

## My Friendly Neighborhood Albertson's Store

Darlene Baird Missionary Journal

I walk into a small room with tiny aisles, jam-packed shelves stuffed with a small selection of canned goods. Sugar and flour are packaged in one-pound containers and are sitting next to a variety of fresh baked bread. The fresh fruit and vegetables occupy one-half of the store. The fruits and vegetables, all labeled as to country grown, are a multi colored backdrop for bobbing black haired shoppers. And there are olives, olives and more olives.

Twenty-two different varieties all displayed in three inch deep pans approximately twelve by twenty inches in size. The olives set in a corner of the store occupying more room than the canned food display. Customers spend an enormous amount of time choosing the perfect olive to purchase. Most customers select several varieties stacking their little olive filled cups in their blue shopping basket. Women chatter as they discuss the merits of the olives. Men nod as they use the tongs to turn each olive for inspection and then they make a little high-pitched sound as they discover their perfect olive. All are smiling as they complete the olive ritual.

Silly me, I thought olives were black or ahem, olive green and a really special live has a tiny piece of red pimento just to add color. These olives come in many shades of yellow, green, black, brown and surprise red! Some olives as big as my thumb, some are shriveled, others plump and juicy, others are wrapped in grape leaves, others seem to be swimming in oil.

The first three pans of olives are very pungent smelling. There are two pans of olive-nut combinations that are not odor free!

Cost: \$2.27 per pound. I wonder is there a list of olives rules?

As I am standing in the checkout line I listen to three women giggling and talking behind me. I glance at them, they all look away, I turn my head, more chatter, I glance again at the bride, the mom, the aunt. They are talking about the white eggs that I have in my blue basket.

Oh, I have a glimmer of understanding "white eggs for the white haired lady." They giggle- I look at the brown eggs they are going to purchase; I smile, "I'm sorry, no black eggs." Startled eyes then peals of laughter!

That will be sixteen Looney's, please.

Nasir "MY GREAT BIG FAT GREEK GROCERY STORE!"