

INTRO: This is part two of my interview with Chris Davila. If you have not yet listened to [part one](#), I highly recommend you go back and do that first because it provides some really important context for this episode. If you have already heard [part one](#), you know, we're about halfway through our bottle of wine at this point, so. So please enjoy the conclusion of my interview with Chris Davila.

Matt Bowles: Can you share a little bit more about your remote business building journey for all the entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs or people maybe that are thinking about taking that leap? Reflecting back now on the seven years that you've been building this business? What has that journey been like? You know, what might you tell yourself now with this much experience if you were just starting that journey again?

Chris Davila: I would absolutely say to build a solid network with people. And when I say build a solid network, it goes beyond just knowing people in places. Build those connections, build those friendships. A lot of the clients who I now work with are because I was friends with them, because they knew I was now going into this freelance world because I was saying to them, hey, if you need help with X, Y and Z, I can do it. So, I have clients where I work on their media trips or I am a communication lead for their projects. I do events for them. I help the execution and the planning of events that they then take on and execute on site if they don't have a budget to bring me on board for the actual execution.

And all of this, thankfully, has been because of the friendships that I've made with people and just putting myself out there. Sometimes I even say to people, I create ideas. And I say, hey, I've looked at this. I think this could be a potential opportunity. Is this something you want to work on? Together. I also feel the higher powers are looking down on me. And these opportunities also come as well. The moment you're putting yourself out there and you're saying, hey, I can do anything. And everything I say to people, I'm like, tell me what you need and I can tell you if I can do it. Or I can tell you if there's somebody else that I might know that can help you with it.

Matt Bowles: I also want to ask you a little bit about being based in the UK for people that would like to come and experience the UK. You've now been there for six years. What recommendations or tips would you have for folks?

Chris Davila: For the UK, I would say definitely do London for two, three days because I feel like it's such a bucket list destination that you would be doing yourself a disservice to not see it. But also, that there's so many other beautiful places in the UK to see that can easily be reached via train or even renting a car if you want to test yourself driving on the other side. Wales is gorgeous. I feel like I'm biased, but Manchester is also a really great city if you want to see what the nightlife is all about. If you want to experience football, if you are into the music scene, so many amazing artists have come out of Manchester like Oasis and the Smiths and so their music scene is amazing. Liverpool is also really great if you love The Beatles and if you love football as well. And Edinburgh and Scotland also. You can do such an amazing trip. Yes, do London if you haven't come yet. But there's so many more amazing places in the UK that need to be seen.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. I will tell you this. I've been to London a number of years ago and did most of the tourist things. But now at this point in my travel journey, I want to go back to London to have a very different experience in London. Because I feel like the stuff that I appreciate, having traveled the world so much, is quite different now than it was before I started traveling the world. So, the richness of the immigrant cultures in London and the food scene in the different sections of the city and the nightlife scene and the different immigrant quarters of the city. I keep hearing about this stuff and interviewing people that are from

these places and it's just like, whoa. I really want to go to London and none of it has anything at all to do with any of those high-profile tourist attractions at all. I just want to go like immerse with the people from all over the world that live there and have made it amazing.

Chris Davila: Oh, absolutely. I go to London quite often and for me, I always say you can go to London multiple times and see new things, you can visit new neighborhoods, you can do different activities. London is amazing. And like you said, it has all these different segments of groups, different neighborhoods, different immigrant population. London will have the best Latin food because of the amounts of Latinos that are there. London also gets all the best Latino concerts coming through. So, I always find myself going back to London because I'm like, if I want really good Latin food, if I want to get all the shows like Bad Bunny or Angela Sulas, I'm going to London.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. And that's just the Latino stuff. I hang out in places like West Africa and I post up in like Nigeria and Ghana and I'm listening to these Afrobeats in the clubs and I'm Shazaming all of these Nigerian Afrobeat artists. And how many of them are based in London? Yeah, exactly. Like, I'm like, I have got to go to London. It's just amazing. So, yes, I need to plan my next trip back to London. Definitely going to hit you up when I do that. I want to also talk to you a little bit about some of your more recent travels. Since you've become fully remote, you've continued, of course, to travel the world. One of my other all-time favorite countries anywhere on the planet is Brazil. I have been four times.

I'm planning to go back later this year for my fifth time in. It is, in my opinion, just one of the most amazing and incredible and magical places that you can go. And I keep going to different parts of it because of course, the country is absolutely massive. I would love to hear about your experience in Brazil and I particularly want to ask you about this experience you had in Sao Paulo when you went to a capoeira training workshop. If people have never heard of capoeira, if you can explain what that means and then what your experience was like.

Chris Davila: Yeah, so capoeira is a mixed martial art that routes back to Brazil. It looks a bit dancy. The first time I actually experienced capoeira was in Namibia with a friend who was from Namibia and he's like, let's go do capoeira. So, I was like, I don't know what it is. But sure enough, and then years later, I found myself in Brazil and I was part of a Red Bull event where they had their Red Bull athlete, Arthur Fiu, who is a capoeira artist, teach a workshop. And so, we were in, I think it's Parque Iberico, the largest park in Sao. And we were doing a workshop with this legend, Arthur Fiu, learning how to do capoeira, thanks to Red Bull.

Matt Bowles: That is amazing. And what was your overall impression of Brazil? Where did you go and what did you think of the country?

Chris Davila: Yeah, so I've done Rio, I've done Iguazu Falls, both Brazilian and the Argentinian side. I've done Sao Paulo. And honestly, I agree with you. It's amazing. I think people will always say that they feel like it's dangerous. And like I say to everybody, this is like my little PSA is there will always be a scary place, even in where you live, where you would not go. You know, I'm from Chicago, and whenever I say to people that I'm from Chicago, they're always like, ooh, Chicago, scary. And I'm like, it's not if there are scary places and there's places that even I, as a born and bred person from Chicago, would not go to. And these are the places that are being spoken about. And I think it's the same with Brazil. There are places where us as tourists, would not find ourselves. And if you do find yourselves in these places, you're looking for it. Why are you there? Right. And I also think Brazil is breathtaking. It has just such a beautiful culture, but also their

food. I mean, I'm a foodie. If it's not wine, I'm definitely a foodie. And Brazil has the most amazing food. So, if, even if you just go for the food, it's amazing.

Matt Bowles: Well, and the thing is too, that people need to understand about Sao Paulo in particular in terms of the culinary scene, which, by the way, I would say in South America, really, the two best culinary cities that I think probably compete for that title are Lima, Peru and Sao Paulo, Brazil. But one of the things you have to understand about Sao Paulo is that it's not just Brazilian food that's good. There is a massive Japanese population there. There is the largest Italian population outside the country of Italy, anywhere in the world is in Sao Paulo. So, you literally have the best food from Europe and the best food from Asia are just in Sao Paulo. So, you just have this incredible restaurant scene there that will just blow your mind. And the nightlife and just the street parties. And for me also, the graffiti street art scene in Sao Paulo is just mind blowing. I literally went there. This was crazy.

So, the first time I went to Brazil, I just went to Rio for two months. And I was so enamored with Rio, in my opinion, it's the most naturally beautiful city on the planet of Earth. I've never seen anything like it. And I'm so enamored with it that I'm like, I don't believe that any other part of Brazil could be possibly this amazing. I don't want 59 days. If I can have 60, I'm not taking a single day to see any other part of Brazil. This is too epic. So, I spent all 60 days in Rio and then I leave Brazil, right? And I go on continuing traveling and then I come across other travelers. You know, you have these discussions. And so, I was talking with this woman that I met who's more well-traveled than me. And you have the what's your favorite city in the world discussion. And she doesn't even think about it. She goes, Sao Paulo, Brazil. I said, Sao Paulo? She goes, yeah. And I said, you've been to Rio? She's like, yeah. And I was like, and you've been to Tokyo and Istanbul and all? It's like, yeah, yeah, yeah, Sao Paulo for sure. I was like, what? So, I'm like, tell me why. So, she starts telling me why.

The street art is one of the things that I will travel for, for sure. That's one of my top things that I go. Another reason I want to go to London, want to do the street art tours there. And so, I'm like, I will fly to Sao Paulo primarily to see the street art. That's my top priority. And so, I booked, I went by myself to Sao Paulo and I booked a full day long private street art tour. Because, you know, the city's massive. There's over, over 20 million people in the city. And I booked a private tour because if you really want to see the street art, it's in a lot of different parts of the city. And the city is freaking huge. So, there's some places you can go and you can walk around like Batman Alley and like some of these places and different things, right? But then there's all of these other amazing stories about how a number of years before I went, apparently the police had arrested some of the top street artists. So, the community was all up in arms about this. And then from within prison, they, they negotiated with the government to create this open-air street art museum where they could do their own stuff and it would stay up and they wouldn't touch it. And it's in like the northern part of the city. And then there's this other stuff over here and like all.

So, like I got an eight hour, like full day long private driver to take me around, who was a street art specialist and show me all of these different things. And I literally just booked a solo trip to Sao Paulo just to do that. Was my first time there. I have been back since. But like I'm there for that by myself. And then I'm just like walking around and I like walk into these massive block parties where there's like DJs and they've just taken over the street and people dancing. This isn't carnival. This is just like a Saturday. This is like a regular weekend in Sao Paulo, right? I'm like, this is amazing. So, every time I go to Brazil, I feel like it's just an amazing energy, an amazing warmth and I just feel like, oh, I am back and I have missed you.

Chris Davila: Now I'm excited because now I feel like I need to add Brazil again to my list. I had no idea about all this street art. I went to Batman Alley, but this sounds even more epic and amazing what you've just said that. I'm like, actually I'm going to go back to Brazil.

Matt Bowles: It's wild. I mean, they have graffiti crews that are rappelling down high-rise buildings to do massive pieces on the top of high-rise building. Crazy over the top stuff. I'm just walking around the city, I'm like, this is incredible. So that combined with the food and the nightlife and everything else, I'm just like, man, this city is electric. It's incredible. So, yeah, I go to Brazil as frequently as I can. However, I feel like you and I now though need to talk about Japan. I just mentioned it. I know that you and I have both been to Japan multiple times. And I will say this, since you and I are both foodies, my understanding and impression of culinary excellence can be broken into. Before I went to Japan and after I went to Japan, like my life is like broken into those two segments. Tell me about your experiences in Japan. What do you love about it? Why do you keep going back?

Chris Davila: Epic is the only way I can describe it. So, for Japan, it had always been on my bucket list. It had been super high on the bucket list for years. And at a certain point, I'm going to admit, before going to Japan, I was a little scared that my bucket list item was going to underwhelm me after so much travel that I had already done. I think at this point I had probably 70 something countries under my belt. And I'm like, I've seen a lot. I need Japan to either bring it or I'm ready to accept that maybe I've traveled way too much in Japan. It's just not going to do it. And it definitely did. It exceeded my traveler expectations. So, I found myself last year finally visiting. And I have visited since then probably like three times. And it continues to amaze me. The last time that I was there, I was there for work and I was saying to my colleagues, I know I visited here already twice and it's still amazing and I love it and I'm so glad I'm here. And I was able to do even more things. The food, like you said, is game changer. You think you've ate until you've come to Japan and you've realized that it's just next level.

Matt Bowles: The thing is too that it's not only the Japanese food. I mean, there is that no matter how good of sushi or that kind of thing you've had somewhere else. When you go to Tokyo, you realize there are levels, right? Even though you've had amazing stuff, you realize all of a sudden there are levels. But it's not just the Japanese food. The best Neapolitan pizza I've had anywhere in the world outside of Naples, Italy is in Tokyo. The coffee shops, the attention to detail and excellence in the coffee shops is going to be on a whole another level. And so, after you visit Japan, your impression of what is possible in the culinary world is just different. You just realize there's levels.

Chris Davila: Absolutely. I didn't realize that rice could taste different until I reached Japan. I ended up visiting Niigata, which is where a lot of the best rice fields in the world are. And I stayed in this really posh retreat ski place in Niigata when I was traveling. And the chef there is the best vegetable chef in the world. She's been awarded this Michelin rating. And she grows her own rice in her own little farm field next to this retreat center accommodation. And so, we got to taste literally rice that was picked and grown right next door from this Michelin rated woman chef, which I was like, girl power. They ended up in the morning because we had it for breakfast. We also did it for dinner, mixing it with egg. And I was just blown out of my mind. I'm like, I didn't realize that I was eating very crappy rice until I got to Japan.

Matt Bowles: It's unbelievable. And then if you go to the really high-end spots, like if you're able to get a reservation at the Michelin star sushi place in Tokyo, Omakase. Yeah, I went to one in the Ginza neighborhood. And sushi chefs at this restaurant, they have to train for 10 years before they're allowed to serve a customer. They have to have 10 years. I mean, it's like a whole different type of level in terms of

what you're going to experience in the food, but then just in terms of the country as well. What places in Japan did you go to, and what was your impression of the places you went?

Chris Davila: Yeah, so I went to Niigata for this retreat. I did Tokyo, I did Kyoto, I did Hiroshima, which was so mind blowing. I would recommend hiring a private tour guide for Hiroshima because you really get to experience the stories more closely, ask all your questions. And honestly, Hiroshima is one that I think is worth the day trip, is worth adding on, because it's just going to blow your mind. The energy, the history there. And then I also did Osaka, which is Japan's kitchen, and it absolutely is in Osaka. I would recommend doing a food tour. The one that I did, I loved. We got to try everything. And it really got me to understand why Osaka is considered Japan's kitchen. Yeah, it felt grimy.

Japan is very proper. I keep saying to people, I'm like, Japan is living in the future. And I do not understand why Japan is in the future and the rest of the world isn't, especially for Western countries. How are all of these Western countries not like Japan? Osaka, though, feels like your younger brother, who's a little bit more rebellious, and they're really stepping out of their shell, because I feel like they're the ones that, like, aren't following the rules in Japan. And it's great to see it. It was great to see how Tokyo was super proper. They follow the rules. And then there's Osaka, who's like, I'm going to rebel a little. I'm going to be cool, and I'm going to have just the most amazing food that you can actually have in Japan, which is saying a lot when you think about how amazing the food is in Japan.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, listen. I mean, the first time I went to Japan, it was kind of similar to my Rio experience. I went to Tokyo and I went by myself, and I was there for a month, and I just was having my mind completely blown every day by that city. If you've never been to Tokyo, there's really nothing that I can compare it to, because I don't think there is any other city on earth that's even similar to it. It's kind of its own planet. You just have to go and experience it. It's just fundamentally different from anything else. And I, again, was so enamored, and I was just entranced by the city. I was like, I'm spending every day here. I'm not even taking a day trip to see anything else. This is too epic. And so, I spent the whole month in Tokyo, and then I left Japan, and then I went back, and then I spent a month in Osaka, and then I went back and I spent a month in Kyoto and I traveled around and I did go to Hiroshima. Really appreciate that recommendation.

I am telling specially Americans, how important it is to go to Hiroshima to learn the history of the United States government dropping a bomb on the civilian population of Hiroshima, and also to go to the Peace Museum. And the lessons that the Japanese folks from Hiroshima are trying to teach the world about. This is why we have to completely denuclearize the entire world. And that is the lesson that they're taking from and that they're pushing for and everything. And it's just so horrific to see that history. But it's really important to learn it and to sit with it and to reckon with it, and then also how hopeful and inspiring it is to see what these folks are trying to do in the political advocacy globally that they're trying to do. It's just amazing, and it's incredible and certainly the most powerful day that I had in Japan without any questions. So, I appreciate you putting people on to that. I also want to ask you a little bit about [Girl Takes Mundo](#). Can you talk about your travel blog, your platform, why you started it, and how it has evolved and what people can expect from it today?

Chris Davila: Yeah. So, [Girl Takes Mundo](#) actually started because I thought that I would get bored during my sabbatical. I thought that I would need something to do. And so, when I started solo traveling, I used to create these guides for my family and friends so that they would know exactly where I was at. They had all my flight information. They knew all of the hotels and hostels that I was staying at. They knew the activities

and tours that I had booked. If I was missing or if they didn't hear from me, they knew where I was supposed to be and they could start looking for me. That was like my whole thing to make sure that my friends, my family felt comfortable with me solo traveling, especially being a Latina, but also giving them the guide. And at one point, my friend, I'm going to go on this sabbatical, said, why won't you start a blog and share all of these amazing guides that you create for us and share them with people. So, I was like, that actually sounds like a really great idea because I might get bored while I'm traveling and I'll have something to do.

And so, I started the blog to time it with my sabbatical. I started writing. The writing in the beginning was definitely not travel blogger worthy, but I was writing. And then at a certain point, I decided to start taking it a little bit more seriously. So, I started writing proper destination guides. Covid happened. And that's when I really decided to put a lot more time in revamping my blog. That's also when I started with affiliate marketing, because I realized that I could potentially, if I actually put some effort, start earning from my blog. And that's really when I became a travel blogger, an intentional earning travel blogger. Because I actually started earning from my blog.

For the longest time, I thought that it was just me reading my articles, maybe my friends and family reading my articles. And then I realized actually there's more people looking at my blog, so it's serving a purpose. And I decided to start finding ways to earn from it. But yeah, the blog started because I wanted to start documenting my journeys. I look back at some of the original articles that I wrote and it still gets me super excited to see how far I've come. Also, that was one of the other things I really came out of the sabbatical. During my sabbatical, I became a travel blogger and I started earning from my blog through affiliate marketing and through ads and through collaborations with different brands. And I would have never thought that that would have been the case when I decided I'm going to go on a sabbatical goal for six months and we'll see what happens.

Matt Bowles: Well, for people that are listening to us talk about all of these travel experiences around the world that we have had, some people might start thinking, that sounds amazing, but it sounds kind of expensive. You have curated on your blog a number of resources and tips and hacks for how to do this in ways that don't break the bank. Can you share some of your budget travel hacks that you would recommend to people?

Chris Davila: In terms of traveling smart, I'd say one of the things is maximizing your dollar, maximizing how you use your credit cards. So, I know that people are like, oh, credit cards. But I love traveling using my points, and I put everything on my credit cards so that I can then expand my travel. I also look at different dates. You know, I don't limit myself to just the weekends. I will sometimes just figure out what's a really cheap destination that I can travel to and I go to it. I talk about, especially in my travel blog, about ways to travel smarter but without breaking the bank, finding ways to cut corners. So, like for example, in Chile, as I mentioned to you, I knew that food would be really expensive. So, I said to myself, okay, I'm going to bring food and I'm going to camp in Easter Island so that I can still be able to enjoy renting a quad bike, going on these different experiences and tours because that's what matters to me sometimes.

I always remind people, depending on the type of travel that you're going to be doing, don't pick a really fancy accommodation if you're not going to actually stay there. If you're sightseeing, just find a decent place or an Airbnb that you'll be able to stay in that is going to be comfortable without breaking the bank. Because most of the time you don't even spend time in your accommodation. Don't put money toward that. Put money toward the foodie meals, the things that are actually going to bring you joy. For me, it's

food. So, I'll always find ways to either do a really cool cooking class in another country or do a different activity or eat at a Michelin rated restaurant. Because these are things that I'm like, this is where I'm going to splurge and these are the areas where I'm like, I don't really need to splurge.

Matt Bowles: I think that is super important advice. I also want to ask you for any minimalist packing tips that you would have, especially for women. I will say this. When I started on my digital Nomad journey, I had an enormous amount of luggage. I have told this story a number of times about how much stuff I attempted to pack when I began this journey. And over the course of my travels, I have figured out how to get it down. And I'm now 100% on team carry on and I travel the world with carry-on luggage only. I am curious if you can share some of your minimalist packing tips, especially for women.

Chris Davila: Yeah, for women. I'm with you. When I started my sabbatical, I was on a 65-kilo bag and for those who haven't searched me yet, I'm 4'11", I'm 113 pounds, so I'm quite little with a 65-kilo backpack. Doing my sabbatical because I knew that I was going to be traveling through different seasons. I felt like I needed it all and I'm with you. I'm for the most part, I'm now carry on. So, the tips that I would give women for packing, I definitely think you can pack very minimalistic. You can be team carry on as well. The key is doing three shoes. I always say a nice pair of shoes if you decide you want to go out. Trainers and then flats, potentially things that you could wear to the pool or if you ended up at a spa.

The other thing is in terms of your clothing, wear items that you can pair to create a larger wardrobe. So, three or four tops, one really nice dress that you know that if you found yourself being invited to a party you could wear. I never leave home without a swimsuit or swimming costume, as they say in the UK, even if I don't think that there's a pool, I say to people, if I'm leaving my house to go to another country or another city, I'm packing the swimsuit. Just having your essential items where you can create a bigger wardrobe by just mixing and matching. Having one dress that can be used for going out if you find yourself being invited to a nice party, literally shoes take up the most space, so really breaking it down and also reminding yourself that as a woman, all of the pictures, people will never know when you took this picture, so they might think you took the picture on that same day. They'll never know based on what you wear or on the shoe. So, you'll be fine, you'll survive.

Matt Bowles: Great advice. Chris, what tips would you have for Latina solo travelers in particular who may be at the earlier part of their travel journey?

Chris Davila: I always tell my Latina solo travelers to start small. If you're trying to test yourself or feel comfortable, either add on a day or after a trip that you're doing with either family or friends to do something on your own to feel comfortable. Eating by yourself, going to a museum by yourself, traveling by yourself. The other big thing I'd say is communicate with friends and family or plans. As I mentioned, I used to create travel guides that had everything. People knew where I was going to be because in my mind I felt if I can share this information with them, even if something happens to me, you know, God forbid they could find ways using my guides to know this is where she was going to be. I'd also say if you're starting to test style traveling research accommodation that will be geared toward women or hostels that are catered towards solo travelers.

So, there is a number of solo hostels that I used to pick literally because they offered activities within the hostel that would then bring people together. One of the things that I say to a lot of Latinas, a lot of solo travelers, a lot of those aspiring solo travelers, is that you never travel alone. The solo travel feels like a lie to me because I solo travel, but I find myself meeting people in these countries, hanging out with them. I

have friends from all over the world, and that's thanks to my travels. And this was because I would research accommodation that was geared toward women or geared toward solo travelers. A lot of these accommodations used to do family dinners together, or they would do nightly activities or day activities as the hostile group. And that's where you met friends. So, you were no longer traveling by yourself. But you also have that luxury that if you decide, today is not the day, I just want to go and do my own thing, you could totally do that because, yes, you are technically solo traveling.

Matt Bowles: And for people that are interested in becoming travel content creators and being able to monetize that as a business and create revenue from it, can you give any tips for the business side of doing that for aspiring creators?

Chris Davila: The biggest tip that I give is to start calling yourself a travel blogger. If you're going to start a travel blog, if you're going to start documenting your journey, if you're going to start telling people about your travels either through a blog or social media, and start trying to find ways to monetize it early on. So, my biggest thing, the way I learn is through affiliate marketing. And I feel like there's a platform called *Travelpayouts* that makes it super easy for people to start earning from their blogs. Even the newbies, which is one of the things that Latino Travel Fest. I was saying when I started my blog, I didn't think that I could earn from it. I felt like only those blogs that were super established, that had high traffic could earn.

And then I learned that *Travelpayouts* has a smaller threshold to allow you to sign up for them. And I was like, why did I wait so long? Why was I not given this information sooner? So, I try to give people that information. I'm like, if you want to start travel blogging, as long as your blog is three months old, which is, I believe, the standard for *Travelpayouts*, and have some content already up, you can start adding affiliate links, which don't cost your readers anything extra, and you can be earning a commission by them just clicking your link. So even if they land on your page and they're like, wow, I like this tour in Olbos, they click on it, they book and you earn a commission.

So, to kind of paint that picture, I started my blog in 2017, as I mentioned to you, but I didn't get into actually earning from my blog until 2020, when I had time to really bring it to its earning potential. So, I had tons of content and I had to update all of these links to affiliate marketing links. But as a result of that work, I'm now earning from my blog, which is something that I would have never, you know, in 2017, I was just Chris. I was just Chris who decided to start her blog. And now I'm [Girl Takes Mundo](#), who is earning from her blog because she decided that she was going to integrate affiliate marketing. And anytime anybody goes into my blogs, reads my destination guides, is getting information from a first person, actually somebody who's experience led Tripp. I'm learning from that and my readers aren't paying anything extra. So, we're all winning.

Matt Bowles: And I have to also say I love the name of your blog, [Girl Takes Mundo](#). That is so amazing. I smile every time I read that. I think that is so awesome. You know, you and I have now been drinking more wine for quite some time this evening, and I realized that I haven't even asked you a wine travel question. Are you like me? Do you intentionally travel to wine regions of the world? Do you seek out wine experiences when you travel? And if so, what is maybe one of the most epic or memorable wine experiences you've had around the world so.

Chris Davila: People can't see this one? I'm literally cringing right now because the story I'm about to say is probably the worst wine experience.

Matt Bowles: Wait, why are you going to say the worst one?

Chris Davila: Only because it's also the most memorable one. So, it's such a good one. I agree with you. I love wine. I've decided recently this is my year where I'm going to become a wine lover. And I've been doing wine courses. But the cringy experience that I have that is also super memorable is my husband and I did a three-week trip in the Balkans, and one of the places that we visited was Serbia, which has this wine region. They're the ones that provided this certain wine in the Titanic boat. So, I was like, I grew up loving Titanic. I may or may not have had a crush with Leonardo DiCaprio. I will not admit it here. Totally off the record. And so, when I heard that in Serbia, they had this wine that was served in the Titanic, I was like, I need to go have this. So, my husband and I. We rented a car during the Balkan strip. So, we drove to this town. We found ourselves in this home that looked like genuinely somebody's home. They had this religious cross and these religious figures. It looked like a family home. But they were creators of wine. They also carried this Titanic wine.

And we started to do a wine tasting with them, which led to us getting really drunk, because the person who was leading the wine training must have really started liking us. They started serving chocolate cups with wine, and it was only us two there. We started getting, like, bottles of wine. They were like, oh, no, you need to try this one, too. Two hours later, we were very drunk. We got to our car and we're like, we cannot drive. And so, we got wine wasted, stayed in front of our car. It was close to a little. So, at one point, we had plans to go to this really nice restaurant that was in this town. Never made it.

I remember waking up too drunk and asking my husband, where are we? And he's like, we're in the little parking lot, Chris. We're still here. And I've purchased bread and ham and just eating at a little parking lot. But the wine was amazing. I purchased a lot of wine, so I was still able to, back in Manchester, enjoy all of this beautiful wine, which costs little to nothing because I was in Serbia as well. But still to this day, we talk about and we laugh about how we thought we were going to go to this really nice wine experience. And then we drank way too much, and they liked us way too much, and we bought too much wine.

Matt Bowles: I love that story. But I also love you putting people onto the Eastern European wines, because I feel like a lot of people, if you have not traveled through Eastern Europe, a lot of people have never tried an Eastern European wine. They've never heard of wines from Serbia and Bulgaria and different places, you know, in Eastern Europe. And there are some really impressive wines from that region.

Chris Davila: Yeah, I'd say if you're going to go to Eastern Europe, Montenegro is a really good place for wine. Serbia is a good place for wine. Just be careful, because you might also fall into the trap and get very drunk, as I did. But Romania also has some really great wines as well.

Matt Bowles: Chris, when you think back about all of these travel experiences you've had from 80 countries and all the years that you've been traveling, what impact do you think all of those experiences have had on you as a person?

Chris Davila: It's definitely transformed my life. Each experience has something different. Some of them have bigger experiences than others. As you as a traveler would know, certain countries really resonate, certain cities really bring up memories. But for me, continuing to travel has kind of become the norm. And I think that's what people, I don't know, I think they think it's normal, but they think it's normal for me. And I try to stress to them, this can be super normal for you too, even to, like, friends and family. Yes. I finished a

sabbatical that transformed my life, but now I travel all the time, and that feels pretty normal to me. This doesn't feel like it's out of the ordinary.

I get people who tell me, they're like, I have no idea where you are because you're always posting different things. And I'm like, yeah, that's kind of the luxury that I have. I have so many stories, so many memories that I can share with people that I want to share with people. And that's why I have my travel blog, because I want to share these stories, I want to share these experiences, and I want to inspire not just Latina solo travelers, but just any traveler to be able to do it themselves. I truly believe that when I say, if I can do it, you can do it too. I know that I am no different from the person who is reading my blog thinking, this is insane. Everything she's done, I'm like, I'm normal. I am a normal person, and I did this. And you can totally do it as well.

Matt Bowles: What inspires you to keep going? I feel like some people might have a dream that if I could take a year and travel around the world and do around the world trip and do the sabbatical, and then I would have done it, and that would have been the experience, and maybe it would be out of the system. And now I come back and do this regular life, and that would just be a thing. You've been doing this for so many years now, and you're still so passionate about continuing to travel. Why is that? What does travel mean to you today at this point in your life?

Chris Davila: I'm doing it for the younger version of Chris, that little Chris who was creating little books with all the countries she wanted to visit. And I look at myself now and I'm like, little Chris would be so proud of me when I finally visited Egypt. Little Chris would be so proud of me because that was a place she really wanted to see. She wanted to see Cairo, she wanted to see the pyramids. And so, it felt like such a milestone for me. And I remember so many times feeling goosebumps and being like, little Chris would be so proud of me for being here. But little Chris would also have not imagined how far I've come with my travels. And so sometimes I think I still do it for her. I still do it for the little girl who was sitting in a library reading about all these places in the world. And even like right now I'm like, you can't see it, but like, I'm like getting teary eyed because she's my motivator, you know, And I think I have transcended her expectations and if I could go back to talk to her and tell her everything I've done, she would be mind blown.

Matt Bowles: Well, I think that is the perfect place to end the main portion of this interview. And at this point, Chris, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Chris Davila: I mean, I think I'm ready. Yeah. Let's do this.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. *The Lightning Round*. All right. What is one book that you would recommend that people should read?

Chris Davila: If you're a traveler, I'd say [The Wrong Way Home](#) is a great one that will inspire a lot of your travels. If not, if you're looking for something else, I'd say the four Agreements. I live by the four agreements.

Matt Bowles: All right, what is one travel hack that you use that you can recommend to people?

Chris Davila: Find flights if you have the ability that have long layovers which will allow you to visit a place either very quickly. So, I did a long layover in Bilbao, Spain and was able to visit Bilbao, Spain super easily. Or take advantage of those stayover flights where you can stay longer in a city so you can actually see more places in one flight without having to pay extra.

Matt Bowles: All right, who is one person currently alive today that you've never met that you'd most love to have dinner with just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation.

Chris Davila: Oh, so the person that comes to mind is Barack Obama because I feel like he'd be a lot of fun. You know, he had his time in Chicago. But I will say I have met Barack Obama. When I was a kid. He did shake my hand. You know, I don't want to flex, but he's shaking my hand. When I was a child, I feel like I could still say Barack Obama because I didn't spend enough time with him.

Matt Bowles: Fair enough. We'll give it to you. All right, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Chris?

Chris Davila: Don't stay in a situation longer than you should. If I want to go into, like, personal stuff, I felt like I stayed in relationships longer than I should, and I found myself wasting too much time knowing very well that I shouldn't have been there.

Matt Bowles: All right, of all the places you have now traveled, what are three of your favorite destinations you would most recommend that other people should definitely, definitely check out?

Chris Davila: I know I'm biased, I'd say Guatemala. Add that to your list. Cuba. I think Cuba is amazing. And then obviously Japan. Go to Japan.

Matt Bowles: We talked about two of those three. Why is Cuba on your list? What was so special about it for you?

Chris Davila: I feel like I had the most amazing experience in Cuba. I got to see communism in its real life. I got to spend time with a family there. They invited me to their mother's birthday, and they had saved three months of their rations to be able to make their birthday happen. And they decided to invite four random girls that they had met just a week before. And they're like, we want you to come to our mother's birthday. So, we got to see both sides of really living in a communist country, how beautiful Cuba was. But it's also why I can't go back, because I know it will ruin that experience that I had in Cuba. And so, I've preserved my little memory. But I think people should definitely see Cuba because it is just super surreal to see a country that has this resilience. The people just are happy despite the circumstances. Super similar to Madagascar, but it's also just such a beautiful country when you really get to see. See it properly.

Matt Bowles: All right, Chris, last question. What are your top three bucket list destinations, places you have not yet been. Currently the highest on your list.

Chris Davila: Highest on my list is Georgia, because they're actually known for their wine, ironically enough. I want to go check out their wineries also. Antarctica, it's the last continent I need to see. So, a part of me feels like I have to do it. And then Nepal, before my sabbatical, I did have a dog. And they have a dog festival where they pretty much honor and showcase their love for dogs. Which, you know, ironically enough, like, I became a vegetarian because people were eating dogs. And now I'm like, Nepal has this festival for dogs. I want to go and experience that.

Matt Bowles: Love that. I actually spent about a month in Tbilisi, Georgia. It is a super, super special cities. So, yes, when you're ready to plan that trip, you can hit me up and I will give you some tips on that. Chris, at this point, I want you to Let folks know how they can find you, how they can follow you on social media,

how they can check out your blog and everything that you're up to. How do you want people to come into your world?

Chris Davila: Absolutely. Go and check out my blog at [Girl Takes Mundo](#), 'Mundo' is a Spanish word for world. So [girtakesmundo.com](#), that's where people will be able to experience my world but also be able to see all of my destination guides, get all of my tips, my travel advice from my own experience, and then also check out my social media. So, I'm really big on [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#), which is also at *girtakesmundo*.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. We are going to link all of that up in [the show notes](#) so -you can just go to one place at [themaverickshow.com](#). Go to [the show notes](#) for this episode. You're going to find direct links to everything we have discussed on this episode, including all the ways to find and follow and connect with Chris and check out her amazing work and keep up with everything she is up to.

Chris, this was amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

Chris Davila: Thank you so much for inviting me and thank you for making it a wine night because I feel like I've gone through enough wine, but I'm okay.

Matt Bowles: Well, I knew that you were my people and that a wine night would be the only way to appropriately conduct this interview. So, I appreciate you indulging me as well. And good night, everybody.