

Interview with Arjana de Bruin

Internship at Ayko Lingerie

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Could you briefly introduce yourself?

Merhaba, my name is Arjana de Bruin, I am 22 years old and I study International Business and Languages at the Hanzehogeschool in Groningen, the Netherlands.

Why and how did you decide to do an internship in Turkey?

First of all I love to travel and learn about other countries and cultures, as my study choice might suggest. Therefore I wanted to go abroad again for my final thesis internship and as my fiancée's parents are living in Istanbul we decided to try to get an internship here.

What were your expectations before coming to Istanbul?

As I visited Istanbul before, I already knew what a wonderful and lively city it is. I also expected that family and friends are very important to Turkish people and that they are very friendly.

How did you first feel when you came to the Turkey?

In the beginning I had to get used to the idea that I was going to live in such a busy city for 5 months. The ad-hoc decisions and sort of chaotic (less organised than I was used to) way of life were also things to keep in mind.

Can you tell us a bit about what you did within the hosting company? And whether or not you faced any difficulties?

I did my internship with Ayko Lingerie at the Asian side of Istanbul. For Ayko I conducted research about the lingerie markets in Iran, Syria and Azerbaijan and I wrote an export plan for the Azeri market. As you can imagine, it is quite a challenge to conduct research about countries you do not know much about from a country which is not your home country. All kinds of difficulties occurred during the research: from embassy employees who did not speak any English (Türkçe?) to the struggle to find useful information. Within the company I had nice colleagues and wonderful supervisors who were very supportive. I found it interesting to see the (strategical) changes the company was going through and what effect this had on the employees.

How about your life outside work?

Well, because I lived in Beşiktaş and my workplace was somewhere at the Asian side of Istanbul the long travel time to and from work resulted in very long working days from 7.30 until 20.00 hrs. Thus during weekdays there was not much time left for me to go anywhere besides food hunting. During weekends I tried to go and see as much of Istanbul as possible like museums, mosque's, palaces and parks, or we visited my fiancée's parents. And a personal favorite time spending of mine is shopping in one of Istanbul's many malls or at İstiklal Caddesi.

What did you and didn't you like about living in Istanbul?

I like that Istanbul is a city with a long history where there is always something to do or someplace to visit. A lively city with friendly people who love to play backgammon and enjoy their tea and nargile till the early hours (right under my window, which made it

sound like I had 20 people right in the room with me!). Regarding my accommodation I didn't like the frequent lack of water for periods of 2 to 3 days at a time; nor was I a fan of the busy traffic all over the city.

Any surprises & astonishments?

I was astonished about the people in my neighbourhood who seemingly accepted the frequent lack of water, but as people say in Turkey ' İnşallah' and that's that.

What are your future plans?

I hope to graduate and find a job as a marketing person for an international company either in the Netherlands or abroad. And I hope to travel much more in the future.
