

## **Felix' Erfahrungen in den USA: New York City, New York - Januar - April 2010**

"On the 15th of January I arrived at Newark Airport in New York. After the normal checkout procedure I took the train to the city. As soon as I exited Penn Station on 34th Street in Manhattan I was just stunned. Of course I have seen the skyline and the city before in magazines, films and TV series but once you are there for real, it just blows you away! It was already dark and the city was shining in its bright lights. Yellow cabs were rushing by and honking. It was the lively and amazing city I had imagined.

I found somebody in Manhattan via couchsurfing.org who let me stay at his place for the first nights until I find an apartment on my own. After I caught my breath again I got a cab and went a few blocks uptown.

While I looked out of the car window I saw the brand new "New York Times" building and slowly began to realize that I finally arrived. My host for the first days was not just friendly and heartwarming but also became a friend. He lives in a small but very nice apartment on 48th street close to Times Square. After welcoming me, he invited me for dinner to a very cozy Thai restaurant.

I arrived on Friday and my work was going to start on Tuesday so I had a few free days to explore the city and to find an apartment (there aren't any flats around here, buddy you're in the States not overseas). The tourist I was and definitely still am, I went to Times Square and stood there with approximately hundreds of other tourists mouth open and astonished. The next few days passed by quickly.

I went to 5th Avenue, the Apple Store, the Metropolitan Museum of Arts and Downtown Manhattan to Ground Zero and the Financial District. In the mornings I jogged in Central Park, which was another highlight of my first days.

If you enter Central Park, you enter somehow another world within this busy city. This green oasis surrounded by the most expensive apartments in New York, maybe in the world is the place New Yorkers and tourists go to relax, hang out with friends and do sports.

On Tuesday was finally the day my internship started. I went to the NBC Visitors Office on the first floor of the GE Building on Rockefeller Plaza and got my NBC-pass with which I was allowed to pass the security and get onto the elevator. I signed an approximately 30 page-contract for my internship at the research department and one part of it is that I am not allowed to publish anything of my internship. If you like numbers, facts and studies about different segments of the society than it is the right place for you.

My workdays started between 9 and 9:30am and usually ended at 6pm. The atmosphere is positive and the colleagues are friendly and helpful. You do not get any financial compensation apart from that the ride to work and back home is paid for.

NBC has a fitness center within the building, it is not for free but by far less expensive than all the places to work out in Manhattan and of course it is a good place to meet people from other departments.

My first goal was to find an apartment, which was not as easy as I thought it would be. I used craigslist.org and apparently there is no other website around. It took me a while to get used to the site because the navigation is not the best. I looked at many places but most of them were too far away or too expensive. I finally found a shared apartment in Brooklyn close to the Franklin Ave subway station for 750 Dollars per month including everything. The commute to my work took me around about 40 minutes, which is pretty alright for Manhattan.

There is probably hardly anything New York does not offer. It is great for a night out, visiting the stunning museums, endless shopping, sightseeing or just strolling through the streets and avenues. The only downside of New York are the prices, which are sky high.

The weekends I used to discover the other parts of the city. I went to the culturally mixed Williamsburg, which is in the North of Brooklyn just two train-stops away from Midtown Manhattan. Here live young artists, orthodox Jews, students and everybody who wants to live in a more relaxed, less expensive neighborhood than Manhattan. There are plenty of cafes, little bookstores, organic supermarkets, shops with self-designed or second-hand clothes and a park where everybody meets as soon as the sun comes out a little bit.

Another trip worthwhile is Five Points in Queens. If you are at least a little bit interested in graffiti, you should definitely check out these old warehouses with their cladding full of artistic graffiti. There are also some small alternative art museums around which show more or less interesting installations. The close by PS 1 is definitely worth checking out.

One of my favorite places in Brooklyn is the DUMBO district - Down-Under-Manhattan Bridge Overpass - with its amazing view on the Manhattan skyline. When it is a sunny day you can wander around there for hours and discover the beautiful area with its little shops and restaurants or just to observe people.

If you want to meet people, New York is a great place for. New Yorkers are always kind of busy and in a rush but most of the time very helpful if you ask for subway directions or information about their city. Phone numbers are often exchanged after a brief chat to meet up for a drink or two.

In total I stayed here for two and a half months. I would definitely do it again, but next time I would stay a longer period of time."