the Israeli said, “I ring the bell and the fish raise their heads above the water to see where the sound is coming from and when they do, I hit their head with the hammer.” “And how many fish did you catch so far today?” asked the American tourist. “You’re the first,” replied the fisherman.

E. “We ought to be able to figure out from the name ‘Dead Sea’ alone that we should stay the hell out of it.”

#### 5. RE: YARMULKE/YARMELKEH

A. [wife] “...finds a store called Kippa Man, where she buys--you cannot have too many--souvenir yarmulkes.”

B. “I’m a Jewish guy. Saw another Jewish guy on the street wearing a pink yarmulke. I walked closer; not only was it a pink yarmulka, it was made to look like a slice of watermelon. I think if God is so easygoing he tolerates your summer fun pink watermelon yarmulke, he’d probably be cool with no yarmulke.”

C) Why do Jews wear yarmulkes? Because the little propellers cost extra.”

D) It’s often said that wearing a yarmulke, or otherwise publicly demonstrating the fact that you’re an observant practicing Jew, means you’re somehow a representative of religious Jews everywhere. Like Hebrew National hot dogs, you clearly answer to a higher authority...

E) [the yarmulke] “has long been the butt of jokes, partly because it sounds more like a Japanese motorcycle than a ritual garment.”

#### 6. RE: ISRAELI PERSONALITY

A) “We’d been told that Israelis can be brusque, but almost everyone we encountered was helpful and friendly.”

B) “Are the Israelis friendly? Don’t ask! If you are lost in Israel and ask directions, they don’t tell you. They take you, then you both get lost.”

C) “Instances of hilarity tend to take place in buses, falafel stands, the Tel Aviv beach, El Al flights, Ben Gurion airport, bomb shelters, Knesset elections, Birthright trips and Miami.”

D) “Students in Israel don’t riot. They’re too busy arguing what to riot about.”

#### 7. RE: THE COUNTRY

- A) "This is the country [Israel] where you go to the post office, take a queue number from a machine, sit and wait half an hour, and someone comes in and walk straight to the counter and get served."
- B) "Israel began evacuating thousands of Jewish settlers and as a result, the Jewish settlers will be forced to return to their traditional home: Miami Beach."
- C) "Israeli businesspeople are often shrewd negotiators who should not be underestimated. They are used to, and may even enjoy, hard bargaining but usually hassle less than their Arab neighbor may. The bargaining stage of a negotiation can be extensive. Prices may move by 40 percent or more between initial offers and final agreements."
- D) "Bad English was the second language of Israel and bad Hebrew, of course, remained the national language."
- E) "Jerusalem is an extremely holy city. Everybody came through here at one time or another: Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, possibly L. Ron Hubbard."
- F) "Let me tell you something that we Israelis have against Moses. He took us 40 years through the desert in order to bring us to the one spot in the Middle East that has no oil!"

#### 8. RE: SHOPPING

- A) "Never buy the last item on the shelf."
- B) "We take a cable car down to the base of Masada...there is a gift shop...the size of the rest of Israel."
- C) "Do NOT look for Olive Oil on The Mount of Olives."
- D) "Shleptomania" is defined as "going from store to store even though you don't know what you want and are maxed out on your credit cards anyway."
- E) "Do not settle for the first price offered on anything when at the Shuk HaCarmel market in Tel Aviv or Mahane Yehuda market in Jerusalem. At these famous (and touristy) marketplaces, bargaining is the name of the game."

#### 9. RE: ADVICE

- A) "DO NOT ask your hotel concierge where to buy a Christmas tree."
- B) "DO NOT feel guilty if you don't see everything in Israel in one week."
- C) "In a place like Israel, where anything goes fashion-wise (people wear jeans to weddings)."
- D) "Do not drink seawater--If you swallow seawater, request help from the life

guard or first aid provider.”

10. RE: MASADA

- A) “You can rent Torahs on Masada”
- B) “Going down [Masada] is another story. I can testify that a person with a good set of shoes can run down the snake path in 12 minutes (especially if your group is about to leave you).
- C) “DO NOT take the Snake Path up to the top of Masada in summer without a truckload of water.”
- D) “Masada. Just hearing the word brings to mind the sounds of battle, the courage of a few, the passion of a nation, and the reminder that no place on earth is ultimately secure apart from the hand of God in our lives.”

11. RE: WESTERN WALL

- A) “I went to the Wall together with some soldiers...only a few hours earlier they had...seen their comrades fall for its sake. Now standing before the Wall, they wrapped themselves in prayer shawls and wept, and I too, took a sheet of paper, wrote...‘shalom’ on it and pushed it into a cranny of the Wall...one of the soldiers suddenly...laid his head on my shoulder and we cried together.”
- B) “The vibe at the Wall is a strange combination of vacation joviality and religious fervor. Some people are there strictly as tourists, smiling and laughing as they pose for photos with the Wall as a backdrop as if it were the Washington Monument.”
- C) “We held hands and danced at the Western Wall as we sang ‘Od Yavo Shalom Alainu.’”

12. RE: RETURNING TO ISRAEL

- A) Jews take so long to say goodbye to each other. “This is because as Jews, we have a level of separation anxiety that doesn’t come close in any other religion. We want to cherish every moment with the ones we love, even if it means standing in a dark parking lot in twenty-degree weather dissecting every element of the meal we just had.”
- B) “Zei (t) gezunt. Be well! Good-bye! Farewell!
- C) “Would we go back to Israel? We would in a heartbeat. In fact, we’ve already decided that we will and the reason is simply: Apparently we need more menorahs.”
- D) Shalom means “Hello,” “Goodbye,” “Glad to see you,” “See you soon” and “Peace.” Tommy Manville and Artie Shaw, who between them, were married about 17 times, could live here a lifetime without learning any other word.”

-----  
ANSWERS:

- 1. C, D, and E were said by Dave Barry.

- A) Dave Berg (My Friend God)
- B) George Mikes (The Prophet Motive)
- F) Bryan Fogel & Sam Wolfson, "Jewtopia"
- G) Fogel and Wolfson, "Jewtopia"
- H) Johnny Carson, the Tonight Show, 5/22/79

2. A, B and D were said by Dave Barry

- 3. A) was said by Dave Barry
- B) Darryl Todd
- D) Kirk Douglas (The Ragman's Son)

- 4. A) and E) were said by Dave Barry
- B) "Jewlarious"
- C) Various Jewish comedians told this story

- 5. A) was said by Dave Barry
- B) Todd Barry
- C) FunnyPact.com
- D) "The Scroll Tablet Magazine," Tova Ross, 6/18/14)
- E) Joshua Hammerman, The Jewish Week, 9/7/07

- 6. A) was said by Dave Barry)
- B) Dave Berg (My Friend God)
- C) "Ops & Blogs," "Your Funniest Israeli Moment: Do YTell"
- D) Dave Berg (My Friend God)

- 7. A) Darryl Todd
- B) Dave Barry
- C) Lothar Katz, "Negotiating International Business - The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World"
- D) George Mikes (The Prophet Motive")
- E) Dave Barry
- F) Golda Meir

- 8. A) was said by Thomas Marguccio
- B) was said by Dave Barry
- C) Anthony Grant
- D) "Shleptomania" is a Lenore Skenazy term
- E) Source unknown

- 9. D) was said by Dave Barry
- A) and B) were said by Anthony Grant (Don't! 11 Things Not to Do in Israel")
- C) "Time Out Israel," March 20, 2010

10. A) was said by Golda Meir  
B) Wayne Stiles  
C) Anthony Grant  
D) Jamie Moskowitz, "Summer Love, Sunrises at Masada and Dancing at the Western Wall: One Girl's Extraordinary Experience in Israel," Mayanot Trip Journals, Aug. 8, 2013  
D) Wayne Stiles, Bible.org, Sept. 11, 2012
12. A) Unknown source  
C) Dave Barry  
D) Joey Adams (Cindi and I)

---

MARJORIE WOLFE has visited Israel three times. She agrees with Michael Kohn that "Wading through a dark, 2,700-year-old [Hezekiah's] tunnel with gushing water is a real Indiana Jones experience."