**Transcript**

**Episode Title: “A Whole Dating World in Rome” with Latreese Williams**

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**LATREESE** [00:00:00] And so being in Europe, I mean, not even just in Europe, I think this is experienced once you leave the US but especially in Europe, in Africa, most of the countries in Africa, even South America, Central America, but once you leave America, people are like, “Oh, well, you're a beautiful woman. You're smart, you have a beautiful smile, you have a body that I'm attracted to, and you're a woman. You're like this three dimensional woman that I want to spend more time with. I want to take you on a date. I want to know you. I enjoy your company, your company.” And you just see. And that's there's no other way to say it. You are absolutely free.

**CHRISTINE** [00:00:44] 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. As a business strategist, I help Black women and women of color, leverage their talents and their expertise into viable and sustainable online businesses, businesses that make them professionally fulfilled financially abundant while they pursue a thriving life abroad. If you are interested in starting a business abroad, I recommend you grabbing my free *Build A Business Abroad* guide which you can find a link on the website <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/> or you can find the link in the show notes of this episode. Have you been thinking about starting your own podcast or perhaps you already have a podcast but you want to grow it or maybe you're a little bit unsure on how to market the podcast. I want to highly recommend you joining the women of color WOC Podcasters Insiders Membership. It is a membership that I am a paying member of and it has been so instrumental in the growth of this podcast. It can really help you get clear about your podcast idea, help you launch successfully and help you grow your listenership. If you're interested in joining the WOC Podcasters Insiders Membership, please be sure to use my affiliate code, which you can find in the show notes of this episode or on the website. It is at no extra cost to you but it does support this here podcast. I also have more podcasting resources available on the *Flourish In The Foreign* website, which you can find at <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources> and just scroll down to podcasts. And I've put some products and services that I personally use to produce this here podcast. *Flourish In The Foreign* is a labor of love, but labor nonetheless. And that's why I asked all of you lovely listeners to please support this podcast. You can support this podcast in a number of ways you can become a *Patreon* supporter of this podcast. Shout out to all of my Patreon supporters who listen to this podcast. I greatly appreciate y'all one thing though, can you email me back because I've tried to email some of you *Patreon* supporters and yellow be emailing me so check your email because I'd like to start a an exclusive chat with my *Patreon* supporters, where we talk once a week about that week's episode and their questions about living and moving abroad so *Patreon* supporters get back to me and if you are interested in having chats about the episodes and about living and moving abroad, become a *Patreon* supporter today at <http://www.patreon.com/flourishforeign> you can *CashApp* the podcast that *$flourishforeign* you can buy me a coffee via the *Buy Me A Coffee* platform at <http://www.buymeacofee.com/flourishforeign> and if you are so inclined, you can purchase a piece of production equipment that is sorely sorely needed. to really keep this podcast going. You can find our Amazon wishlist on the *Flourish In The Foreign* website at <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/support> Thank you all so much for tuning in to this week's episode of *Flourish In The Foreign* and thank you all so much for your words of support and encouragement and for checking in on me. When I went MIA, I went Mia, your girl needed a break, and she needed to take care of herself. And I did that. And I feel so, so much better. And I am so excited to be bringing back these stories to you. I am just in love with this podcast. And I love how much you all love this podcast. It means so so much to me. So thank you so much. Today we have Latreese. And can I just tell you this, this episode is so wonderful, because Latreese is so wonderful. Speaking with Latreese really illuminates how the American dream, the Black American dream is not always what it cracks up to be, and how it is so vital to know yourself so that you really can create a life that you really want to live in sometimes that life is just not available to you in your home country. And I think what Latreese's story exemplifies is that Latreese also has an amazing perspective on dating abroad. Yes, I said it cuz y'all want to hear it dating abroad. So I'll let her tell you all about it.

**LATREESE** [00:06:25] I'm Latreese Williams. I'm 44. And I live in Rome, Italy. I'm from Chicago, Illinois, and I moved abroad when I was 42. I went to an HBCU once at Clark Atlanta for undergrad. And it was very much kind of that right after like post a different world school days experience. So I was I mean, freaknik was still going on, I was really, really engulfed in the Black Youth American college experience. And so I really didn't see beyond that. And one of the coolest things about being at Clark was that, and I imagine how it would be the same or fam is that there were so many different kinds of Black people. So I had an instructor that was a Black Canadian, like, there are so many people from the Caribbean and Africa. I have African professors from like Nigeria with girlfriend from Eritrea. So I felt like this global African experience that was brought to me and that was as an undergrad. But when I went to grad school, and I went to grad school immediately after undergrad, so I didn't have like this break, I did have an opportunity to study abroad. And it really just opened my eyes to what else was out there. And it started a lot of questions. But I still was so laser focused on making America work for me. That really living abroad wasn't something that I seriously considered towards the end. I mean, I made some amazing friends, people I still talk to this is, this was in 1999. And one of the things that was really impactful for me and meeting all these people and seeing all these different kinds of experiences. But then I was still like, well, but let me get back to the State so I can start my career. And it didn't even dawn on me that I could start it somewhere else, especially when the US is this place that everyone's trying to get to. So I think people grow up in other parts of the world dreaming of the US. But we're so that the US is Utopia. And so I don't think so many Americans grow up wanting to be somewhere else.

**CHRISTINE** [00:08:27] Latreese had the opportunity to study abroad when she decided to pursue an MBA. And so I asked her, What was that experience like for her?

**LATREESE** [00:08:36] Well, in my graduate program, I went to an MBA program. My undergrad had been in communications and I worked. I spent time interning at TV stations and initially thought that's where I wanted my career to go. Once I started like making the money that people made in TV, which is nothing like the payment is, you get to work in TV. And then people will come back that had like internships in marketing and sales and finance. And they're like, “I made all this money and I was like I'm doing the wrong thing.” So I went to this school and studied marketing. The program that I went to, it was my major was marketing. My minor was organizational theory. So I ended up taking these Econ classes globally. So I went to Leipzig University in Leipzig, Germany, which is East Germany, which is so crazy because it was not too long after the fall of the Berlin Wall. And Leipzig was in East Germany, everyone wants to just split people up and divide them into like, little pieces. And we will be there and the German students will say to us, we she's crazy because she's East German, and oh, they're this way because they're West German and I'm like “Y'all white, exactly the same. You have the same religion, you speak the same language.” but they were still like splitting up between East and West. And both programs study the conversion to the EU. So that was kind of from an Eastern European standpoint. So we went to a lot of places because we do these business case studies and we actually go to the place like we went to the shipyard in Poland, where they make like the freight ships, the ship these huge ships that are like the size of a small town. And we went to a cigarette factory and just a lot of different factories and manufacturing places. And we took classes on site in different cities and traveled a lot in Eastern Europe. But it was kind of the fall of communism and trying to get them on board with Western Europe. I didn't even really appreciate it, I think as much then. But in retrospect, it was this amazing kind of hands-on learning experience. And I remember being in Poland, and we're just walking down the street, and I was with two girls from Colombia, but they were white. And this guy just walks up to me and starts screaming, and we're like, “What? Why don't we're out of this basket.” And he looks at me, he's like, “Oh, my God, I was so happy to meet a Black person.” And then I was like, “Okay,” he's like, “I love Eddie Murphy. Like that was my cousin Eddie. Like, often we're like, yo, Eddie, guess what happened to me today?” That was like, so eye opening for me in terms of like the way that because in the United States, being Black is not generally seen as this awesome thing. It's like, “Oh, man, she blacked, well, we're not we're not gonna hurt her for this job. We're gonna be perilous, she's gonna be followed around the store.” But I mean, it was always cool. When I was in Europe, that things were happening even without the context of being American, which definitely helps as well. And then after that program, I did a program in Manchester, in England, and was similar it was how business would operate host the EU conversion, because at this point, there are still all on different currencies, like we're still in the Deutsche Mark and the lira, and the franc, when we go different countries. And so they were, you know, still studying kind of how to bring this together and did some work with that and learned about how companies were kind of bringing those processes into uniformity. So that was that experience. And it was kind of more of the same, but I really loved it and didn't, like I said, I did, I kind of took it for granted. And once I got to the States and got to the real world, and beginning my corporate career, I was really unhappy. I wasted a lot of time in the United States. And one of the girls that I met when I was in Leipzig was from Colombia, she was Black. And we're really good friends now. And she basically like went home, got her stuff and came back to move to Germany. She's been in Europe ever since she's married to Austria, they have two kids. And I told her, I was like, if I had any sense, I would have did what you did. But I didn't know. And I had bought into this whole concept of the American dream and thought that, that would be a reality for me as well, and just never really worked out like that.

**CHRISTINE** [00:12:36] So safe to say Latreese really had a mind expanding experience during her MBA program when she had the opportunity to study abroad. And so as she returned to the United States, I asked her, how did her life then unfold?

**LATREESE** [00:12:52] Once I got to grad school, I did some temping at different places, and finally got like a really good job offer with Accenture of Anderson consulting at the time. I mean, I was making great money like 23, and making like a ton of money. And when I got the offer, I remember my daddy call, like everybody was like, “My baby Beckett, this was buddy,” like it was an America is only about money. It's like, well, if you make X amount of dollars, you should be happy, like money equals happy. And I hadn't realized yet hat was not important. That wasn't as important to me. But I couldn't. I hadn't reconciled that yet. Because I think I mean, I think capitalism is kind of shoved down your throat in the United States. Like, if you don't feel like this, then you need to just buy something until you do. So I had a great job. I was making great money. But the hours were ridiculous. There was a joke, because it was like a law firm, billable hours. The more hours you work, the more money the company makes, the more they want you to work. And they had a joke that if you had a seven o'clock meeting was it AM or PM? At work, I will work 24 hour shifts and 36 hour shifts and travel to all these horrible, horrible places that you didn't want to visit. Like I was in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and Overland Park, Kansas. And it's just places. I mean, I would have never wanted to go. They weren't paying me to go. It's not like that. When they recruit. They talk about “Oh, there's an Ikea project in Finland and adult pilot project in Hawaii.” And it's like, “Well, yeah, but we're gonna send you to walk a shore Wisconsin” So it was not like this cool thing and not a fluke. personality wise, I'm that natural extrovert. When you do the Myers Briggs, I'm that person, it’s like the natural performer natural salesperson. So I ended up interviewing randomly for a job at a National Black MBA for Novartis. And I got an offer and started working in sales. So that was a much better fit for my personality for my skill set. And I was able to do really well. I worked there and I worked at Johnson and Johnson and both roles. I won like a few sales awards, a few contests. So I was able to be successful, but I still wasn't happy, especially when I was at Johnson and Johnson's making like a lot of money. I was six figures before I was 30 And this was a while that one six figures was even more than. But I feel like there's less of an opportunity to be three dimensional, as an African American woman. And when I say that, I mean that you are expected to fit a very myopic focus on a very tiny box of what your human experience is supposed to be. And so I was working this job making decent money, but I wasn't really meeting anybody worth, like, dating wise, that saw me as potential. And I really wanted to be in a relationship or do anything. And then I was living in Chicago and it was just so segregated. So beyond like work experiences, I wasn't even meeting people that weren't exactly like me. And it was funny when I would go to different work things. And we go to like a club or something, and wrigleyville, and my co-workers would be like, oh, there's a Black dude over there in the corner, and you're a Black girl, like, you should talk to each other. I'm like, “Sweetie, he's not here. For me. It wasn't fulfilling for me.” And so working at field sales is a really, really good opportunity to learn how to be an entrepreneur, because you basically work for yourself. And I mean, when I first got that job, I had a friend say, like, “Oh, if there wasn't somebody standing over my shoulder, I'd never do anything.” And I'm like, “Well, in sales, if you don't do stuff, you don't make any money. So you learn to be self motivated and manage a business and to manage your day, you don't need the structure that a lot of people do honestly need in order to be productive.” And so I started doing real estate, full time after I left Johnson and Johnson. And I've been doing that full time off and on since 2006 - 07.

**CHRISTINE** [00:16:45] As I think you guys have been able to tell if you've been listening to the podcast for a minute, for just about every one of my guests, there becomes a moment a pivotal moment, sometimes do or die, sometimes not that intense, that really kicks off the journey to go abroad. And so I asked Latreese to tell me about her journey abroad.

**LATREESE** [00:17:10] You know how when you're a little kid, I think, can you realize, like, from the time you were born for a lot of kids, and your parents who like there's a Santa Claus, and there's a tooth fairy, and there's an Easter Bunny, and all these kind of fictional things. And you believe in these fables and these myths, and then one day, you just you grew up and you realize it's all a lie, that there is no sound, there is no Easter Bunny, there is no tooth fairy. And I felt like that about the United States. I don't know, if it was like, one day, I just felt like, there's no, like, I my happiness will never be here, I will never find it here. And it's one day I realized that, and that probably happened in maybe 2011. But the problem was figuring out how to get abroad. I couldn't. I hadn't figured out how to live abroad. And that was that took me some time because initially I was like, well, I considered being a professor and I went back to school in the US, because from what from the research that I've been doing a lot of PhD programs in Europe expects you to have a master's degree already, before you apply it. And the thing that you're doing and MBA isn't really a master's degree. No, they don't tell you that when you get it. I mean, MBA is great if you're going to if you're only going to work in a corporate setting, but if you're looking at advancing to a like a PhD level, they don't consider that like a real because there's no you don't do the scientific stuff, you don't do the research in that same capacity that they want you to do. So I started a program at U of I and Chicago, and in planning and urban planning and development, and my thought was that, okay, I'll do this program and get my master's and then I'll apply to PhD programs abroad. But once I got into the program, two things happened. thing, one, our professors went on strike, and they disclose how much money they made. And I was like, this is crazy, because it was less money than I was making when I came out of school to work at Accenture, like 23. And so I was like, Well, I'm not doing that. And the second thing was, I really didn't enjoy being in school as an adult. Like I thought I would I mean, I just, this wasn't going to be it for me. So then it came back to just like how do I figure out how to get a rod and that was something I'd spend time and energy kind of figuring out but honestly, it you know, it was when I look back on it, it was just a waste of time and energy. Because you just make your work. And I know people who are like no, you don't you need a plan. You need this, you need that. And I think it just comes down to your personality type. I've been in sales forever. I was hustling and sales, I was hustling and everything. So I just took my hustle on the road and was like, I have to leave and it's gone. I'm gonna make it work period. And that's what I've done. The summer before I moved. I spent two and a half months in Italy and Rome. And it was just kind of like, Is this like a trial run? like is this something that I am able to and really want to do? And absolutely, I wanted to do it. That was like from day one. But then it was how can I make this work? So initially the apartment that I was living in I sublet it through Airbnb. And honestly, that was enough money to live off of was just through the AirBnB Comm. And so when I got back, I was like, Okay, well, let me just continue to do that. But the condo associations like “Well, no, we, you can't do Airbnb from this unit.” So I was like, Okay, fine. So my goal was to find a place that I could just do that with, and that would be kind of like my steady income while I was living abroad. And I also was doing like, refurbs like property renovations, but I would do maybe one renovation a year and then like, have the income coming in from AirBnB on a monthly basis. So that was my goal is to just kind of get that set up within that six months, and then also kind of figure it out, like, Where was I going? And I had my dog. I was like, I'm not leaving without my dog. And that I mean, that was, I mean, I probably stress over it more than I needed to but it's actually a lot of work particularly it depends on the country you're going into in the country you coming from like when you're coming into the UK, they make you quarantine I think Australia does as well, the EU didn't make me quarantine the dog. But I had to get all this paperwork, like a lot, a lot of paperwork in different prices. And like, the requirements for the cage that took a lot It was like,” Wow,” so and it was funny too, because Italy has this reputation of being laid back. And it's a little bit deserved. Because everyone on the on the chats are like, Oh, you have to get all this paperwork, and no one in Italy is going to ask for it. And I did I got all the stuff and nobody looked at it. I was like, please look at these papers, a lot of energy to get them please, please read them. But nobody did. And so those are my priorities like to be able to take my dogs do all the things I needed to do to take my dog and make sure I had some kind of money coming in once I got there.

**CHRISTINE** [00:22:01] I asked Latreese what her family thought about her deciding to up and leave Chicago, and move to Italy.

**LATREESE** [00:22:10] I don't know if I got like, much of a reaction from them at all. It's been the weirdest thing was not when I said I was going to leave but kind of the aftermath. My mom was like, “Why you gotta go?” to like, “Why can't you be happy in Atlanta, like every area that I like to call it your restaurant with Georgia.” But the thing was, I talked to my mom every day when I lived in Chicago, but I didn't see her. I still see her like once a month or maybe twice a month. And I was like mom, we don't even see each other that much. Now she's like, I know. But I feel comfortable knowing if I needed to I could be over there in like half an hour. And I'm like, I'm just a flight away. So she kind of like once she realized that it was what I needed in my life. She was okay with it. Now with my friends. What was weird was like I had a going away party and people were excited for me. But once I left and came like, when I would go back, like my friends got really, my list of friends got really small. And I've talked to other people that live abroad, have said the same thing. It's like people that are like you're really really good friends that are more like brothers or sisters. They're always there. But for some people, it's like they don't understand how your life is. Or they're jealous. And not to me, that's always a cop out like, oh, they're jealous. But I mean, really, there are people that are like, they're not jealous that you're living abroad, but that you have that fearlessness, I think that's what they're jealous of, or they just don't need you in their lives anymore. It's like a relationship, or romantic relationship where if I can't see you all the time that we can't be together. So the friendships definitely took a different kind of a hit once I actually moved abroad. And so when I had my going away party was a ton of people. But if I go back now and I'm like, “Hey, I'm hanging out. Who wants to do something?”I might see like three or four people. And I know a lot, a lot, a lot of people, but it just that we're not as close. The friendships have definitely dissolved in a way I wasn't expecting.

**CHRISTINE** [00:24:16] I'm always curious about the day my guests leave their home country, and what that whole situation looks like and how they felt when they landed in their country of residence. Because I don't know if I've told you guys my day when I left to go to Spain was a complete shit show. I've been solo traveling for years. But on the day that I was leaving to move to Spain, I forgot my passport at home. Yes, it was a whole hot SMS. And so I asked Latreese What was that day like for her knowing that she is leaving her home country, leaving her family and starting a new life in Rome.

**LATREESE** [00:25:03] I mean, I think when you're in the process of a move anywhere, like they're overwhelming, it's like, I don't know if you're processing it in the moment you process it later. So I mean, I have my dog. So that was like a huge focus for me was kind of like getting to the airport. I mean, he passed away last year, but he was a 100 pound giant Schnauzer. So I wasn't like some little lap dog that I could just put under the seat. So we had two flights, we were flying from Chicago to Frankfurt, and then from Frankfurt to Rome. And Uber took me to the airport because I needed like the big van to put his crate and my luggage. And so I shipped two boxes ahead of me. And then I brought two suitcases and then my dog's crate. And his, I was still concerned about him. And I didn't like cuz he wasn't crate train. So I had to, like get the crate ahead of time and kind of get him used to being in the crate and like throw steaks in there, like see it's a good place to be. And also worried about him. I can't think about anything else. And so he, when we got to the airport, I felt like it was like a sign, a positive sign. Because Lufthansa is the airline we flew, which is the best airline, if you're flying with animals, they charge a flat fee. I'd been quoted as much as 3000-1500. Some airlines wouldn't fly because of the season or, he was too big. But Lufthansa was like he can fly. It was a $400 flat. And we got to the airport, all of the people because they're Germans that work at the airport in the US. They're all playing with him, he was behind the ticket counter. And like, by the time we left our flight, everybody was like, fine. And so the flight attendant came on each leg of the flight was like, we boarded him, he's fine. They let me know when they took them off the plane. And so when we got to Italy, my first thing was him and so I saw him and he was fine. It was just this crate, like, like, hey, okay, what we got to do now? And then after that, then, it was like, Okay, I just, I just arrived in Italy. And one of my, this guy that I had been dating at the time, he came and picked me up with his dad. And it was so funny because like, the whole concept of like big and little and just spatially do your thinking spatially different based on your culture. So I'm telling him like, I have this huge crate with my big dog. I have these boxes. He's like, “Oh, my dad, he has this big, big car, this big SUV kind of thing.” He didn't say SUV, but he said like it's big. It's hot. So we get there. And it's like the tiniest little thing like this. This is a Land Rover, like a like a Prius. So we actually ended up having to have his car and his dad's car. And that's how we were able to get from the airport to the apartment that I booked online. So that was like, day one.

**CHRISTINE** [00:28:00] I asked Latreese to describe to me her first year in Rome.

**LATREESE** [00:28:04] The AirBnB that I was staying in was I mean, everything in Italy is all it's it's I mean, this is it Europe as much as it is Italy for especially for Rome to be this really big city. It's just not very modern, not very updated. So I booked this Airbnb online. Actually, I got it because there was a terrorist, but the terrorist was not off the street. So it was n't it didn't get a lot of light. And I've gotten it because I thought my dog was like, “Yay.” And he never went out there because there was no light. And the apartment had an outdated electrical system. So I'm in bed asleep, and my dogs, he's asleep. And he's like, I hear this pop. And I'm like, “Oh my god, what is that? That's probably nothing.” And it's something told me I'm just gonna say what the answer is. It's like if you don't get out and see what that noise is. And I'm going to the kitchen and the entire wall is on fire. So the electrical system had overheated. And thus, this is the fuse box is on fire. I just started doing stuff on it. And the fire started falling, the electrical box was over the garbage. So it started falling into the garbage and the garbage started catching a fire and I'm just like throwing water on it. I was like, please go out. And so the fire goes out. And then I called the owner, like, “what the hell like we almost died.” And so he came in, he had a guy come fix it. And he put the entire apartment have been on two circuits and he added two more. So basically it was they only had enough electrical to support half the electricity that was running through the apartment. So that was like that was probably not probably that was the single worst experience that it happened. But what happened, we didn't die and so you just keep you keep going. So there was that but then it was just kind of daily just figuring out how to get around how to meeting people, making friends. And when I moved initially, like a lot of the people that because one of the things that that people tell us complaining about I'm sure people say this in other places, too, is they don't like to make friends with foreigners because they don't tend to stay. And so a lot of the friends that I've made had left even before and people that I met since have come and gone and you it's hard, it's harder to form attachments to people when they're a lot more transitory. So it was definitely challenging. But I'm outgoing, I went out a lot, I talked to a lot of people I met a lot of people I met, a lot of guys went on a lot of dates, which kind of helped me learn the city and like different restaurants and stuff like that I took my dog every day to the park, and definitely would explore and run and stuff with him. So I just really got my, immerse myself in the culture as I was taking language classes and just trying to assimilate as much as I could. And just liv.

**CHRISTINE** [00:31:07] I asked Latreese , about advice for making money to go abroad. She is in real estate. I know that some people are interested in getting into real estate to go abroad. And so I asked her for some advice for you all as well. And this is what she said,

**LATREESE** [00:31:26] I wouldn't advise that. I would advise that you find a way to generate income around whatever thing you've been doing. I have been doing real estate. I got my real estate license in 2007. So it was something that I've been doing in different capacities since then. And I didn't make any work. So if you, a lot of people end up teaching English because they've been speaking, retire alive. You know, to teach it isn't some huge leap. So it's what you've already done, what you're good at, and what you have the ability to be successful at, to whatever extent. So if you, if you're a social, I met a girl from New York, who was a social worker, and she just started applying to jobs and got a job in the UK in London as a social worker. And they were like, “Okay, come to London and be a social worker,” that travel nurses who's who have gotten jobs abroad working as a travel nurse. So you find the thing that you do the thing that you can do, and you make your work around that. And if you've been doing real estate, then yeah, absolutely figure out how to people, I've met people who just own a bunch of rental properties. Or I met a girl who leases apartments remotely, like she is a leasing agent. And, or people are online professors teaching English online, people do the day trading thing. And the other part of it too, I mean, we're in Spain and Italy are they're cheap relative to Europe, but they're expensive relative to other places. I mean, if you you could go to Vietnam, or Thailand or Colombia, at different countries in Africa. And you don't need that much money. So people are still thinking like, like they're living in Brooklyn thinking, well, I need to make $150,000 a year abroad. No, you don't. It’s depending on how much you want a ball, you might be able to find a place and I don't know, in Kenya and you're only paying like $500 a month. And you don't need that much you don't get a car you're walking or you're taking like whatever kind of public like a taxi or whatever service that they have. So that's the other part of it like you don't or you have a car note. Now if you move, you don't have a car so you don't have to factor having a car note into your budget. Or like maybe you're going to brunch every week, maybe you don't go to brunch every week once you move abroad or like in Italy foods are really cheap. So going to brunch every week here versus going every week in the US is completely different things. You could have a really nice dinner here like a really nice dinner for two people with appetizers and a bottle of wine and everything for like, maybe 50-60 euro. You do in Portugal, you do for like 40. You don't you don't need to, I don't think people need as much as they think they need. So there's flexibility.

**CHRISTINE** [00:34:08] I asked Latreese to describe some of the Italian bureaucracy of getting an Italian visa and getting to Italy.

**LATREESE** [00:34:17] Italy is weird. Italy's like, always joke that I went to Clark but I'm like Italy's like living in an HBCU because stuff just don't quite be like, it just is always a little off. And like, Italy's system is really arbitrary. Like even the embassies and consulates out. Imagine if you're trying to go to Germany, if you want to conflict for Germany and London and I'm imagining this, but I'm thinking if you go to the one in London, New York and Beijing, they're probably all the same. Everything's probably super consistent. Italy. I was in a class with Chicago and people were like, well, the cost when New York is horrible, and the one in LA is really nice. Chicago is great. And people have moved to have rented apartments in the zone for the Chicago consulate to deal with that conflict over the New York consulate because they're so drastically different. And stuff that has been approved in the Midwest would never fly in New York and vice versa. But that's Italy, it's very much who pull, you get personal relationships. So I can't I mean that, that's horrible advice. But that's like the Italian advice. But in my story, it was my story. But if I got different people at the consulate, if I had to, I met a girl who went to the New York consulate, she had 100-some thousand dollars in the bank, and they're like, well, you don't have enough money in the bank. And another girl online was like she had 10,000. They're like, Oh, that's fine. It's, it's, it's so random. So that's what I was saying. I would say to it's probably harder now than it was when I did it, because the US is less favorable globally, because people in the US hasn't really worked hard to be cool with the EU, they're not going to make it easier for American citizens, like you're making you hard for you EU citizens. So we're gonna make it hard for American citizens. So I mean, I think it's probably harder. I know, girls right now who have had shotgun weddings. It's so funny because people always think it's like 90 Day Fiance, people trying to get to the States. I'm like, you know, how many people try to get out to sign up people who married Italians, like just to get their papers who are engaged just to get their papers? So I'd like that's the clear as mud answer. Here's why I just got in the military, you can get here if you fail. So you have to understand, there's a couple bases here. It's one outside of Naples. I've met people that are contractors in those places, too. And then outside of Milan. So there are people who come, you know, through the military. So there's that, or they're contractors, because then you have more control over where you go.

**CHRISTINE** [00:36:53] Now Latreese has lived in Italy for several years, and she's settled into her routine of life. I asked her what is it really like living in Italy, for her.

**LATREESE** [00:37:05] Rome came up is like the worst place to be an expat on the inner nations and one of their surveys. And Italy as a whole is a great place to live. If you're like the digital nomad, or if you're retired or, like if you're not depending on Italian income to live. I mean, it's beautiful. It has all this culture, the full cost of living, apartments and stuff are expensive in the cities. But the rest of the cut, like everything else, is manageable. definitely cheaper than a city like Chicago or New York. Milan is cheaper than Chicago and |New York. So it definitely is, is a challenging economy, we have a huge brain drain problem, a lot of Italians leave, because they can make more money somewhere else, like way more money somewhere else. And being here is very much about who you know, like getting a job, getting started in your career is so connected, and the mob is a thing. It's not like some, it's not just a Scorsese movie, it's like you have to deal with them with a lot of the businesses that are here, I met a woman who owns a restaurant. And I was asking her about, like dealing with the taxes of starting a business and owning a business and dealing with a mob. And she was like, “Well, you have to cheat on your taxes. If you want to own a business here. And you have to deal with the mob. My husband deals with them,” but it's like, “How is that a given?” So it is, if you're a part of this economy, it's bad. If you are existing outside of it, then it's fine. It's better. It's just like any other you. You live wherever in the world that you can based on your residency and visa where they'll let you go. And you just take your money from somewhere else. So getting paid in the states and living here is okay. But I mean, I wouldn't if I were trying to find a job, like if I were 22 and trying to get a job in the Italian economy, like I wouldn't do that, I got to go to Brussels or I go to Austria, or I go to Germany or Singapore. I wouldn't do it here at all, like no, that's just crazy talk.

**CHRISTINE** [00:39:12] As weird as this might seem. I'm always very fascinated and very eager to learn about the different healthcare systems around the world, and really how they perform in practice, right? And so I always asked my guests about the healthcare system and what their experiences have been with the health care system. And so I asked Latreese to tell me about the Italian health care system.

**LATREESE** [00:39:40] Well, I mean, the health care system is where it here is a fella to set a two prong system, there's a private system and the public system and the private system is you can get like health care insurance just like in the states and pay but the health care insurance might be like 100 euro a month and then you can go to the private system and then, which is like the difference between if you want, if I want a mammogram and I want to get it today, versus I might have to wait if I go through the public system, but I have a test that are senatorial, which is the medical cart. And as a foreigner, you can pay to get that. And it's only like 300 euro a year. And so that allows me to go to any public, like, I have a public doctor that I'm assigned. And sometimes I'll just text him like, I'm having this issue. And then he'll text me, or he'll call me, or go to the computer and send the prescription to the pharmacy, and I just go pick it up, but I can go to a conference. I'm 40, I'll be 45. This year, if the creek doesn't rise, and there's some comfort in knowing if I ever need it, like a major surgery, I could just go to the hospital and not have a bill, like a bill kit, like if I needed a stent or something. So, or if I broke my leg or whatever. So there's that the thing is different, culturally is different, like a doctor will say things because in the US because everything is so anytime people are paying for a service, they definitely care about the customer service. So you're not going to get somebody that's like not paying that. It's like if you go to a free clinic in the US and that's not clean, and like there's some issues. So here, I mean, if you go to one of the free places, it might not be like the emergency room, it might not be that clean or whatever. And the doctor will say something that is just like completely out of like I had a yeast infection. And I go to the doctor's office, and she's like looking at the yeast because she's a gynecologist. I'm like you, “You worked on cadavers at some point, right?” And so she's like, looking at the yeast. And she's like, “Yeah,” and I'm like, “Dude, come on. Now, you're a doctor, like how is this grossing you out? And how are you vocalizing that as gross I even if it is just being your head? should be your internal self talk? So there is that?” Because I mean, it's not like somebody's going to sue or if they do not get anything. So there is this policing in that kind of way. But also, if you look at the outcomes here, generally speaking, if the answer mortality rate is way lower than they're just, they're a lot more concerned about safety, and then medications, which is kind of a bad thing for me, because I'm from the States and I'm used to drugs, like a lot feel a symptom for something. It's like there's a pill for that. But here, I feel like no, no (Italian word, inaudible) wait, just a little bit in here, getting used to infection of a UTI, and they're like, “Drink this cranberry stuff.” And you're like, “Oh, I want some Cipro. I want some antibiotic. Well, no doubt cranberry.”So it's generally speaking, a much more holistic approach to medicine, than in the States, but it's not profit driven. So that's the other thing.

**CHRISTINE** [00:42:48] Another question that I get a lot is how do you make friends? How do you build community while you're abroad? I know you've all seen the memes about trying to make friends as an adult. But it's not so bad. It really is not so bad. And so I posed the same question to latrice. I asked her, how did she make friends and how did she build a community in Rome?

**LATREESE** [00:43:12] Well, I went to a lot of different expat events. So there is a there's inner nations, which is, all over the world. They have a chapter pretty much in every major city globally. And I went to a lot of their events, and I met a really good friend at one of them, who ended up he was actually a gay, White Jew from the US. They lived in China for a long time. So I got to be really close with him and his partner. I met people through Facebook, one of my really good girlfriends. I met her before I moved, because she has a dog here. And I saw her, and like one of the expat groups like, “Hey, you have a dog, I'm bringing my dog,” and I just sent her a message. And we got to be friends from there. And I met Felicia Weaver from Black Girl Travel through, I've taken the shop with her and she was living in Rome at the time. And so like, we got to be really good friends. Because whenever I come visit, we meet up. And so I got to be friends with her. So just different things like that. I was just going and like even different guys, like there's a guy that I dated and we didn't end up working out but we're friends. So like we would talk and hang out sometimes or if I needed somebody to help me with something that was like super Italian. Super bureaucratic. He would help me with that. So, and I dated a lot so I was, I use Tinder. I would meet people I yeah, so I ended up meeting a lot of guys that way. And that was kind of how I ended up building community.

**CHRISTINE** [00:44:43] I hope you have been enjoying this week's episode as much as I enjoyed producing it for you all. If you are enjoying this week's episode, be sure to screenshot this episode and share it across your social media channels. Be sure to tag at *Flourish In The Foreign* and I'll be sure to repost it. Also, if you're interested in learning more about this guest head over to the *Flourish In The Foreign* website <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/> to learn more about them, I have Bios, I have pictures and I have links to their social medias and their websites. Finally, I want to encourage you to please support the podcast either via *Patreon,* *CashApp, Buy Me A Coffee*, or our Amazon wishlist. Any amount is greatly appreciated, and your consistent support really means so much to me, and really makes a difference in the production of this podcast. On to the rest of the episode. I asked Latreese to tell me about her experience being a black woman abroad as a traveler, as an expat.

**LATREESE** [00:46:00] Well, once you leave the US, it's United States. It's just Black, Black, White and Latino. But somebody who's Mexican is like I'm Mexican is my Puerto Ricans like I'm Puerto Rican. But most Americans will be like, let's all your Spanish, which is Spain. And so what's African Americans? They in the United States, they will put us in the same bucket as Nigerians. Nigerians like, no, we're Nigerian and African Americans like “Well, no, we're all Black.” But there's a national identity that Nigerians have and anywhere else in the world, it will be recognized in the United States. I know you're all Black. In Europe, what happens is Europeans are nationalists. And then there's the race, the racial overlay. So for instance, a guy that I know was dating a girl that looks just like me, but she was, her parents are from the Congo, but she was raised in Italy, in Rome. And he's like, well, she is Roman. And I'm like, but she's Black. He's like, no, she's Roman. She's not just the Italian. She's Roman, because she's from Rome. And so they, they kind of they do this overlap. So there's definitely the racial piece too, because then Africans that are here, there's a girl, a woman, I know this from Uganda, and she's hurt. She's has an Italian husband and two kids and her kid, her oldest is like, 25. And she's Italian. And she, she's like, I've been here almost 30 years. But people say, I'm an immigrant. But as an American, you could come here after a week, and they're like, you're an expat. So there's definitely a positive connotation that people assume when people are, “expat” and negative when they say, “you're an immigrant.” And it just really comes down to class. So then there's this whole ad, a professor in college, he used to say you can't separate race, class and gender, but in Europe is I would say, nationality, race, and class, like they kind of do these overlays, or overlaps, and where they're separate and apart. So it's not just rice. So I definitely, and most African Americans will say this, you get privileged when you're American, and you're Black, because, first of all, they've never met cookie dough. Cookie dough, I'm still on the block in DC or in Chicago, it's short. So most of the African Americans that they're meeting abroad are college educated, they have disposable income. They're the talented 10th, for lack of better term. So generally, there's nothing but positive connotations. So you don't kind of get the overt racism that you would get in the United States. But then they look at Africans a little differently, because a lot of the Africans, particularly in Italy, are new immigrants. But then they look at they're looking at Africans the same way they're looking at Bangladeshi or Romanians or Russians because then they're like, “All the Russian girls are all prostitutes.” So it's weird because of its race and its nationality and its class. There's a small, very, very small African American community. And then most of the black immigrants that are here are new immigrants. They don't tend to want to stay because Italy, Italy's like the poor, they come in through Sicily, and they stay here long enough to get their papers and generally they're trying to get to Switzerland or Germany or France because they have much better economies economy, Italy's trash, like it's horrible there. It's a lot of old money, and not a lot of opportunity to make new money. So people that are coming, looking, nobody's coming to Italy, looking for a better life to struggle and make a very, very little amount of money. So they tend to not want to stay here and I met a girl, African American woman in Switzerland, who should actually come and marry the Swiss guy, they got separated. But she has a lot of African friends in Switzerland and she's like almost all of them come through Italy, but they're not trying to stay, which is funny because there's this anti-immigration, push Italy, and they don't focus on the fact that most of them aren't really trying to be here. So it's a really interesting kind of thing to witness because it's there all these nuances that come with race that in the United States they never get, they never really go into. It's like, you're just Black. And as someone who's Jamaican, or someone who's Eritrean, or someone who's Black from DC, they all have different stories. But in the United States, we're not giving the luxury of being able to have those separate identities. And actually, I think it is what it is. But in other parts of the world, you're a lot more three dimensional.

**CHRISTINE** [00:50:40] And I wanted to know specifically, what was her experience being a Black woman in Italy?

**LATREESE** [00:50:47] Well, Italy is very chauvinistic and patriarchal. So women, Italian women struggle in a way that American women don't. I as the women that I know that working in businesses here, like the stuff that people can say here, and it'd be okay. It's like madness, from the show about from the 60s about advertising the 60s in the US. I mean, a guy can say something crazy to you at work, and it's like, whatever the whole *Me Too* *Movement*, people here just thought it was crazy. They're like, how can If a woman has sex with you, and you're not physically raping her? How does that? How is that a problem? Like why can't a boss talk to a subordinate? Like, none of that makes sense to the culture here. So women in general, are seen as a lot more, they have a lot less power, I think, than they would in a lot of other countries. I mean, women definitely are objectified more, you in the States, I think you, I mean it good and bad, but the culture of work here, women tend to dress up all the time they do as well. But if you're not wearing a heel into the office, I think people are kind of looking at you with a side eye. In the US women are I think putting their comfort, the physical comfort ahead of like, what a patriarchal, the ideal of what a woman should look like in the workplace is. So there's that. So the country as a whole is Texas. Which is, it can be good too, because when couples get divorced, men pay a lot, because they're expected to take care of women. So that's the bad thing for men and people kind of backfire. People here don't really want to get married so much, because it's really hard to get divorce and men have ended up paying so much. So as an African American woman, there are a lot of Nigerian prostitutes in Italy, one of the reasons and it's the thing, it's like when I mean people do this, in China and Mexico and Nigeria, they take girls there, they want a better life. And they're like, okay, we'll bring you to Europe. But then you have to pay your fare. So they'll make them be prostitutes for however long to pay their way for bringing them to Europe. And they can't leave because they'll say things to them, like, “Well, we know where your parents are in the village in Nigeria,” and they're afraid. And so there are a lot of Nigeria prostitutes. And but at the same time, women that are seen as expats that are from the UK are definitely from the States that are White. They think they think all all American women are sluts, because on a TV show or a movie you meet, and two seconds later, you're having sex. And that's not a part of the Italian culture. Like it's a lot more conservative, because it's rooted in Catholicism. And I joke with my my White girlfriend's like men here expecting American women that are White to have sex with them for free. And they're expecting the prostitutes to their, to have to pay the prostitutes. I'm like, which is worse for them to expect sex from you for free or for like to have to pay for it. And I mean, they're both bad, but at least they're Black women. So I mean, it is all these kind of nuanced kinds of things. So my experience, me I've had that happen. I've had men think that I was a prostitute, particularly my look, is I look African. I look Nigerian. A lot of times when Black women are African American women are lighter skinned. They don't necessarily look, you are Nigerian. I clearly look Nigerian or Ghanaian. So I've had that experience. But I've also had I think, too, that men here are because race is the only thing that seems to matter in the United States about anything. I mean, here it's a thing, but it's not everything. So then there are definitely men that date you and they're like, they see you just as seriously as they see any other woman. And being Black is just another attribute like Oh, she's tall or Oh, she's short. She's thin, she's heavier. She's Black, she's White. Actually, this is funny. sidebar. This guy that I dated before he had a friend of a friend that lived in the States was coming and this guy was like this hedge fund manager from Minnesota and his white hedge fund manager from him. I'm a Black woman from Chicago, this super liberal. And he's like, well, we should all hang out because he's American, you're American. And for him that we're the same, it's like, well, you both speak English. What's the problem. And I'm like, “No. Like he voted for Trump was trying to justify, like, all the reasons that the tax breaks were needed that Trump implemented at the beginning of his term,” like it, we will could not possibly be more different. But for him, it's like, “Well, you're both Americans.” And so it's, it's this, it's a really interesting thing to see the way that we're perceived outside the United States, because it's not just about being Black. It's about I mean, it's definitely a big part of it. But it's not everything extra. That's one of the things I really like about being abroad is to not just be me, I am a black woman, I love being a Black woman, but I'm not just a Black woman, I am a woman, I am an American, I am smart you work in real estate are like I have all these other things. And it's so amazing to not solely be defined by my race.

**CHRISTINE** [00:56:02] Latreese is the founder and moderator of an amazing Facebook Group called Sisters Dating and Traveling. And I asked her, why did she create this group, and what it's all about.

**LATREESE** [00:56:18] So I was in another big travel group. And when I started traveling, and dating abroad, I actually posted about it, and I got dragged. And so I was like, and like people in the group started sending me private messages, like we should be able to talk about this without people having all these crazy comments, and blah, blah. And so I just was, like, compelling. I was just like, I have to do this. And I started the group at that point to just kind of have a space for women to talk about these experiences without the judgment. So I'm kind of just blown from there.

**CHRISTINE** [00:56:48] Dating abroad, the question that gets asked the most. And so I had to ask Latreese What was her experience dating abroad, and she really, really was not only so transparent, but gave some really, really interesting advice.

**LATREESE** [00:57:09] One of the reasons I was not happy in United States was because I was not able to date the way that I would have liked to. And I hear that from so many Black women in the United States, when you are abroad, men are men all over the world. So then it's more like I'm not eating the right guy. But when you talk to Black woman in the US, it's like I'm not meeting a guy that doesn't matter where like how beautiful she is, how smart how accomplished, like whatever attribute she brings into the room. She's like, generally speaking, African American women have a really hard time finding a man. And for one it's because so manyBblack men are not eligible a lot of guys are in I mean, because of the way the US is set up deals are in jail guys have been killed. I mean, there are a lot of socio-economic issues and racism, institutionalized race, racial things that significantly reduced the amount of eligible black men. And then the black women who are a lot of them aren't willing to date outside the race. And the ones that are there are so many other men that don't even see you and Americana, she talks about how it even though it's a fiction, the last story how she's dating this, this wealthy white guy and his I guess his brother couldn't imagine that he would date her like, not fit because she was Black, but because she's a non entity. And I think that a lot of non Black men in the United States see Black women like that, like you're not even an option because you're not, you know, I don't look at a chair and think that that's the possible mate. Because this is a chair, it's a non entity. And I think a lot of Black women are seeing that not even if they're attracted to you, they don't see you as a potential mate. And so being in Europe, I mean, not even just in Europe, I think this is experienced once you leave the US, but especially in Europe, in Africa, most of the countries in Africa, even South America, Central America, but once you leave America, people are like, “Oh, well, you're a beautiful woman. You're smart, you have a beautiful smile, you have a body that I'm attracted to. And you're a woman, you're like this three dimensional woman that I want to spend more time with, I want to take you on a date. I want to know you. I enjoy your company, your company.” And you just see and that's there's no other way to say it you are absolutely seen. And so what I noticed once I got to, here, like if I moved here like my girlfriend, one of the main reasons I say I wish I'd come when I was younger is I would have. I'm still single. I'm in a relationship but I'm not married. And I don't have children that I know I wouldn't be married with like four kids or something. It is so much easier to have that happen. Being here, I was dating filled I would meet so many guys so easily and the caliber of men that I was dating. I dated wealthy artists, different kinds of artists, attorneys, doctors, like somewhere everything and they're genuinely interested in you. Then it's just the regular relationship stuff. I can find somebody I'm compatible with who is compatible with me and like opportunities exist for me in the United States. So I dated a lot of people and a lot of the stuff that I mean, I think dating is a skill, and a lot of the stuff that I should have learned, like a long time ago I hadn't because I hadn't had the practice that I was able to get here. And when I met my current partner, it's funny because when I met him, I wasn't terribly like I was dating so many people. And I wasn't, he didn't knock me off my feet or anything. But his consistency and his heart and his integrity. It just completely won me over. And I think one of the things that happens in the states is African American women we made from a place of desperation. And we just, we go, whoever, but here, I had options, where I didn't have to be with him. And it was me genuinely connecting with this person and wanting to spend time with him. And that was, it's been nothing but a good experience for me. And I'm in an amazing relationship with a spectacular man. I'm very deeply in love, and I feel loved. And this is an experience that I've had in my adult life, not to this extent. So it's definitely worked out. Well. For me.

**CHRISTINE** [01:01:10] I really like talking to the truth about dating. Can I just say that I really like talking to Latreese about it. Because I think her viewpoint and her perspective, and her philosophy makes sense in a lot of different ways. Whether people like it or not, it may be provocative. Who knows. So I asked Latreese to share some dating abroad advice that I thought was really interesting and insightful.

**LATREESE** [01:01:40] And I've really thought about this, and I think I haven't answered but nobody listens to me. I think it depends on who you are. As I'm speaking specifically to women, there are places in the world where it depends on what kind of woman you are. If you're an African American woman, and you have dark skin, Europe is really good. Because I mean, honestly, I think men here tend to especially like Italy, they're like I want a Black woman, I want a Black woman. And so they like dark skin. But then if you're a fair skinned Black woman, then you might probably do better in different countries in Africa or the UK because there's a lot of Black men there and colorism. I mean, it is what it is, if you're a heavier Black woman, Western Africa, South Africa, because they really want a woman with meat on her bones. So it depends on who you are. So I mean, I'm not friendly, says this, you want to put yourself in a situation to be successful, to have as many options as possible. Like don't go to Asia, don't go to China, if you look for a man, like at the White gay couple that I that I know that was here. They lived in China for like 13 years. And they were saying almost every couple that they met, like after they got their husbands left for women, that the straight couples, the husband's left for Asian girls, for Chinese girls. And he was like, Don't bring your husband to China. Well, if you're a woman, I'll go to China like the Chinese when they got that. So it just I mean, anything's possible, and you meet people who anecdotally met their partner and other places. But it definitely if you're trying to have as many options as possible, you should kind of understand who you are and what you want. So it places in the Middle East that I hear from women is the religion there. It's all part of Islam. And the culture is such a part of the lifestyle, that men aren't going to marry somebody who's not from there. Like they'll have sex with you, and they'll take you out, but they're not going to marry you. But here I mean, almost every woman that I know that wants to get relationship is in one. Like if she's not, honestly what I've, what I've discovered, too is when it's been a certain amount of time, and if someone wants to be partnered and a black woman wants to be partner, Europe, if she's not, then it's kind of like at some point, then is there's probably some internal work that needs to happen. Because it's not that you're not meeting men here. There's so many men that will be interesting to you. Then it's like, okay, maybe they're like, do I have issues with commitment? Do I have issues with whatever. But Europe is easy, but again, like, but it tends to be harder here if you're not slim, because it's just what it is. But like if you're heavier and West Africa, South Africa, I mean, a light skinned, heavyset black woman in South Africa will be married like at the airport if she wants it. Just the kids Oh, you want what you're looking for? Oh, Central America, too, I think is good too for a black woman.

**CHRISTINE** [01:04:31] So according to Latreese , Europe is a good place to date. And so I asked her, why does she think Europe is such a great place for dating?

**LATREESE** [01:04:41] Well, you have options there. That's the thing that I think is very different from like, I and I always say this. I don't know why BGlack women keep going to Atlanta, stop calling Atlanta. They see on our list for me to just stop it. Like there are too many women. There's too much competition and you got to work like you. You If you have to work too hard to keep a man's attention, and then they're going to be men, because they have so many options. So like, if you want to ask the fool, he could act the fool. And if you want to act a fool, they have a woman take them back every day he can't. And so it's just it's too many options for them. But in Europe, I think, is the opposite. Like, if you decided right now, you're like, I want to go out tomorrow in the middle of COVID. And you went on Tinder and was like, I want to like who wants to take me to dinner? It'd be like a million dudes. Like, please let me take you to dinner. So you have that option. And I think that's the difference. A Black woman sent in Atlanta, a gorgeous Black woman with a PhD and an MD and a JV you have a million IT starts. And she's like, I want to go out to dinner, who wants to take me out to dinner? And do like, what does that mean? I have to pay it. Like where your money is like this completely different thing like, Well, you know, I just sit at home and watch Netflix. No, thank you. And it's just Europe, it's just easier. And that's part of its cultural too. I think regardless, even in France, I know people are a lot less likely to get married in Italy, people don't get married as much as they used to as well, because it was historically super hard to get divorced. But people still expect to be in a relationship. Now marriage is something else. But people don't tend to stay single. But in the States, I think people, especially in a Black community, men have, like the whole hip hop culture is presented, having a relationship and being in love is a weakness. And so a lot of men kind of stray from that. And in most other countries in the world, men are men are taught to want to partner. Now whether they get married or not, that's different. But they aren't taught to one from being in a relationship.

**CHRISTINE** [01:06:39] I asked Latreese , how long did it take for her to feel settled in Italy, for it to feel like home,

**LATREESE** [01:06:46] I think I felt that from day one. When I brought my dog It was my, like, when I had my dog I was home. Because I don't think that home is necessarily a place. This is I guess this is corny, but it's the state of mind. And that was my immediate family being complete. So I felt at home at that moment, now that I'm with my partner, I feel that with him, like we move into a place together. And I feel like that with him all the time. Like he is my home. He's my sanctity, my comfort. And so that's when I feel that kind of overwhelming sense of, of like an anchor.

**CHRISTINE** [01:07:27] I asked Latreese to share some advice with all of you about going abroad.

**LATREESE** [01:07:32] You can't be afraid, you can't be afraid to live. Their life is full of uncertainty. That's like the one of the guarantees is the uncertainty. But you'd have to live in spite of it. Because you have to live and you kind of have to think about your life backwards. If you live to be 100, what are the things you want to have said that you've done or that you want to have done. And if this is one of those things on that list, you just gotta do it because it's not promised. I think for me that one of the things that was just pivotal in understanding that was when I was a freshman in college, my half sister died unexpectedly. And we really, we never really found out what happened, she’d gone to a club with her friends. And when it was time to go, they couldn't find her. She's missing for two days. And then they found her body. And she was 20. And so that was just inconceivable. I mean, she wasn't sick, she wasn’t someone sick who grieve them the whole time and expect the death. But when someone dies unexpectedly, it's like, it's a gut punch. And it was a surprise. And that is the moment that I realized that tomorrow is not promised and you cannot live thinking well in five years and 10 years and and when I turn this age when I turn that age and project these goals into some arbitrary future date with the assumption that they're going to happen. The thing is, if you want to make God laugh, make plans. That's true. You plan as much as you can. But some stuff is just beyond your control. And that's okay. Absolutely. Okay. If that's something you want to do, you have to just do it and let that fear. Let that fear go. Fear will keep you from living your life in every single capacity. And that doesn't mean that fear. Fear is important. It's a wonderful evolutionary skill that is that will keep you from doing super stupid things. But it can't keep you from doing anything. You don't want to wake up at 45 or 55 or 65 and have all these things in life that you wanted to do.

**CHRISTINE** [01:09:38] Wellness, a topic that we all should be delving so deeply into especially now. I asked Latreese, hat is her definition of wellness? And how has living in Italy affected her concept and practice of wellness.

**LATREESE** [01:09:59] I think wellness is what I talk about three dimensionality and three dimensionality is having this ability to be comfortable and fulfilled. In all the aspects of being a human. So, to me, that means, are you satisfied with your work? Are you satisfied with your home life? With your relationships relate to romantic and non romantic? are you growing mentally? are you growing spiritually? Are you content and all of these areas, your health, your physical state, your mental state, the state of your heart and your soul? To me if this was all, an all encompassing, kind of fear of contentment? And for me, absolutely, it is been a better place for that for all of those things to happen. I mean, that physical health is super easy to stay, because somebody posted on one of my groups to Italy, like, “Oh, I ate a KitKat. And it tastes really different.” It's like, well, it's not all those chemicals and that you're used to the EU is much stricter guidelines on food. So even when I eat crap here, I know that it's the sugar is real sugar, that is actual milk that it's actual flour. And it's not like a bunch of chemicals. So it's a lot harder to it's one reason I think why people are generally more fit here. So the food is definitely better. We kind of joke about it. But when we buy food at the grocery store, just the regular grocery store, not buying like the bio, or the organic stuff, just the regular stuff, if we don't use it fast, it goes bad, the fresh produce goes bad fast, I eat a lot of coats a lot of meat. And I know people feel like some people feel like all meats horrible for you. I'm like, well, the EU in the US got into it a while ago because the EU wouldn't take full meat from the US because they have the same guidelines. But they don't they don't allow the same types of antibiotics and growth hormones in the in the EU that the US does. So just eating regular food every day here versus eating food every day in the US, it's just you, you have to be healthier, because the food the stuff is just the ingredients are better. And so and then just being, like more fit in general, like we don't drive as much here with this pandemic. We do a lot of car share. But historically, we'll be on public transportation, and a lot of people in the cities in Europe, I think they rely on public transportation. And so people walk more in general, and they just you organically tend to get more exercise, we walk to the grocery store, we walk the walk almost everywhere. And you don'thave a car and go even if you drive the car and go to do a lot of the errands on the US you would typically do we don't we go to the grocery store a few times a week, because we're constantly buying fresh stuff. And we're walking in there. So just the lifestyle overall just lends itself to kind of being healthier. I think one of the reasons COVID was so bad initially in Italy, it was because so many families live together. And I think the focus on families here is much more important than I've seen in the US. It's also I think one of the reasons Italy's like, because in the US, they just decided like money is more important. And that is the if people die, they die. But I think Italy was just like, what sucks, we definitely don't want to take this economic hit. But it's really important to us that we stay alive, that we protect our elders, that people aren't just out here dying for something that will we can do something about it. So so there's that families are definitely I think stronger, they get together a lot of family as friends, people don't work as many hours they have more vacation as they select that cliche Americans live to work and Europeans work to live. So yeah, I mean, I just think it, you know, allows you to kind of hit all of those things in a different way. And ironic t,o about the spiritual piece is even though I'm in Rome, I've met so many atheists, because I think Catholicism is such a very integral part of the foundation of this city in the country, that people have a lot of information about it, and they have no problem judging it. And so a lot of younger people that you need are very, I think, a lot more introspective about religion, and how they feel about it, then in places where you like, It's not what you think it would be, you think it'd be like all these Catholics in Rome and, and it's, I see a lot more. And just as this is anecdotal for me, I've met and seen a lot more Italians and they're like, well, what is religion? Like, what's my spirituality? How do I feel about this, which is actually pretty cool.

**CHRISTINE** [01:14:54] I asked Latreese if she has a motto to live by a mantra and affirmation. A prayer that keeps her going in life where maybe especially since she's moved abroad.

**LATREESE** [01:15:07] Well one of the things that I don't know if it's just if it's solely this, but it's just control the things that I can. It's the Serenity Prayer, the serenity to accept the things, I cannot change the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference and anything that I feel like I in my life that I need to change if I have the ability to do so I really try to and sometimes you have to accept that you can't. And when I can't, I can't. So that's, I guess that's probably the biggest one for me. And then beyond that, to try to live each day is to the best of my ability to be a little bit better, hopefully, than I was the day before. And I've really tried to honor my ancestors in a way that I've made some self deterministic choices that really weren't possible for them. And I try to remember that is think about that as much as I can. So those are two kind of really important things for me.

**CHRISTINE** [01:16:02] Thank you so much Latreese speaking with you was absolutely delightful. Thank you so much for sharing your story. And if you enjoyed listening to Latreese as much as I did, you can stay connected with the trees via social media.

**LATREESE** [01:16:20] Well, you can find me online at [www.sisterswhotravelanddate.com](http://www.sisterswhotravelanddate.com).

**CHRISTINE** [01:16:25] Thank you again Latreese. And be sure to check out the show notes page four. Latreese‘s episode at <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/episodes/Latreese>. Thank you all so much 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, CashApp* or by purchasing a piece of production equipment via our Amazon wishlist. You can find all the links to the ways to financially support us at <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/support>. Also, please rate and review the podcast on Apple podcasts and anywhere else you listen to this podcast. It is so important. And while you're at it, be sure to head over to the website. The website is where there is just an abundance of information. It's where 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 find out ways to get in contact with them if you would like to do so. You can also check out the resources page at <http://www.flourishintheforeign.com/resources> to check out some products and services that can help you get and stay and thrive abroad. Also, if you'd like to book a consultation call with me, you can do so also via the website I give two types of consultations. The first type of consultation I do is for moving and living abroad. If you have specific questions, or if you just want to pick my brain, or bouncing ideas off of me, that is the best way to do so. And then the second type of consultation I offer is for starting a business abroad and you can also get a consultation with me there where we can talk about your ideas and start really game planning how to launch your business or scale your business so that you can thrive abroad or if you have not grabbed my free build a business abroad guide. What are you doing, grab that on the website, or you can grab it in any of the links on my social media profiles. So be it Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, you can click on the link that is in the bio section. And it will take you to a page where you can sign up and get your free build a business abroad guide. The music for this podcast is produced by Zachary Higgs. He is a talented multi-instrumental producer. And if you need music for any of your creative endeavors or pursuits, he is your guy. You can find all of his information in the show notes. Thank you so much for supporting this podcast. And thank you so much for believing in the voices and stories of Black women. Please take care of yourselves. And please remember that it's not about getting abroad. It's not about being abroad. It's about thriving abroad. So go abroad and cultivate a life well lived. See you next time. Bye. On the next episode of *Flourish in The Foreign.*

**NEXT EPISODE GUEST** [01:19:51] it just got so painful to be there. Like I was just so uncomfortable and I know that I needed to change something about my life and all the people around me were kind of like, oh, welcome to adulthood. Life is hard like single parenthood. Everybody does it like it's fine, you'll be fine. You just have to be miserable for the next 15 years. And I was just like, I yeah, I'm not gonna do that. I'm not here for that.