

Discovering Israel in a Day

By Mitchell Bard

I spent the past summer in Israel and, like most visitors, came away with a number of lasting impressions of the country and its people. For those who have not been there yet (what are you waiting for?), I'd like to give you an idea of what to expect starting with the plane flight overseas. You *have to* fly El Al to prepare yourself for the Israeli personality which I found to be a caricature of the stereotype New Yorker. When you ask the flight attendant for a drink and are told to get it yourself, you will know what I am talking about.

When you arrive at Ben-Gurion airport, you might want to take a bus to Tel Aviv. The bus system in Israel is very good, but some things may make you wonder why. For example, instead of paying your fare and getting on the bus the way we do here, you pay and then get a ticket. What's the ticket for? Presumably to prove you paid to ride the bus, but you paid the driver so he already knows that you're on the bus legally. And the tickets, they're very cheap, but for some reason the drivers do not al-

you to climb over them.

When you get to the city, if you haven't already done so, you may want to change money at a bank. By the time you figure out that one dollar equals 57 shekels and one shekel is worth about 1.8 cents, the rate probably will have changed. The actual transaction should take about a minute and a half but will most likely require twenty minutes. Having worked up an appetite, you proceed to the nearest falafel stand where you have the first of many pita and chick pea sandwiches. After seeing how much a Coke costs, you decide to drink water instead. Later that day you will have your first exposure to Middle Eastern politics when struck by the gastrointestinal ailment known as "Palestinian's revenge."

Your hunger satisfied, you head for the nearest phone to call your third cousin on your mother's side who lives in B'nai Berak. After walking a few feet, you remember your mother told you to change out of your tank top and shorts before going to see your cousin to avoid being

suit that was neatly stuffed in your pack and now looks as though it was used as a dish towel, you go in search of a telephone. The heat and humidity quickly reduce your suit to a wet dishtowel, and you decide to take a short diversion to the beach. The beach is crowded but nice although you are occasionally hit by errant balls from the game all the Israelis seem to be playing.

It's time to find a phone which you succeed in doing after walking six blocks. There are two phones, one is out of order and the other has a line of 12 people wait-

and picks up six more people along the way who fail to recognize that you are not an armrest.

At last you arrive at your destination. Shakily emerging from the taxi, you pay the driver a fare you know is a rip-off, but you're so glad to still be alive you say nothing. You go to the apartment building with your cousin's address and walk seven flights of stairs to the correct apartment and ring the bell. The door opens and nine kids, ages four to thirteen, rush out knocking you and your backpack over. You look

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Prepare yourself for the Israeli personality, a caricature of the stereotype New Yorker.

ways have tickets to match the fare so you end up getting three or four tickets. Once on the bus, you will notice Israelis have an attraction to the aisle seats and will not move to the window seat (no matter how much luggage you have) nor will they get up to allow you in; instead, they will force

stoned. You sneak into a hotel inconspicuous with your six foot backpack, sleeping bag, tent, and Coleman lantern, and slip into the restroom to change just as you feel your political orientation about to begin.

Emerging from the bathroom in your

ing. A half hour later, it's your turn and you go to put your shekel in the phone and discover that you need a token to make a call. In broken Hebrew you ask a passerby wearing a Fame t-shirt where you get phone tokens. The person looks at you incredulously and finally asks in English what it is you are trying to say. You are told to go to the post office.

As long as you are going to the post office you decide to buy a postcard to send to your parents (you won't send another the rest of the summer) and stop at the nearest souvenir shop conveniently located five feet away. You find a nice card showing the beach at Eilat. You are a little disturbed by the strange looking people sitting on the beach and begin to wonder how street people get from Berkeley to Eilat without drowning.

When you arrive at the post office, you are given three stamps for your postcard completely obliterating everything you wrote except "Dear Mom and Dad." You buy an *asimon* (token) for the telephone and soon locate a phone, but are unable to tell a dial tone from a busy signal and give up. You decide to take a taxi to your cousin's and succeed in flagging one down just before he hits you. After giving the driver the address you embark on a trip which reminds you of a cross between the chase scene in French Connection and an "E" ride at Disneyland. The driver stops

up from the prone position and see a man with a black suit, black hat, white beard, and side curls staring down at you. You pass out from exhaustion and dream of the trip home.

Mitchell Bard, a former Berkeleyan and now Ph.D. student at UCLA in political science, hopes to work for the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.



Ethiopian Jews in Need

American Jews are urged to send used clothing to Israel to be used by Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia. According to the American Committee for Ethiopian Jews, "They come with hardly more than the shirts on their backs and they have hardly enough money to pay for the bare essentials."

Clean, good quality, used clothing, used bedding or linens, used cloth diapers, and clothing for children of all ages is

needed. Packages should be shipped by surface (sea) mail and should be marked, "USED CLOTHING FOR NEW OLIM." The address of the warehouse in Israel handling the donations is:

American Committee
for Ethiopian Jews
c/o Rachamin Elazar
17/14 Eilat Street
Lod, Israel



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