

Arlind Kacirani



For this week's #humansofOISS edition, we talked to @arlind.kacirani, a first-year Chemical Engineering PhD student at the School of Engineering & Applied Science, and originally from the city of Shkoder in Albania.

Q: Arlind, are there any obvious cultural differences between Albanians and U.S. Americans?

A: While the U.S. American culture has become a conglomerate of very diverse cultures, I would say there are some distinct features between Albanian and American way of life. Albanians tend to spend a lot of time cooking; while some Albanian dishes take several hours to prepare, the culture of ordering out is new and not popular in Albania. Albanian people are big consumers of coffee. Centers of some of the biggest cities in Albania are dominated by the so-called "Bar Kafe" that stay open all day. Albanian culture is also known internationally for its religious harmony where muslims, catholics and othrodocs christians co-celebrate each other's holidays.

Q: What's a special holiday food in Albania?

A: One of the most prominent authentic holiday dishes in Albania is the "ballokume". Ballokume is a biscuit-like dessert prepared traditionally in the city of Elbasan during the spring festival day, Dita e Veres. Its main ingredient is goat ghee and in its 'proper' form it melts in your mouth. The city of Elbasan attracts people from all over the country during Dita e Veres to taste the delicious ballokume. Hard to find authentic ballokume nowadays but definitely one of my favorite Albanian holiday foods.

Q: Do you have any favorite work spots at Yale?

A: Although I've seen much of Yale's campus, I think there is still a lot out there for me to explore. I usually spend

my time at Sterling Memorial Library (and in Bass) which is one of my favorite spots to study or work on assignments. Marx Science Library is also a good work spot when I want to be closer to my apartment. I can't wait to explore more of what Yale has to offer in terms of study spaces this upcoming summer.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CcYb0DAJ1-q/> [1]

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