

Transcript

Episode Title: Becoming a Wine Professional in Lisbon with Cha McCoy

Release Date: June 17, 2021

Cha McCoy (00:00:00)

Once you get a taste of it, for sure you know what you want to go back to you want to go back to that feeling. You want to go back to that. And I always tell myself that even when I'm dating, I'm like, if somebody treated me bad, I'm like, I know what good guys feel like I know what it feels like to feel loved. So why am I going through this trash with this guy? It's the same idea. And I go, Okay, I'm in America. I feel like all I do is take the subway, see nobody at the same time if I'm not gonna see anybody besides like, once a month or once a season because we're all busy. Then I can just live in Portugal and fly in once a month or once a season and see my friends, then what's the difference? I don't see you anyway.

Christine Job (00:00:43)

Hey, everyone, welcome to Flourish In The Foreign, a podcast that celebrates, elevates and affirms the voices and stories of Black women living and thriving abroad. While exploring living abroad as a pathway to wellness. I'm your host, Christine Job, a Black American business strategist, and podcaster based in Barcelona, I went from burnt out in the states to thriving abroad, and I want you to do so as well. As a business strategist, I help Black Women and women of color, leverage their talents and their expertise into viable and sustainable online and businesses, businesses that make them professionally fulfilled and financially abundant. I helped my incredibly ambitious and competent and brilliant clients utilize their magic in the pursuit of their own dreams. I take my clients through my signature 12 weeks sprint, in which we go from ideation to purpose driven business and sales. If you are interested in building a business abroad and taking your talents and your expertise, and really utilizing them in the pursuit of your own dreams and the pursuit of your own life vision, get at me, go to the website www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources and get my free build a business abroad guide. And then go ahead and check out all the many ways that we can work together from helping you with moving abroad questions to helping you launch the business of your dreams. You can find out all the information at www.flourishintheforeign.com. Flourish In The Foreign is a labor of love, but y'all know it, it's labor, none the less. And that is why I asked all of you to please support this beautiful Black Woman podcast. You can support Flourish in the form by becoming a Patreon member at www.patreon.com/flourishforeign where I have an amazing library of articles all about moving abroad, thriving abroad from all around the world. So check that out and other resources exclusively for our patrons. You can buy me a coffee at www.buymeacoffee.com/flourishforward. You can cash out the podcast that dollar sign Flourish foreign, you can purchase a piece of a sorely needed podcast production equipment via our Amazon wishlist which you can find at www.flourishintheforeign.com/support. And as always make sure that you rate and review this podcast. It is so important and share it amongst all of your friends and your family and on social media. Tag Flourish In The Foreign at Flourish Foreign and I'll be sure to repost. I'm looking forward to being a panelist for the Digital Nomads Beyond 50 Summit. It has over 20 panelists with over 25 topics and it's a live virtual event of information and inspiration for those in their late 40s who have a location independent life plan to or just curious, you're ready for this. Register now because early adopters get \$10 off, and 10% of profits will be donated to charity www.water.org. You can grab your ticket in the description of this episode or on the show notes page of this episode, or on the resources page of

Flourish In The Foreign at www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources and I'll see y'all there. All right, on to the next episode.

Today's guest is Cha McCoy and Cha is a Somalian, public speaker, and the founder of Cha Squared Consulting, which is a Wine Experience company. I came across Cha via Instagram and her Instagram is so beautiful and so informative. And I just wanted to chat with her. And in our conversation, we really spoke about how it's so important to not only have the vision for your life in what you want to do, but also the tenacity because sometimes it doesn't work out exactly like you want it to, you know, thriving abroad, thriving and business isn't a linear path. But it is worthwhile if you are passionate and if you are purpose driven. But I'm gonna let her tell you all about it.

c (00:06:11)

Hi, my name is Cha McCoy. I am from New York City. And I am an expat in Lisbon, Portugal. And I'm, 34 my first time moving abroad was in 2010 and I moved to Italy. So that was actually a second expat does my second return expat adventure and I was yeah, so that was 10 years ago. And so I was 24 when I left. And I was there for about close to two years. So I was about 18 months to be exact. I was in Rome, Italy at that time. And then I returned back to the States for a long gap of time. But trust me, it's always been on my mind to return back to Europe in some way. I just needed to figure out myself figure out life a bit like why would I come back to Europe? How would I get a job, all those things were on my mind, but I also did not find wine then as far as my career path. And so I didn't know how to reconnect back with returning back to Europe or moving abroad again, what was going to be my thing like my purpose for moving abroad.

Christine Job (00:07:15)

I asked Cha, if she has any early childhood experiences or family influence that planted the seeds of her desiring a life abroad.

Cha McCoy (00:07:27)

There was some important I guess, if I was looking at we talked about our lives probably like, you may look at the someone that you thought was a great example of a mother or someone who had always went to work, but when I grow up, I want to go to work. I never really knew what it meant to move abroad or to be an expat. But there were people who were in my life who did it when I when I was young that I remember them telling me when I was growing up. So I had a vice principal who ended up turning to be our principal, she was a Black woman in my elementary school. I believe she moved to Spain when she was in college or something like this for a study abroad program. So that was like the first kind of introduction, I think the first time I've ever heard anybody that was like from Harlem or from New York, for sure, who said I lived here for whatever I got, of course, I don't know what study abroad means at this point. I'm an elementary school and but she was the first person that kind of introduced me just by like sharing that she was living in Europe that I knew that this was possible and to return back like she didn't move there and stay there for the rest of her life. But that there was such thing as like going out there and learning and then coming back to the next person around maybe high school, I was in a mentorship program. And I was more profound with her story because I was like, she was my mentor, my one-on-one mentor. And I was probably like, sophomore year of high school or so also a Black woman and she actually moved abroad to was even a little while Paraguay either way, it was a country I'd never heard of before. And so I was like where do you live? Because I've realized she spoke Spanish so well. And I never like we all lived in New York and I still didn't speak Spanish. But I am of course we had a lot of people that was Puerto Rican here, Dominican, etc. But I didn't grow up learning Spanish and so I was I thought it was like interested in that she knew Spanish she said "Oh, when I was in

college, I lived abroad, in Paraguay", something I think that one was the most impactful memory that I have of someone living abroad because I realized she learned this language while living in another country. And they come time when I was in high school a little bit later on. There was an opportunity, which I guess I realized my mother wasn't the goat. But there was two people in my actual high school program who went and did an exchange program abroad. So I do recall her name is Rosemarie, I never forget that she was in my high school class. So she's a junior or senior year, she actually was like gone the entire year and then like returned and I was like, were you and I don't remember what country she was in. But I do recall that she did a full study abroad program in high school which so these three I just want to say instances was something that kind of sparked me about doing a study abroad program for when I actually left for college. So I was pretty much aware of it and knew was a thing to go to study abroad. I ended up not doing it because I ended up pledging my sorority the year I was supposed to move to London when I was in university. So I did not do it in my undergrad. But that's, those were early instances that actually made me feel like oh, what's this abroad thing or people leaving the country and going to countries that not that they have family and but just completely random countries.

Christine Job (00:08:29)

Cha had the opportunity to study abroad for her MBA program. And so I asked her to describe what that experience was like for her.

Cha McCoy (00:10:40)

It was I was, like I said, it was about 24/25. So this was way later in my life, I already had a career started after college, etc. So it was a little bit different than like, oh, like, I guess everyone else that I learned about, who like picked up in went while they were still in like a transition phase, I was probably in more of a personal transition phase. And without going into too much about my life. At that time I was engaged, I was ready for a change. And I didn't feel like the relationship I was in was going to be going in the direction I wanted to go in. So I was ready for a break overall. So I had already enrolled and got into my to my university for my MBA, I was doing international business, I after applying into the program, my graduate advisor basically told me that I can do like they would, I guess some people did just to get this exposure abroad to because it was better for your resume, was they went in for a month, because like some classes that you take for like, like everyday for one month. So it was like this intense course that you would do in like London, which I ended up still doing. But it was these different type of courses that they had abroad. Because we know though we don't have a campus in London, we have a full campus in Italy. So Italy actually being because at a school like they didn't have another place for me to go with my MBA degree. But people who did like study abroad and undergrad, they did have Spain, I think also France and London to go to. But this is more for people who were willing to like transition completely over them. And once I actually got to Italy, most of the program because we had our own campus, there was 50/50, probably Americans who either came straight to the university to do a graduate degree. Most of them did like a master's in something related to like, let's say work related to the UN. Most of them went on to work for the UN or the World Food Program, which is also underneath like almost UNICEF and UN underneath these initiatives. There's a lot of people came more for that. So it makes sense for them to do a Master's abroad. And then an MBA program was a little bit smaller, but they were people who were already in corporate but in Europe, Johnson and Johnson has a big headquarters in Italy. So our program was at night. So it was made as an executive MBA program. So people were doing a full time job during the day, which is what I did originally here in New York. And then I ended up going out there and quitting my job and didn't end up focusing strictly on my MBA program. So it was interesting to be in, let's say, an environment where I had a few professional battalions that was working next to me in class with me, then I had some Americans from different states. And then I had a couple of people that's from Croatia and Germany, that came down to be a part

of this MBA program. So it also gave me an outlook on just like meeting and being around just Europeans in more collective way. And not like in passing or in travels that I appreciated too because of course, we're mister still school, we're doing projects together, we're working together, collaborating, most people intern with each other, if they were not already full-time companies, they were in Italy. So for a professional view, I really felt like it was a good step ahead if I wanted to continue in finance, which is what I ended up like my entering, and I was going to do more banking. But that was like the original, like first start of how I got like the vibe of how people move. Like, I didn't realize so much like people like, "Oh no, I'm gonna fly here and be a part of this program". And then I'm gonna apply for a job up in Germany. And I was like, what do you know, I guess because America is so big. We're normally talk like, we're gonna go from this state, maybe to that state. And then that's probably the extent of it, but there to hear people saying, "Oh, yeah!", they have dreams or goals of like applying for some corporate headquarters up in Amsterdam, and then going to Sudan and to do time in the Peace Corps. Like these are the things that I never even thought of or new people did personally in my circle. So it did give me a more global a worldly perspective on how I would say that I looked at life even today, and how you look at business today, because there is probably a very, not that that is a little bit but I think there's just very few who think that way who feel like we move with no boundaries like just because you studied in Italy doesn't mean that you have to come back and live in Italy. You can pick up and move to London in next week, and see if that works out. And if that doesn't work out, go to another country. And so I like that kind of like freedom or flexibility that came with being around them as they describe their lives or know their background when they moved or how they moved around Europe, at least for sure.

Christine Job (00:15:17)

I asked Cha, what was her experience with dating in Italy.

Cha McCoy (00:15:22)

So Italy was interested in again, this is pre the Tinder and all that other stuff that we have now. But I would say I, I was still very much like fresh off of like breaking up a relationship, breaking up a relationship with someone. So in that case, it was I wasn't really trying to put myself out there, I ended up meeting someone, I don't know how many people know. But I'm sure many of us, it's definitely like in New York, a lot of friends that I grew up with, or even relatives, if they were really good in basketball, and they didn't make it in the NBA, they go move to another country. And so I actually ended up having a friend through a friend who actually was playing basketball in Italy, who was from the Bronx in New York. So in this case, it was in Southern Italy, and his team was in Southern Italy. And so the guy that I did date, while I was out there was one of his teammates. So I actually had a, like a relationship of some sort with someone who was from there. But it wasn't from like just passing them in the street. It's because I had already a connection with his teammate. And so I feel very comfortable to be kind of like, like, I know, he would take care of me and make sure this guy wasn't you know, traveling to the different cities while he was playing basketball and like cheating on me. Like, I was okay with venturing into like a relationship with him. I felt safe. If you want to say everybody else, I don't know what their like intentions were, it was kind of weird. I think a lot of people do think about how Black Women are fetishize in certain countries. And then I can definitely say there was obvious difference when I was being looked at compared to my friends who were of all the nationalities who were next to me while I was walking around, I was living in Rome. And so that always was something interesting. Maybe it worked in our favor, maybe we get free drinks, or something like this, or maybe a good conversation, or maybe someone's cute, which is, it's cool for that time. But I never took it more seriously than that I never like pursued it further. Because I was like, I'm not someone's, I didn't want that type of relationship. So that's my thought of it. And then the other one, only one guy, actually, I did, it was black. And he was from Cameroon. And then he actually by way of Toulouse, he was there working in IT.

So I do remember or recall like these three people that are like dated meaning like we went on several dates and make connections, etc. And I maybe I would have probably been a little bit more open. But I think I was a little bit more scared than anything. And I think that language barrier, I was younger. And I think being a little alone, when I'm came out to Italy. That was my first time coming to Italy. I didn't do that. I think that's the reason why I did something different when I came to Portugal, because I packed up all my things sight unseen, which sounds a little crazy. But to be honest, you just kind of hope that it looks the way it looks in the movies. And then, and then I just kind of went for it. And so I didn't, I never came and visited Italy before then. And so when I was there, I was a little, I wouldn't say shy. But there was some things that I know now it was my first time abroad, but that I was a little bit scared to go to Florence without somebody. And I mean, I think anybody who traveled in Europe, you understand how easy it is to jump on a train, and just get to another city in the same country, just like if you use the Amtrak in the States. So these little things I remember in the beginning where I was hesitant, and I would like didn't go do as much stuff until friends would invite me and I would go with them. Now I go wherever I want by myself on the trains and the buses and cross to different countries and stuff. But I would just get on a train like not being able to figure out the language and stuff. And then like people asking me questions and being lost. So it was originally, it was like, okay, I sheltered myself for a bit. And let's friends had me there, one of my closest friends is from Alabama. And she, I met her through my MBA program, and now she lives in Berlin, Germany, so and I've been fortunate enough to go visit her several times in Italy because I continue to, she lived there when I moved back to the States. So every time I came back, it was like a good way to like reconnect with Italy but also check on her and so we continue to be friends past that, but it was difficult probably for me to really deep dig deep into the Italian community. And even more so if people don't know this. If European community not large, but it's present because of previous histories of the two countries Italy or Mussolini at the time tried to be like the other countries were trying to like okay, we're gonna make the whole east coast of Africa, Italian like how the French took over the West Coast, etc. So clearly they failed if you don't know history, so there's not a large population of Ethiopians there. But they're awesome. And I would have that is something that when I look back at my time there, I wish I really did. just dive deeper into the language, so I wouldn't feel so I don't wanna say nervous, but it's like I feel comfortable just going into their houses with them because a lot of them wanted me to come with them and chill and all this other stuff. But like, just to get a sentence out was like, like, because they either had like an accent or something that I didn't pick up. So even if I knew the word, sometimes just hearing it differently, especially with me as a beginner language learner, it was it was a little mess. I was like, "Oh, God, I can't". Like I see she's laughing. I understand the joke happening. But I don't know what's being said. So, so it was always good energy.

Christine Job 20:31

So Cha didn't go to school for viticulture, or for winemaking or anything like that. And so I asked her to tell me what was her journey to wine.

Unknown Speaker 20:44

So when I was there, I actually did, a friend from the program. She was like, "Oh, ciao, let's go to like, the vineyards on a weekend!" and, I was like, "Oh, yeah, this sounds fine". Like we have this right in our backyard. And she's also from New York. And so I was like, yeah, let's do these things. The difference is that she was on there for like, like, a semester only. So she really was into like, she's here to do everything she can, why she's only like here for and we did like quarters. So she was there maybe for like three months. So I remember what she was, it forced me to do a little bit more outside of what I was doing on my own because she was the one pushing it like, and so we was going to vineyards. And I was like, "Oh, this is this is fun". I love learning about wine. But I never really thought of it as a job or

anything like that. But that was my first like, official experiences that go into vineyards, etc. It was because I was already accessible to them from living in Italy. And then just being at the table, people being from Europe, in the fact that we lived in Italy, and a lot of people who were there they were studying the language. And so learning about the wine, everybody else seemed like they knew they was talking about except for me. So I was the one who was like, "Oh, God, I gotta figure out what's going on". Because I'm just going yeah, whatever she got, I want the same thing. She was happy with it. I want that too. And I didn't really understand anything about food pairing, etc. But I understand that that'd be to be a big thing for Italians that food and wine is like hand in hand, like saying that wine is also like a food group for them. And then decided to fast forward. When I came back to the States. I wasn't like how do I still connect with a culture that I really loved from living in Italy live in my dolce Vita. I was scared that I was back in the States. I didn't want to come back here with me like extreme reverse culture shock. And then literally, I was like, the first thing I thought of was like, oh, what about why, like, maybe I can just do something worldwide. And then. And then at that point, I did have a little bit more Italian under my belt when I returned back to the States. And so it was interesting. If, as you know, when you live in Spain, all the one you have accessible to you is Spanish one, you can't go like Oh, let me Don't try these wines from Australia. And let me try to German wines. So it was interesting, because that's what I was now used to is like all this Italian wine from different regions. If you lucky, if you had a really good wine shop, you can get ones that carry wines outside of the region that you live in. And so whenever I met when I was in New York, I was the like, I'm lucky I know it was about wine, asks me anything. But I only knew about Italian wine. So it was hilarious. Because I was like, Oh, that's so then I realized that was the like, the door that opened was in Italy. But I realized I had no clue about how much more wine or how much more about wine, I did not know because I felt like I knew it all from after like, I'm like what I spend time on vineyards, I visit the winemakers like I probably have more experience than everybody in the store. But that is that at the end of the day, I need to do more than just sell Italian so so it was a nice way to kind of introduce me to wine I should say I probably came in a little bit more cocky than I realized when I came working at the shop, Rose I knew nothing about Burgundy, Napa Valley anything and then denied you actually start learning about wine from the my mentor that I got at the store. And then the rest is history. That's where it all started.

Christine Job (00:23:57)

So Cha is well traveled, she has studied abroad, and now she is in love with wine. And she's starting to think about where does she want to be in this world. And so I asked her to kind of walk us through our thought process as she decided where she wanted to launch her career in wine.

Cha McCoy (00:24:21)

So I started to travel to different countries, specifically to wine country, sometimes with people like my family came with me when I went to South Africa. And then sometimes by myself, like when I went down to Chile and I stayed two months in Chile. And so I just kept hopping around to different wine countries. At one point I realized that's what I really love to do is like be on the vineyards talking with winemakers. And so I kind of like narrowed down my life because like I said in the beginning I always thought I got to eventually move back to Europe or move back out the country. Let's just say that move abroad again. And so I was doing my investigation kind of slowly by just doing visits here visits there and I narrowed it down to two countries, one at that point I still never been to, which was Portugal. And then the other one was South Africa and South Africa. The reason why that didn't win was simply because well, let's just say two reasons why they both were my final ones. But Lisbon or Portuguese culture was very much for the wine industry. So both of them were wine countries clearly. And then also they both beach inside was part of their way of life. And so that was important for me being a New Yorker and having something different, and it also the cost of living. And so I knew that I probably would

have to quit my job in order to or save, and then kind of like figure things out when I got there. And so whatever country I'd be heading to be a place that was cheaper to live than where I was coming from. And so these were like my three main criteria's. And so that's how come both these two countries were like high on the list for me. And that, and obviously, at that time, I did started doing their investigation with Portugal, because I came in state a month in order to true into 2018 to truly, see if I actually like the way it feel before I committed to anything longer. And it was interesting, because I remember, like the last week or last day, I wasn't even going home, I was flying into Germany, and I was already at the airport, like almost about to cry, because I was like, I don't want to leave. Like, I just want to stay here forever. But I knew like you can imagine at this point, I have so much back in New York to figure out on how to leave, what do I do? Did I have enough money saved? All these things that kind of made me feel like the trip or the idea of getting from making it like a one month trip was felt like kind of dry, but I still had a job. And then it kind of felt impossible to even pull off. So how am I going to get to actually being fully abroad again. And so that was the real deal was like, try to investigate how to do it, how to get out there, or even just kind of decluttering my existing life so that I can really be able to get out there because I do I have my own apartment, I have a dog, I had a career. So it's a lot of things that I already had set my life up at this point in my mid 30s to really be able to actually make it out there. So this is before even like, can I survive once I get there? Which is kind of like how do I get my life in order to be able to go, and I was just sitting there like, "Oh my gosh!", it's gonna take me like over a year for me to get here full time because this is I have too much things that have to get in order before I leave.

Christine Job (00:27:18)

So Cha decides on Portugal. And you know, Portugal, at least at the time of this recording, is still a fairly popular spot for expats, for retirees, for people, people to visit. It's a beautiful, beautiful country. So I asked Cha why Portugal was the best fit for her.

Cha McCoy (00:27:41)

Everything when I arrived there, it was what I felt it, was kind of interesting, because it wasn't like the summertime, so I expected it to be probably a little bit slow. But come to find out the it was a popular month for conferences. So like you and I had talked earlier, Portugal relies heavily on tourism. And so that means they when it comes to like conferences being held there. So they can like be able to have the city obviously thriving and slow months was important and things like this. So when I was there, it was like we landed and then all of a sudden meaning we I had a friend with me because she was in Spain together first. And so like the first week, she was there with me and didn't she left to go back. And it was crazy because I was there and I wanted to like see how it is to live like a local everyday. But it was so many tourists there. Lisbon is so small. And so this this is like the largest tech conference in the world. And it was swarmed with people from different countries, but it's conference. So it was kind of funny being in that first week with everybody flying in, but it just showed the livelihood like the city was so much alive because of it. And so that was a good sign to see as well without me being in the heart of like July or something like this August, just to see how the city kind of came alive in that way. And then just slowly seeing how much opportunity it was, again, I really didn't know what I want to do in the wine industry. I know what as a wine consultant, I wanted to work with vineyards and possibly do operations or marketing and sales for them since I was there. Do these kind of like business work I do you have my MBA, and I have a career of doing a lot of work with large corporations. So in my case, I feel like the smaller companies can use my help. So in my mind, that was like, Okay, I have what it takes to be able to work for any of them. So let me just get my stuff in line and I need to just be in the wine industry doing it so I can be able to flourish. So that's why I came out there. Originally, it was the first breath of it was like I see an opportunity with the Portuguese wine in the American market in Scandinavia market where they just need help, I realized and I thought that I can be the one to help them. And so that's that was

like the main part too when I looked at like, oh, is there something for me to do here? What can I really create here? What can I get going? So that was the original thing and then tourism I'm really big into the tourism market was wine Tourism specifically because of all of my experience, personal experience. And I've also hosted trips, as well as did itinerary planning and trip building for people who were interested in Gastronomy adventures. And so that's basically what I thought is that, I'm abroad in a country that is focused on why, and I can help people when they come here, and be their destination manager, whether it's for larger groups, or family trips, or whatever, and so that also was a good reason, because Portugal is closer than South Africa. And the reason why Portugal ends up winning, my mom lives alone in New York City. So that was important for me to have some what have some sort of access, it was a lot of straight flights, I say was because the pandemic, there's not too many straight flights these days. But yeah, normally there is straight from New York to Lisbon. The flight is about six hours. And I have family in California. And it takes me about six hours to get there. So in my mind, I like calling Portugal the other coasts. So that's how I'm making my final decision.

Christine Job 31:03

I asked her to tell me what that first day in those first couple of days, weeks and months, were like, once she had landed in Lisbon.

Cha McCoy: (00:31:12)

When I first arrived, it was interesting. I always remember telling people like, you adore like, did they drop us off in like Africa, I've never seen a European country with an entire airport, everybody is black. It was like 90% black. And I think because like, so many countries in Africa use Lisbon as its hub before it goes to other countries to and then is a lot of people who actually is coming in from Angola, or Mozambique, etc, to come to Portugal, and they have family here. And then they go back and forth, etc, etc. So I think that's like I said, visual also was very impactful to how I looked at it like, "Oh, okay, well, that was a wake up call for me." I'm not used to seeing that when I fly into European countries. So and I've been to a quite a few, a lot of European countries. So I thought that was interesting. So I knew immediately that we will, like blend in, like, in this case, when my first visit with my friend. And so when we were there, or I can say like just from living here, it was easy to be able to actually do that many people didn't know the difference between if I was in Golan resilience thinking I'm Brazilian, it was a lot of that. And so like, and they really thought I was lying. It was like I was like not from New York. There's like, "No, you're from Sao Paulo!", "I'm like, No, I'm from New York". Like, so I'm really trying to get them to like understand, I really don't speak Portuguese. I am well now I am learning I should say but I was interested in because people were really thinking that I was being rude to them. Because they're looking at me and talking or they expect or maybe they're not looking right at me. Maybe they behind me and trying to try to ask me to move or trying to ask me a question and get my attention. But I'm not paying them to attention because it's in Portuguese and I'm not even thinking they're talking to me. And so they misconstrue that with me, me ignoring them. And so that was it. That's an interesting thing that happens too. So, but I'm really set on trying to learn the language in real life. So hopefully that won't happen as much anymore.

Christine Job (00:33:15)

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Cha McCoy (00:34:41)

And by the way, my background before if you're listening was an engineering so you can only imagine I'm switching a career. I'm making a full career change which working in one is obviously not as much money as working as an engineer. And so I'm already switching a job that's going to pay me less but I'm also moving at the same time. Not only my moving, I'm moving to a new country. So it's like these three new things on top of each other was a little bit too much. If, if I was talking to myself two years ago, maybe I would have quit my job, see how I could build clients first, in the US build that up, see what I needed to change what my business had and see how that worked. And then I probably would have moved abroad, that would have probably been easier, because then I would have had my feet wet. And it's I was new at, you know, being an entrepreneur at the same time, being in a brand new country, and learning about their market. So that sounds like a crash and burn scenario, if you can imagine, but it did teach me a lot about myself. It did teach me about what I'm like, endurance like, what do I have in me? What am I able to do, it did give me experiences that I probably would have never done if I had already all these clients abroad and clients already that I'm grateful for, I ended up working at a fine dining restaurant as one of the sommeliers there. And so that was an experience that being in New York City, you got to kind of be like, almost like the best of the best to be on the floor. Here, not that I wasn't good. It's just that I was the foreigner who can speak about wines from different countries. And so I ended up being someone who can tap into the tourists who would come from London or France, because I actually had a lot more exposure to those wines from being from New York, versus someone else being from Portugal. So I spoke the language of wine that allowed me to actually get a position. And then I know how to like, they tested me before I came in. So I actually passed the tests before I started on the floor. And so those are the type of experiences that I can't take back. And actually, that's different than when I lived in Italy, I talked about earlier, because since I actually worked in Portugal, it actually gave me a new community that I was part of like people who literally work and live in Portugal, which I didn't have in Italy, because I didn't work there. Oh, I was mainly with other foreigners more than anything than actual Italians. So now I'm more connected with the people who are you know, struggling to make a living near working two jobs, because that's what I was doing. And so I realized, that's a big difference, too. Because when you work as a consultant, whether it's online consultant for another company, if you if it's an America, etc, and you're going to just fly into Portugal or Spain, etc. you don't feel the people besides if you meet them some other way, but the way to that I was able to easily meet people was one visit in the wineries of course. But then on top of that, actually working on the job and making friends through that meaning making friends with other wineries, making friends with a couple of people from the actual restaurant, making friends with distributors who used to distribute the wines. So now I have a few people that I'm connected to, and they know who I am from the restaurant like "Oh, yeah, that's the girl that worked at, you know, this restaurant there". So it actually kind of helped me to have a calling card for myself when people were trying to connect me to things like "Okay, we know who she is". And we know why she's coming to our vineyard. She's the sommelier from that restaurant. And so that helped me to establish myself with the smaller community of wine folks. There's a lot of expats they're mostly tech people. And I think that being around them, I understand that they play at a whole another level. They, they get to hop in I do I'm only in Portugal for six months, and then I'm going over to this country. So they move a lot more versus I'd learned this term terminology, terminology from a chef that was actually living in Portugal from the States. And she said no, she calls herself a slow mad meaning she's a nomad, but she moved slowly. So she stays in places

much longer. And I said, Okay, that's exactly my speed. I'm not, I'm not usually into like, I'm just popping in for three months, and then I'm going to Croatia for three months. It looks enticing. I do see people doing it. But I also have a dog in so for me, my dog is also very important for me to like stay put plant roots, meet the people in my community, find a vet for him. So some people know me in my neighborhood.

Christine Job (00:38:58)

I asked her if she spoke Portuguese and what it's been like for her learning the language, but also whether she felt it was necessary to know Portuguese or to be fluent in Portuguese, to live in work in Portugal.

Cha McCoy (00:39:15)

I can't say that enough, especially if you live in a place and you want to find a job there. Again, doesn't mean that there's no English-speaking jobs available. I'm just saying that, having some sort of that language background will help you find a job sooner. And if you're freelancing, and you're relying on that local economy to help you like in my case, I was relying on Portuguese winemakers to hire me though they speak English. I do realize that if I spoke Portuguese, it probably would have helped me do a lot more things in the local market in Portugal for them than to just kind of push things for them in the States. So I understand that would have helped to. And I didn't mention I actually did have someone that was in my class, who was an American. I did take a course of executive wine program at the University in Portugal and I recall when I was there, there was someone, she was new to wine industry. But she did get her MBA in Portugal. And she also, she also knew that language very well, as far as like from living in one year, in the amount of time and effort you can tell she put into learning the language. So she was able to get a job properly. Like she graduated, she got a job in like three months for like one of the top wine wine makers in Portugal. It is crazy to think that because I was kept looking like, how was that possible, but I already know, it's because she knew the language well, or at least spoke it confidently enough to like, go into the office and work in office. And she didn't have to actually use it every day, she actually was in charge of like markets like Poland and Germany where they weren't expecting her to speak up Portuguese. So I think looking at the world in a way where I can't express enough that I think that if you go into a place that's not Australia, or London, where speaking English can get you very far, of course, because that's their native language, actually invest in a time to learn that second language or third language where we'll be able to help you a lot professionally. And personally, I love my time hanging out with friends, that's from Brazil, a lot more people from the x colonies, they don't speak English, unlike the people from Portugal, so little bit amount of Portuguese I know, that was not helping me, that's not, that didn't help me in Italy, which I noticed with the friend now is a kind of making from Ethiopia. And it also wasn't helping me with the people I like hanging out with that are from Brazil, or the communities that were heavily populated, were in Golan. Because I can't go walk into those neighborhoods confidently because I can't speak to no one. So that's something very important for me. I don't know if everybody else cares about that. But I do care about building real community, especially with people of color.

Christine Job (00:41:48)

So an aspect of moving abroad that is obviously not sexy. So it's sometimes overlooked, but is incredibly vital. Is the visa situation, right? Like Can you legally be in a country? And can you legally do the things you're trying to do in a country? So I asked her about her experience getting a visa in Portugal, in any advice she has, for all of you.

Cha McCoy (00:42:18)

Every country has their own, like rules and regulations about getting, what type of visa, how you get the visa, all these things like there's some things I thought this came automatically because I had my visa. And that wasn't the case, like I still needed to get a healthcare number, I still needed to get a number. This other number we called (Spanish word, inaudible) before you get a bank account, I needed to like it's a lot of things, little things that you have to do in the system, my social security number, which ended up being very important, but I actually got it because I got a road, I got a job from a Portuguese company. So it kind of came to me automatically. But that wouldn't have, I wouldn't have gotten that on my own these little things that I didn't know about until I arrived and actually started learning about how to fully be because I do plan on having to get my citizenship for Portugal. So no one these things were very important to me. So I can even one day open a business there, which is my plan to have my own wine bar in Lisbon.

Christine Job (00:43:14)

I wanted to know what dating was like for Cha in Portugal, and how that differed from her experience in Italy.

Cha McCoy (00:43:22)

Dating when I first got there. A couple of guys piqued my interest, let's just say that and but it was still kind of most of them, let's just say this. Most of them are definitely of African descent, meaning they were either, first generation Portuguese, and then their parents were from Angola, Mozambique or CELTA May, and or at some key Verdeans. Of course, they had to. So they were in that pile of guys. Or they were actually from that country and they moved to Portugal. So in that case, I didn't really know if they wouldn't be here long term, they don't really know, if I was gonna be here long term. So it was always like, I guess once we kept it light, but and then I also did, I had a few friends that were also Portuguese. And I think this guy we could have probably hit it off or been together longer. But I feel like a lot a lot of Portuguese is interested in a look at I'm from a small country, I gotta go to a big country like America, like China. And so they have this kind of nature. And I'm like, "Oh, we're from explorers", so they like the idea of like traveling abroad they're not really shy about that. So even if they have like no money, they're like all saving up to go live in America or to go live somewhere else. So in London, a lot of them lived in London already etc. So so when you get there you probably be surprised which is also some reason why I picked up Portugal as a European country because I wanted to work in this industry and why but also a lot of people speak English there because of them flying to London often or because of them wanting to be able to communicate with the people who were visiting and who they were doing business with. Portugal is a one, it's already a small country. And then at the end of the day, they don't have two people near them, meaning it's the only country that speak Portuguese in that area. So if they wanted to make money and do business with people in Germany, France, anywhere else, they need to learn those languages. So there, I think that being in Portugal, it was kind of amazing. Even working in Portugal, how many languages of one person could speak like, I can hear someone, service one of our guests in Portuguese, and didn't, at the same table, speak to that person fully in Italian and didn't turn around and talk to that person about the menu, and French in so I was like, "This is astonishing". I've never, I've never been anywhere where this was even something expected of someone to do all of that in one at one table, talk to different groups, and fluent versions, you know, of that their native language. And so it sounds just like all we speak English, it was like, they speak a lot of languages, because they want to be able to get the tourism dollars, they want to be hospitable to people who are coming from other countries. And so it actually works in a favor. And that's why everyone loves Portugal, whether you're Chinese, whether you're French, whether you're British, because they have this very warm feeling. And I think language is definitely one of those special things.

Christine Job (00:46:17)

I asked Cha to share some advice for all of you listening, that may be interested in moving to Portugal.

Cha McCoy (00:46:26)

So I would say that as much research you can do in advance, I would say I made, I don't say I made a mistake with my visa, I was really in a place where I really needed to leave. And you and I discussed this before, I really just wanted to like I needed to. And I was like "Oh no, I can't stay in America another day. Like I just couldn't, I couldn't do it". So I kind of left it where there was a lot of question marks about my finances, and that I would like to have had an order before I left, I did have savings. But I didn't know. Of course that wasn't gonna last me forever. And so that was important for me to have figured out what would be my next step after I didn't have a savings instead of just wishing it. But I do know that I wouldn't take it back, mainly because now we're in a pandemic. So thank God, if I waited to this year and saved everything that I was supposed to, I probably would not have left anyway, because it would have been a pandemic, because I kept saying to myself, "I was gonna leave in 2020. I was like, Yeah, that sounds right. 2020 fresh start, that's gonna be perfect January 2020, that's when I'm gonna go out there and do this, and, and be a full time". So I kind of like I went prematurely, to be honest. But my spirit needed me to leave. And so as much as I would like to tell somebody, like, "Girl, don't go until you had everything in order". But everything in my body needed me to leave. And I actually spoke to my mother about that, because obviously, I did struggle for a while out there financially. And I remember, mainly because you have to understand, I don't speak Portuguese, I felt like if was the jobs available, and I have two degrees. If I spoke the language, if I was in England, or somewhere, I think that I would have been able to find a job easily. It's just that I didn't speak the language. And so, there is when it comes to like working in corporate or working in certain structures that I didn't have the language behind me for them to hire me. People always say "There's tons of jobs, like you could work at telemarketing". But I like what I heard what they was getting paid. I was like, there's no way I could spend that many hours doing that. And I'm not, and it wasn't helping me build my career in wine. So I just had some kind of like, I did have standards, let's just say, I wasn't going to just work anywhere. But I also realized that when I talked to people who do live abroad, they had to do like anything just to survive at first. And I do not that I wouldn't take anything away from that. I just knew that if that was the case, I would, I didn't have a bad life in New York, I would just move back to New York, and figure it out and just come back. And so I had to give myself that space to allow that to be possible. I think I put so much pressure on trying to be there full time. And like "I gotta go, I gotta go, I gotta go. Now I gotta go". Because I told everybody I'm about to go. So I gotta go for real, I gotta go cuz I moved all my stuff out my apartment. So I got to go for real and put so much pressure on that, that to be honest, I would have preferred to not have like, maybe if I took my time, I could have got there and had my feet a little more planted. I am the kind of person that just like, sometimes I do like just to take the leap because if I think too much, I'm gonna stay in like I did. Like I was told myself every time, every year after I moved back from Italy that I was going back abroad and it wasn't until 10 or nine years later for me to get me back to another country to stay. So to be honest, if it wasn't for me just taking the leap I probably who knows it would have been 2030 when I left in real life but so I guess if for whoever's listening, I really do think that you got to find what you're comfortable with.

Christine Job (00:49:48)

Wellness. Wellness encompasses every aspect of our life. Y'all know what it is, wellness is not just self-care, Sundays in the bubble bath, although I enjoy that immensely. Wellness is your mental, your emotional, your financial, your professional, your physical well-being. And so I asked Cha, how has living abroad influenced not only her practice of wellness, but also her concept of wellness.

Cha McCoy (00:50:26)

I guess you could hear in both of the two times that I decided to leave America, I was really searching for a sense of self and more connection back to myself, it's kind of weird to think I had to go some like completely moved somewhere else. Before it was right after breaking of my engagement and really trying to reconnect back to myself. And I didn't know that, that would happen. When I was out there. I just knew that I needed to be away from the normal routine in life, I needed something to kind of like re-jump my life. And I knew that, that was happening, that I was opening myself up for that. And thanks to the book, Eat, Pray, Love, I believed in it. And so because that was the time when that book just came out. And so I've read the book, and I can say that's why I thought that it would be a good, good a good excuse, right? Anything pizza all day. Sounds great, right? And then so I really felt like when I actually saw, like meaning like being in Rome every day, hearing the sounds outside my window, walking the streets, getting gelato at midnight. These are the small things that when I came back to the States, I cherished looking at the Vatican, I had double balconies girlfriend, I had a balcony off of my kitchen, and I had a balcony of my bedroom. I'm just going to sit out on my balcony, have dinner every night. These are the type of things that I didn't know what to expect when I was out there. I kind of you know, took the leap. But when I came back to the States, I was like "Nah, like, I needed an exit plan". So I tried it coming back to the states and really did have a good life here. I set up a good career for myself. But I felt like there's always something missing because I know that kind of like breathing moment just like having this fresh air literally like of just free thoughts. People not knowing what I, do not knowing exactly. Like how old I was was also funny because people then people are like, "Oh my god, I couldn't believe you that you're that old" when I was 25. So imagine people that I'm 35 people think the same thing with me, then they will they like, "What you're about, like 25?". And I'm like, "Yeah!", so I like that fact that I'm just like, I get to be myself and is just like really enjoy my life the way I want to live. And I could be as fast or slow into it. I do think that while I did learn that even with the financial struggles that I had this past year out there, that a lot of that, that's a good reason to make sure you make money or have some stream of money coming in. Because even though I was living abroad, hustling and grinding and getting home from work at 3am, did not, I didn't maintain that same quality of life that I wanted that for a reason why I came out there. So I understood how important it was or it is to make sure that you can do those things that people may see on my Instagram now. Or when I want to go to the beach, I can just go to the beach, I don't have to like, I'm like, "It's Tuesday, it's 95 degrees today, I'm not working, I'm going to the beach", I wanted to have that freedom to do that. But when you when you hustle in and you have to be like on the grind every day, you have no days off Saturdays and Sundays included. And so I do want to get to a point where I can be financially stable enough to be able to survive there and like, be more calm with myself. And enjoy the reason why I came here, walk my dog for long walks along the river, the river tasia that we have in Lisbon. These are all things that I think about that make me feel like, "Wow, this is why I like living here. This is why I love living here. I'm going to the vineyards on a weekend, whether it's for fun, or for learning, it's for me it's one in the same because I've now created a lifestyle from transitioning from an engineering full time to wine". That was also a self-care choice for myself for my well-being I should say, because at that time, I was working in corporate here in America, and I really was making a difference between like, "Do I want to continue climbing up this ladder? Or do I think of the world in a different way?" And so I really, and I know because I've already had the experience from living in Italy on what to expect in a different country, especially in a Southern European lifestyle. So anywhere from Greece, to Croatia, to Italy, Spain or Portugal. These are places that were like really like the lifestyle I wanted to live or Southern France would be nice too. But I mean, Adam got southern France money. Maybe one day, but yeah, so I've really knew that these are the places that really connected with me. I always kind of, I always tell my mother who's retired. I want to feel like I'm, like, I'm working and making money. But I want to feel like I'm retired. Like, I don't want to feel like I'm doing

so much things that's so exhausting. And if it is tiring, to me, it's because of I love doing it. Like I love being able to go to vineyards, I love that the hardest part of my day was coming up with wine pairings to go with this new cuisine that we added to this menu. I don't want to feel like I had to like stay on my feet all day, though. Like in the restaurant until from four I said go to work at 4pm and leave at three in the morning, or get home at three in the morning, excuse me. So that like those types, that's a different like life. I was like, No, so I didn't know my boundaries on even in this new industry, and there's new world what I'm willing to do, and create that for myself. So I think that going abroad to me or moving to Italy, and then Portugal has allowed me to once you get a taste of it, for sure you you know what you want to go back to you want to go back to that feeling? You want to go back to that. And I always tell myself that even when I'm dating, I'm like, "If somebody is treating me bad, I'm like, I know what good guys feel like, I know what it feels like to feel loved. So why am I going through this trash with this guy? It's the same idea. And I go, OK I'm in America, I feel like all I do is take the subway, see nobody, whatever". But at the same time, if I'm not going to see anybody besides like once a month or once the season because we're all busy, then I can just live in Portugal and fly in once a month or once a season and see my friends then what's the difference? I don't see you anyway. So we always grind and grind and grind and but I would prefer to do it and get a suntan or be on rooftops on Friday nights with my Tinder date. So these are the things that come with the extra luxury of me living in Portugal versus me living in New York, these rooftops by the way everywhere. And we call them in the summertime, they don't say "Oh, meet me at the rooftop like a drink of a happy hour to go meet me at the sunset". It's such a beautiful way to think about it right. It's like oh, you because you know that once you get up is the nighttime or it's after workout was to the sun will start to set. So it's like, oh, let's have a sunset. So that's also a terminology we use when we're going for drinks. And it's like at the sunset hours. So things like that just continuously made me feel like there is a life worth living that's not surrounded about material things and all these craziness that we kind of like strive for, especially here in New York, I had a great week, if I was able to like eat at whatever restaurant wanted that weekend, cook myself a really good meal, walk my dog early enough that he was able to go outside and see the sun to very low style of living, this is what I achieved, you know, trying to achieve a more minimalist lifestyle. And I've realized that my self-care usually feel more I feel more centered, when that's my thing, not like, "Oh, we got to go to this we got to go I got to get an outfit, I got to go here, I got to do all these things", or have to in New York was like a it's like a ball that never stops rolling. Like as soon as you got over one deadline or one project or you just wanted is one event that was major and is another one coming up. And I like the idea of being tapped out of it. So I can just breath and I do know that being between both countries now because of the pandemic. It's very important for me to also be truly tapped in to our hope anybody who's listening to this to the economies is going on in multiple places, so never be fully invested in one place. I would tell anybody I feel like even if you're living in one place, just know what's next. Because even though Portugal may be hot today is another country that's going to be the new Portugal whenever five years or 10 years. So if you are into like growing economies and how the world works, I really think that may help everybody's industries and businesses. And so you can still live in Portugal, but then maybe you may figure out who you need to attract and be able to help them one day.

Christine Job (00:58:47)

Thank you so much for sharing your amazing story with all of us. And if you want to stay connected with Cha, you can via social media.

Cha McCoy (00: 59:00)

You can always find me on my website, it's my name. So it's Cha McCoy, chamccoy.com, on Instagram, I'm Cha_squared, that's C H A underscore, s q u a r e d and I'm doing virtual wine tastings now, but I do wine tastings in Portugal, when people are there and take them to a wineries. I do group trips, I do, I

plan trips for other people to actually go to Spain etc. They want to do trips to Spain learning about wine and food culture, etc. So hopefully there's an opportunity to work further with you all who are listening. So anybody who want to learn more about wine or tourism, etc in these countries, please feel free to reach out and I wish you all the best. Anybody who's aspiring to move abroad or Portugal specifically,

Christine Job (01:00:02)

Thank you again for listening to this episode. I hope that you enjoyed it. And if you did, please consider becoming a supporter of the podcast, you can do so via Patreon, Buy Me A Coffee, cash app, or by purchasing a piece of production equipment via our Amazon Wishlist, you can find all the links to all the ways you can financially support the podcast at www.flourishintheforeign.com/support. Make sure you rate and review the podcast on Apple podcasts or anywhere else you listen to this podcast. And while you're at it, be sure to head over to the website where you can get more information about getting staying and thriving abroad. You can learn more about each of the guests that have been on the podcast, you can see their pictures, you can read their bios and you can stay in contact with them via their websites and their social media. Be sure to also check out the resources page on the website, www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources to check out some products and services that can help you get stay and thrive abroad. As you all know, I am a consultant and I do offer one on one calls. So if you have questions about moving abroad, you can book a consultation with me. If you have questions about building a business abroad, you can also book a consultation with me if you are really ready to launch your business abroad and take it from idea to purpose driven business and sales or perhaps just scale your business to financially support yourself while you're abroad. Definitely apply for my 12 week sprint program. And you can learn more at www.flourishintheforeign.com/Christine. And that's where you can book in all of your consultations and get all of your questions answered. If you have not grabbed my free build a business abroad guide, what are you doing? Go ahead to the website, www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources and grab that today. Hey, are you thinking about launching your own podcast or you want to increase your reach of your podcast or monetize your podcast? Well, I highly suggest joining the WOC Insiders Membership. It's a membership that has really been helpful for me, as I have grown Flourish In The Foreign. There's so many resources there to help you with engagement, marketing, legal and everything else you need to have a successful podcast. Join WOC Insiders membership today and use my affiliate link which you can find in the description of this episode on the website, www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources. It's at no extra cost to you. But it is another way to support this hear podcast. As always, thanks to Zachary Higgs who produced the music for this podcast. He is an amazingly talented producer. So if you need music for any of your creative endeavors, he is your guy, you can find out all of his information in the show notes. Thank you all so much for supporting this podcast. Thank you so much for believing in the voices and stories of Black women. Please take care of yourselves today and every day. And please remember that it's not about getting abroad, is not about being abroad. It's about arriving abroad. So go abroad and cultivate a life well lift. See you next time. Bye.

On the next episode of Flourish In The Foreign.

Paige Mariah (01:04:07)

I remember arriving in London. And I was like, "Wow, I am really here all by myself". Like, it's different when you have to get all your luggage by yourself even like, I'm usually used to having like my parents help or friends help but I had to like get all my bags and it was like it was just like I don't know, I just had this moment of realization like wow, you're really about to do this by yourself.