

This month, Alex is pen pals with caterer Janinne Bracha Shor from Baltimore, Maryland. The two discuss world travel, bread baking, and tips for young entrepreneurs.

Dear Janinne,

Hi. I'm Alex. I'm 13 years old and I live in Colorado.

My dad says he's known you since college, and that you traveled around the world in a group taking classes on a ship and visiting more than a dozen countries. That sounds amazing. What was it like?

Thank you for being my pen pal.

Sincerely,
Alex



Alex

Alex!!!!

So happy to hear from you. I live in Baltimore. Semester at Sea is amazing. I loved getting to see so many cultures and taste so many different flavors. It was more of a snapshot of each place because we didn't stay in any country very long. If you could pick anywhere to travel, where would you go?

I'm a caterer. I love to share food and experience new dishes. It's fun for me to create menus and recipes. And I get paid for it!

Sincerely,
Janinne



Janinne is a caterer and spends lots of time cooking and baking.

Dear Janinne,

I hope to visit Brazil and go on a river cruise with my dad. What country was your favorite to visit?

Catering sounds interesting. Do you do a lot of baking? What inspired you to become a chef? What is your favorite thing to make?

When I go to my grandma's house, we make rhubarb bread. But I think it was a cooking unit in school last year that inspired me most to learn to bake.

Best Regards,

Alex



Cooking for a crowd's easier with kitchen tools like this food processor!

Dear Alex,

I really like to make Indian food, challah, and desserts. I've been making challah for three years. I make a batch and give away whatever I don't need. This week we are making 100 challahs. The goal of sharing the challah is to share the warmth of home-baked bread. It's fun. And yummy.

My favorite country? That's a tough one. On Semester at Sea, I would say India. The people and foods were amazing. However my favorite country I've ever visited was Ireland. The cliffs. The people. Everywhere was green.

What's the thing you most enjoy learning about?

With super fond regards,

Janinne



A haul of challah, ready to bake.

Dear Janinne,

Is it stressful baking so much challah on top of being a caterer? My mom is Hungarian. They have a similar bread for holidays and special occasions called kalács [pronounced *ko-lach*].

What is the name of your catering company? What tips can you offer young people who want to become entrepreneurs?

I also like Indian food, but it doesn't come out right when I make it. My favorite dish is chicken tikka masala. What's yours?

I like learning to make digital art. I draw one project each week to get better. I got a new tablet and stylus pen, and I've started doing paid art commissions.

Talk to you soon,

Alex



Alex creates digital art with a tablet and stylus.

Alex,

It's not stressful making so much bread. I love it. The goal of giving away the bread is to add a little happiness to people's week. I am an observant Jew and I keep Shabbat (the Sabbath). Challah is to enjoy on the day of rest. I love sharing that calmness that comes from disconnecting one day each week and focusing on yourself and family.

I just bought a Bosch food processor. My biggest difficulty in the bread-making process was kneading the dough. For 100 challahs, it takes a long time and requires effort to do it by hand. Now with the machine, it's much easier. I then get volunteers to help braid the dough. Then all that's left is to bake it. That's easy.

Sweet and Good Catering is the name of my company. Every year at Rosh Hashanah we give a blessing to each other that the year be "Good and Sweet." There's a belief that everything happens for our good even if it doesn't seem good at the time. So the blessing is that everyone should not only experience the "good" but that the good should also be sweet. I flipped the words and came up with the name Sweet and Good Catering.

My favorite Indian food is dosas. They are huge pancakes stuffed with deliciousness and served with chutneys and soup. I could literally eat it all day.

I love that you are practicing digital art. Please send me a picture of something you created. And look at you. An entrepreneur selling your work. Woo-hoo!

My biggest tip on becoming a business owner: recognize that making mistakes is an important part of the process. Really, life is one big experiment. Not all experiments work out the way you want. It's a learning process. You try. If it doesn't work, you tweak the process and try again. Everyone will make mistakes.

Everyone will fail. That's normal and should be expected. If you know it's coming and know it's a tool to help you improve, then it's not so scary.

Alex, it's been so much fun writing to you!!!!

Take care,

Janinne

