

A Conversation with Magdalini Fliska

March, 2011



Congratulations to Magdalini Fliska, our Exchange Visitor of the Month! Magdalini came here from Greece to study chocolate making at Barry Callebaut USA in New Jersey. I recently sat down with Magdalini to chat about her exchange experience so far.

How are you finding life in the US?

Pretty good! I'm trying to go all around and meet new people and see new places! I didn't expect it to be this good. I couldn't believe it!

Tell me a little about your training.

Everyone there is really nice and really helpful. In the morning we have a meeting going over what happened the day before and then I go out to the plant to work on measuring how the plant works and if there are any ways to improve the processes. Then I'll have lunch with colleagues and in the afternoon I speak with my supervisor and the plan manager also, about what data I collected that morning.

It's very interesting to see how chocolate is produced. Here we produce all of the Hershey chocolate so if you see it in the store now you know where it came from!

Do you find that you eat more chocolate now?

Yes! At first no, because I was around it all day but somehow it just happened!

What do you like to do outside of your training?

I like to travel and see different cities like New York, DC, Philly and Princeton to see the university there. It's all quite different from European cities with the larger buildings and busier pace.

What is your favorite city?

New York, definitely. I've been there 4 or 5 times already! You never can get enough of it! All the lights and the life on the streets!

You mentioned DC as well, what did you think of that city?

DC was nice too. We walked from the museums to the white house and all the monuments. It was huge! I'm planning to go back when the weather is nicer in the spring. It was something completely different!

In all of your travels have there been any stereotypes of the US that you have found to be true or untrue?

The flag! It's everywhere! I was told to expect that. Also, Americans are really open and chatty, which is good for me because I'm chatty too!

How have you shared your culture while you've been here?

I have shared Greek recipes with my colleagues. One colleague asked for a recipe for Tzatziki to try to make it and he really liked it! We also shared about our different traditions for Christmas and now Easter coming up.

What is your favorite memory?

Hmmm...maybe when I went to see a Broadway show in New York. We stayed very high in a hotel on Times Square, maybe the 31st floor about. The view from the room was over the square - all the lights and streets at night were amazing!

What do you want to do before you go home?

Visit more places! Meet more people and make more friends. I would also like to participate in the road races in Philly.

Any advice for future J-1 Exchange Visitors?

Get out of your house! See as much as you can and be open to the American way of living.

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Published on Immigration Policy Center (<http://www.immigrationpolicy.org>)

Source URL: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/participants/conversation-magdalini-fliska>