

Immigration Law ≅ Foodservice



Becki L. Young



Jennifer Ward

A Canadian Culinary Journalist Takes On DC

by Becki L. Young

In addition to those who have chosen to make the US their permanent home, many foreigners come to the US each year on a temporary basis, to work in foodservice and related industries. Canadian Jennifer Ward is a food blogger and aspiring writer. A decade of experience in the foodservice industry has led her to her current career in culinary journalism.

Like many young people, Jennifer started out waitressing in her native Canada as a summer job after graduating from high school. For the next decade she worked on and off as a server and bartender at diverse locations including a mountain lodge, an urban bistro, a Victorian teahouse, and an upscale artisanal coffee company.

In addition to imparting practical skills, Jennifer says that these years in the foodservice industry provided her with an unexpected source of education, and imbued her with a deep and lasting

love of food and wine.

From the passionate chefs with whom she worked she gained knowledge of wine selection and service, ingredient sourcing, culinary products (such as distinguishing between different types of oils), as well as cooking skills (making reductions). From a customer in a bar where she worked, she learned to appreciate fine Scotch.

After graduating from college in 2005 Jennifer moved to Vancouver and began writing seriously, then decided to pursue a journalism career. She began writing on a variety of topics, submitting her work for publication while continuing to work in the foodservice industry.

In 2006 she married and moved to the US with her husband, also a Canadian. He was granted F1 student status to study at Syracuse University in New York, and she received F2 status as his dependent.

Because she wasn't authorized to work in the US as an F2 dependent, she needed to find something to occupy herself; at the same time she wanted to continue to hone her writing skills and to gain exposure for her craft. She started a food blog (freshcrackedpepper.com, subtitled "eating my way to health, peace, and place"). It was the perfect opportunity for the newly transplanted (and newly wed) Canadian to share recipes and connect with her family back home. It also enabled her to keep track of recipes that worked (and those that didn't) and to record new eating and drinking experiences.

After graduating from the Master's program in Journalism at Syracuse University, in May 2009, she received one year of "Optional Practical Training" status, allowing her to pursue U.S. employment in her field.



"The year Gourmet magazine went bankrupt" was not an auspicious time for the young food writer to begin her career in culinary journalism. However, thanks in no small part to her food blog and foodservice knowledge, she secured a coveted internship in the Food Department of The Atlantic. She is currently working on The Atlantic Food Channel (food.theatlantic.com), which focuses on "smart, relevant, thought provoking coverage of all things food, with an emphasis on personal narratives and sustainability."

As to what the more distant future may hold, Jennifer is still uncertain. She hopes to continue her work in food journalism, most likely in the U.S. until her husband completes his Ph.D. Because her immigration status in the U.S. is temporary, she would need sponsorship from a U.S. employer to remain in the country beyond that time. But as a talented young culinary journalist, "the world is her oyster," quite literally.

Becki L. Young has been working in the field of immigration law since 1995. Ms. Young's practice focuses on employment-based immigration law. She has represented employers in a variety of industries, including investment banking and securities, information technology, health care, and hospitality, providing advice on work permits and related immigration issues, and is the co-editor of *Immigration Options for Essential Workers* published by the American Immigration Lawyers Association. To learn more or to schedule a personal consultation, call 202-232-0983 or e-mail becki.young@blylaw.com.

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