

CCSF Culinary Arts

Chris Flores

CHRIS' BACKGROUND

Chris Flores was born in the Philippines and grew up in San Bruno where he attended elementary through high school, graduating in 2002. "9/11 happened when I was a senior, so a lot of my friends signed up for the army. I knew I didn't want to do that." Friends suggested he look at jobs in corporate security, a booming industry at the time. "It was easy to get into. You just had to have a high school diploma."

WHAT BROUGHT CHRIS TO CCSF

Chris spent the majority of his early 20s working in the corporate security field and was promoted to Head of Concierge for a residential building south of Market. "We didn't have a customer service program, but my mentor went out of their way to send me to seminars." Restaurant and hotel workers attended these sessions, too, and inspired Chris to start thinking about a change. "Working security took a toll on me. I was nervous going to work every day." One of his co-workers suggested he look at CCSF. "I liked the idea of culinary because I enjoyed cooking and I'd still get to use my customer service skills."

CHRIS' CCSF EXPERIENCE

Chris immediately knew he made the right decision. "It might sound weird, but walking through the kitchen on my first day and seeing all the industrial equipment and tools, I felt a sense of calm, like I knew I was in the right place." But the kitchen didn't stay calm for long. Before he knew it, Chris was cooking breakfast for a full cafeteria. I had to be disciplined and be in bed at a certain time, but knowing you'll be baking bread at 6am in an oven that could easily fit a whole body inside has a way of waking you up." After learning the basics, Chris had the opportunity to study abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico. "They're famous for their mole sauces. It's a culinary destination and the food was amazing." Throughout his time at CCSF, Chris did some seasonal catering work. "But, I'd made it a point not to jump into the industry too early because I'd heard stories of students being headhunted and not a graduating."

WHY CCSF WAS A GOOD CHOICE FOR CHRIS

In his final semester, Chris was ready for full-time work. "I also had to complete a separate internship, so I wanted to find somewhere I could get experience in both front and back of house." Chris found and reached out to Scott Gorman, the Executive Chef and the Food and Beverage director at the San Mateo Marriott. "Now I'm a banquet cook there." Chris was also able to convince Chef Gorman to take him on as a part time Food and Beverage intern, so he's able to learn about running the restaurants as well. He's very happy at the Marriot and plans to stay after graduation. "Right now I just want to be efficient, fast, cost-effective, and the best team worker I'm able to be, and that all takes time."

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Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Class of '17