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Raphael Miranda, Emmy-Winning Meteorologist, Proves It's Never Too Late To Do What You Love

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By **Maria G. Valdez** Apr 09 2016, 02:04AM EDT



Two-time Emmy award-winning, weekend and noon meteorologist for NBC 4 New York Raphael Miranda has always loved weather, but it took him many years before actually pursuing his dream job. This is his story. Courtesy Photo

If you're a New York City local, you know the weather is a big deal among New Yorkers. It is so unpredictable in the city that most people need to double check before planning anything important, so nature doesn't force them to change their plans at the last minute. If you're a New York City local, you've probably gotten your weather from Raphael Miranda of [NBC News 4 New York](#). His contagious smile and charming personality make anyone watching feel happy, regardless of how the forecast might look like. Raphael can be informing that the city is getting an awful snowstorm, and you would feel a little warm inside nonetheless.

Judging by his name, most people would assume this two-time Emmy award-winning journalist is Latino, and they would be right, but what no one imagines is the whole story behind how Raphael Miranda got to be where he is right now. I took it upon myself to find out more about this man, who's won our hearts by enchanting us with his endearing ways.

The time and place to meet were set: [Ooviña Latin Tapas and Wine Bar](#) on 496 Ninth Avenue at 38th St., a Latin tapas style cuisine owned by Chef Giovanni Morales, with craft cocktails, vegetarian options

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that are all gluten-free. It didn't take this picky Latina much to love the place. The décor was very clean and modern but also casually sophisticated, and the place was booming for Happy Hour. Raphael was already there when I arrived, and he greeted me with the same cordial smile that characterizes him. We sat down as he pointed out a few menu items he loves, since he and his husband are regulars at Ooviña.



Let yourself be charmed by Ooviña, owned by Chef Giovanni Morales and in the heart of Hells Kitchen. Courtesy Photo

He mentioned he was hungry after having a "light" lunch before we met. If you follow him on Snapchat (*mirandaraphael1*), you'll notice that most days, he and his colleagues mostly eat salads and try to keep it very healthy. That wasn't the case for that night. It was a Friday and although Raphael had to wake up early the next day to host the Megaphone Interactive Trivia of "Saturday Today in New York," we decided to not think about diets or work and simply enjoy the delicious food and drinks, so each one of us ordered a Margarita.

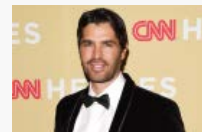
It had been a while since I had a good, strong Margarita, and this one sure warmed my Caribbean heart. Raphael's had jalapeño-infused tequila, which spiced things up a bit. We talked about the menu for a bit before I started asking him about his life and career, and we chose to have the Queso Frito, Brussels Sprouts, Vegan Tacos, Truffle Fries and Shrimp Ceviche. Like I had mentioned before, we were hungry, and all dishes were served "tapas style," so they're perfect to share.



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The Parmesan Truffled Papas Fritas are a great snack, especially if you go to Ooviña for Happy Hour. Courtesy Photo

Once our order was placed, we were ready to begin. We started with his origins. Raphael certainly has a Latino name and he speaks Spanish, but his background might not be too predictable. “Based on my last name a lot of people assume I’m Puerto Rican, and being in New York, I guess it’s a common thing to be Puerto Rican or Dominican,” Miranda said, “But I’m Brazilian. So, it’s also a very common name in Brazil. It’s like ‘Smith,’ so not special!”

He went on explaining his heritage: “My father is from Brazil and my mother is American, from New York City. Queens specifically. My dad immigrated to New York and they met and that’s how I came about.” Although Raphael was born and raised in New York, he has lived in Spain, where he arrived as an exchange student in high school. He also stayed in Brazil, where he taught English for a period of time.

While in Spain, he got immersed in the culture and language, without knowing that in the future it was going to come in handy for him, especially when NBC and Telemundo switched weather anchors for a day — with Raphael taking **Andrea Romero’s** place and vice-versa and delivering the forecast in Spanish. “That was so hard!” Miranda recalled. “When you’re doing weather, you don’t talk like you do in normal conversation, it’s very technical and there are things that you don’t say day to day like the ‘barometric pressure’ or ‘jet stream...’ These are terms that if you don’t say them regularly in Spanish you wouldn’t know how to say it.”

“‘Light drizzle,’ a ‘gusty wind;’ all those things that we say in weather come naturally to me in English but not in Spanish because I never talk about the weather in Spanish. So it was kinda rudimentary: ‘snow,’ ‘cold,’ ‘wear your jackets;’ it was funny! I did the best I could and I always smile, so I guess that helped.”

The food arrived right on time while I was preparing to ask him the question that revealed a whole new perspective of Raphael’s life and career: “How did you get interested in meteorology?”

“Weather was always a passion of mine when I was a kid,” Miranda said. “It’s such a typical story. If you talk to 100 meteorologists, 99 will have that same story: They grew up loving weather. They don’t know why, nothing happened specifically, but they were always fascinated by weather and the power of it.”

He then went on to reveal a pivotal moment for his relationship with weather forecasting. “When I was growing up, back in 1985, I was living in Westchester County and a hurricane came through: hurricane Gloria. I already loved weather but when that storm came through, schools closed for days, we lost power for days. It wasn’t too devastating but it had a huge impact. Trees were down all around because we lived in the woods, and I remember going out the day after the hurricane and being amazed by how much damage it caused.”

“I was already in love with weather but this cemented my love for it and I wanted to know more about how this happened. I was about 7 years old back then, and it only got worse and worse from then. Every winter storm that came, of course you want a snow day from school, but I would become obsessed with the forecast.”

However, Raphael didn’t go to school for meteorology right away. “I went for Spanish,” he revealed. “My first degree was in Spanish literature, but that’s not why I went to school. I wanted to study Urban Planning. That was my major. I was interested in neighborhoods and community development.”

But things didn’t work out that way, since Raphael wasn’t really passionate about it. “I moved away from that. Went to school for psychology. Moved away from that. Then I graduated — finally!- with a degree in Spanish Literature, because at that point I didn’t know what to do and I spoke Spanish, so I

said to myself, 'Let me just get a degree in Spanish.' It was something I loved too. I love Spanish, I needed a degree in something, and I love literature and writing and reading."

As we worked our way with the delicious food, starting with the Vegan Tacos (definitely worth trying!) and the Queso Frito (should've ordered two of those), we realized we had finished our Margaritas, so we decided to adventure into drinking something else. Raphael chose a wine from Austria, and he joked he couldn't pronounce its name. I chose a refreshing sparkly wine from New Mexico. Ooviña's wine list is worth taking a look at because the options are so odd but, at the same time, makes perfect sense once you try them. Once we were set with our second round of drinks, we continued our conversation.



When you go to Ooviña you have to try the Queso Frito (fried cheese). It looked so good and smelled so delicious that the table next to us ordered it as soon as they saw ours being served. Courtesy Photo

"All that time I never really thought about studying weather," added Raphael, referring to all the career changes until finally graduating college. "It was always something I loved, like a hobby, or a passion, but I never really made the connection that I could do that for a job."

So once he got his degree, he moved to Brazil to teach English for a few years. However, everything changed while having a conversation with one of his students. "I was talking to one of my English students, and he mentioned something about doing what you love," Miranda recounted. "That was the moment when I realized that teaching English was great, but it didn't really fulfill me. So the minute he said that, something went off on my brain and it was time to leave Brazil and go back to the States and figure it out."

"I finally came back to the States and I started school for Meteorology for the first time, failed miserably, dropped out. It got to a certain level where I couldn't do it. I was commuting back and forth from the city to Stony Brook, which is about two-and-a-half-hour train ride each way so I was spending

five hours on the train every day, and it just wasn't a good idea."

"I tried though, and I dropped out," the Emmy-winner remembers about his first attempt with the career that has made him so happy for the past several years. But if he had taken a step forward to fulfill his love for weather and meteorology, his next move set him 10 steps back. "I started a career in retail, worked there for a few years and I hated it," Miranda revealed. "Absolutely hated it with a passion but I kept getting promoted, so I was a manager at a fancy, luxury boutique and while I was doing that job, I thought that was my destiny."

Nevertheless, the universe made sure he got on the right track by scaring him a little bit. "I got sick, I got meningitis out of the blue, had to be hospitalized and I was out for months." And it was during those months when he finally got his act together toward the career that really made him happy.

"It was during that time that I reached out to a local meteorologist, and by this time I'm in my mid to late 20s so it's kind of late to start anything at that point, maybe not now anymore but think 20 years ago," Raphael continued. "I was already with my husband, who is great and very supportive, so this meteorologist I reached out to told me that it was possible for me to do it, 'there are ways, go online,' and this was at the beginning of the internet too, it was a new thing."

"So I took his advice and enrolled online in a meteorology school at Mississippi State University. It was a 3-year program and I went to school for journalism at Brooklyn College, which was another two years. I was working and getting two degrees at the same time and interning. I was all in. I knew that I needed the internship if I wanted to work on TV or any sort of media, because you need to make connections."

And Raphael definitely landed where he needed to be. "I was lucky to land a very important internship at Good Morning America and then at WNBC where I work now. I was a weather intern years and years ago. And eventually got my degree in journalism, got my degree in meteorology, and I guess the rest is history!"

He received his first Emmy in 2011 for his coverage of Hurricane Irene, and he got his second one in 2012 for covering Super Storm Sandy — one of the most intense and challenging weather phenomena the area ever experienced. Miranda was an integral part of the wall-to-wall Sandy coverage, working round-the-clock to keep the public updated and informed.

At this point of the night we're ready for dessert until we looked at the time and realized Raphael really has to go to get a good night's sleep before hosting the weekend trivia on Saturday morning. Without realizing it our conversation ran longer than expected, for we sidetracked from the "official" interview to talk about life, the amazing food we were enjoying and one or two anecdotes related to whatever we were discussing at the moment. It truly was a delightful evening with great company at an incredible restaurant. What I enjoyed the most was being surrounded by successful Latinos who made it big in "the big city."

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Maria G. Valdez

Born and raised Dominican living in New York (do not confuse with Dominican-York), who claims to be Sofia Vergara's long lost daughter and who has an unhealthy obsession with JLo. Associate Editor of Latin Times, overseeing the editorial operation and content strategy of the website. Trained journalist and musical theater performer with solid entertainment instincts. Experience covering human interest stories and social and large scale events with focus on Latino entertainment. Maria began her career in journalism in her native Dominican Republic where she worked for Ritmo Social, one of the country's most prestigious magazines, and as on-air co-host of a radio variety show.

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