

From Sidewalk to Sand:
A Journey from NYC to DWRMEpisode One — Food Shopping

By Arthur Shapiro

My wife Marlene and I moved to DWRM in November from the Upper Eastside of New York City, 79th Street and the East River, to be exact.

While many on the east coast, especially New Yorkers (or should I say New Yawkers), head to Florida for their next chapter, we chose instead to head west. Lots of reasons, including close to family; the preference for dryness and the desert as opposed to humidity and swamps; among other reasons. Besides, too many relatives in Florida.

We love it here. I know, you're probably thinking, "Let's see what he says when it's 120° outside." Well, we are prepared for it. We'd rather take the dry heat than the slush and splash of an NYC winter. But as lifelong New Yorkers, it's more than a little "culture shock."

Let's start with the basics, grocery shopping. Supermarkets in Manhattan are small. How small? So small that you go outside to change your mind. So small that aisles are limited by customer size and weight. It was not unusual to hear this announcement: "Attention! Customer stuck in aisle #4. Bring the lard."

Get the picture?

So, imagine our surprise the first time we walked into a Ralph's or Gelson's. We gawked at these cavernous stores that looked like they were built over a football field.

Most of the time in an unfamiliar store, we become like deer caught in headlights. And Marlene and I change roles. She refuses to ask for where things are, and I stop everyone to ask where to find stuff.

On one occasion, we were in Ralph's, and spent an hour walking through this behemoth store. Totally exhausted, we headed for checkout, only to realize that we forgot to buy eggs. When we learned that eggs were at the other end of the store, we looked at each other and said, "Forget it, we'll eat breakfast out."

We now order groceries online.