

[00:00:03.770]

Welcome to the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracy Collins. In this podcast, Tracy shares destination guides, travel tips and itinerary ideas, as well as interviews with a variety of guests who share their knowledge and experience of UK travel. To help you plan your perfect UK vacation, join us as we explore the UK, from cosmopolitan cities to quaint villages, from historic castles to beautiful islands, and from the picturesque countryside to seaside towns.

[00:00:42.430] - Tracy Collins

Hi and welcome to episode 71 of the UK Travel Planning Podcast. In this week's episode, I'm going to chat about some of the best Christmas things to do in London during the festive season. Now, if you are planning to visit London this month, December, early January, I'm sure you're already starting to think about what sort of festive activities can you include in your itinerary? Well, lots of things. There are some amazing things to do in London during the Christmas period. It's my personal favourite time of year to visit London. I just love the atmosphere, the Christmas lights. It's just fantastic. Really, really brilliant time of year to visit. So in this episode, I'm going to chat about some of the best things to do in London at Christmas that you could add into your itinerary.

[00:01:25.760] - Tracy Collins

And I will also be chatting to domi of Scalens Studio about organising a festive photo shoot in the capital, which is very exciting. Okay, so let's talk about ten of the best things to do in London during the festive period. So, number one, enjoy the Christmas lights. You're not going to be able to miss them because central London is just bedecked and adorned with beautiful, beautiful Christmas lights. So take a stroll down Oxford Street, Regent Street, Carnaby Street, Leicester Square, Covent Garden, Seven Dials, you're going to see some gorgeous sights and those are just some of the areas that you're going.

[00:02:01.940] - Tracy Collins

To find Christmas lights. I do have an article about where to find the best Christmas lights on the website and I will link to.

[00:02:07.790] - Tracy Collins

That in the show notes. You could, number two, take a tour, because it does get busy, so walking is great. Taking a walk to enjoy the Christmas lights certainly is a great way to see them, but why not take a tour? You could take an open top bus tour, see the lights and personally, that's.

[00:02:25.640] - Tracy Collins

What I'm going to be doing next.

[00:02:26.590] - Tracy Collins

Month, so I shall be reporting back on that if the weather's great. What a wonderful way to see the Christmas lights. There are other festive tours available, so if you're interested in doing a walking tour, if you want to go to the Christmas markets, there are Thames cruises with a festive theme. Again, I've got an article on the website. I will link to the different tours that are available over the festive season. So do pop over to Uktravelplanning.com and take a look if you're interested in including a tour in your itinerary. The third thing that I recommend considering.

[00:03:00.740] - Tracy Collins

To add into your itinerary.

[00:03:02.660] - Tracy Collins

And one of the best things to do in London at Christmas is go to a Christmas show or pantomime. I absolutely love going to a pantomime. It's a great British tradition, particularly on Boxing Day, to go and see a.

[00:03:15.100] - Tracy Collins

Pantomime if you don't know what a pantomime is. Basically, it is theatrical entertainment, which is

designed for children, really, all the family, to be honest. It involves music, jokes, comedy, bit of slapstick, and it's kind of all revolves around a fairy tale or nursery story. So this year at the London Palladium, you can see Pidpan, the lyric Hammersmith, there's cinderella and I will put a list of the different pantomimes that are available over this festive season into the show notes. But consider adding in a pantomime. It is a wonderful British tradition and I know when my daughter took her partner over to the UK last year from Australia, they booked to go to a pantomime and he thoroughly enjoyed it. So number four they can do is go to the South Bank Winter Festival, which is obviously held in South Bank. It's more than just a Christmas market because there is a Christmas market there, but there are also gorgeous decorations. There's street performances, artworks and lots of theatre music going on at that time. So it's also a great place to try some seasonal and street food from around the world. So head to the South Bank Winter Festival.

[00:04:32.050] - Tracy Collins

Number five is Hyde Park's winter wonderland. So if you think between the smart shops of me, think about Harrods here, because you might want to go and look at the Christmas decorations in Harrods and Oxford Street, you'll find Hyde Park. So this large green space is transformed into a winter wonderland every December. You can enter Winter Wonderland for free if you visit during off peak times. Otherwise entry costs up to seven pound 50. And then in addition to that, there's rides, shows and attractions which are chargeable too. There's a lot to do and see there. Enjoy the food and drink again. It's a very popular destination for Londoners too. Number six is perfect for you. Harry Potter fans out there is to head to Hogwarts in The Snow. The Warner Brothers Harry Potter studio comes over with a beautiful festive makeover, so you can pop over to Hogwarts In The Snow at the Harry Potter Studios and enjoy the festive decorations there. Make sure that you do book because that gets booked up very, very quickly. Number seven is Christmas at Queue, which I've actually just booked tickets for. So you can go to Q Gardens, which are transformed with lights which are just gorgeous, and you can follow them through the gardens.

[00:05:50.840] - Tracy Collins

There's food and drink stalls there. It's an absolutely wonderful experience. It is timed entry with limited capacity, so you need to get that booked, which is why I'm really happy that I have that booked this year so we can go and enjoy Christmas. AQ number eight is free it's to go to see the Christmas tree at Trafalgar Square. So this is donated by Norway every year. You will also find on particular evenings and days, carol singers. I will put a link in the show notes, the schedule, so you can cheque when the carol singers are going to be there. So, number nine is to include some of the Christmas markets into your itinerary. I've already mentioned winter Wonderland, christmas Market and the South Bank Centre. Winter market? But there also are winter markets held at Covent Garden, leicester Square, Greenwich, Trafalgar Square and many other places around London over the festive period. Do not miss honestly, one of the Christmas markets. They are such good, fun and great way to get into the festive spirit. Obviously, if you're walking around London checking out the Christmas lights, chances are at some point you will probably stumble on one of the Christmas markets anyway.

[00:07:01.830] - Tracy Collins

Certainly Trafalgar Square through to Covent Garden is a lovely walk. You'll get the Christmas market in Trafalgar Square, go through Leicester Square again, lovely market there and then to Covent Garden. Beautiful. Absolutely cannot wait to be doing this myself. Next month. Number ten is to book a London festive photo shoot. And at this part of the podcast, I've invited Domi from Scaling Studio to talk all about how to book a festive photo shoot with her, what it involves, where she takes some of her beautiful photos from. And so, without further ado, let's welcome Domi onto the show.

[00:07:37.490] - Tracy Collins

So, hi Domi, I'm so excited to have you on the podcast again. You're such a wonderful guest to have on. So, would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself, about your business and then share what it is that you love about London in the festive season?

[00:07:53.350] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Hello, thank you so much for having me here again. It's a pleasure to meet you online and see you soon on December Photoshoot. So, my name is Tommy and I am holiday photographer in London. So

my guests who are travelling to the city, if they're a solo couple or family photoshoot, I am meeting them here in London. So I kind of like the care of them and then I take the pictures and I show them London. I'm showing more like about the best places where you should take the pictures, where you can take the pictures or find things to do. So when I'm meeting my clients, I will take the photos and I was like, oh, look, this is Big Ben, look, this is Tower Bridge and I'm showing the best spots. It's fun time. And then you can always have someone look after you here in London who can take care of you.

[00:08:43.770] - Tracy Collins

And I have to say, I've had a couple of photo shoots with you. I think I've actually had three photo shoots with you now. And I'm really looking forward to having a photo shoot in London at Christmas. It's my favourite time of year to be in London. So tell us what it is that you love about London in the festive season.

[00:09:03.310] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Christmas. This is the one. All year I'm waiting for Christmas because it's so unique. It's one of the best places to visit during Christmas because there are so many Christmas lights. Like London is putting so much effort. It's already October and they are preparing the Christmas lights around the city. So they're putting always so much effort and now it's still not confirmed. But I think it's going to be around like November 10, the Christmas lights are going to be on. I'm going to share the best licence, few, only yours. So they put so much effort to make this happen and very beautiful. And when the Christmas light is on, 10 November, all this magic place looks so beautiful and it's so good. Great opportunity to take pictures for Christmas card for your family or for your friends.

[00:10:05.810] - Tracy Collins

That's a really good idea. I've never thought, if you're visiting London, how perfect to get a photo, an iconic photo of yourself with your partner, your family for Christmas next year that you can use for your Christmas card. I love that idea. Dobby that's. Perfect. Absolutely perfect. So you obviously have lots of people, you have families and solo travellers and couples and then they love having their photo, I guess, taken at Christmas.

[00:10:34.090] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Oh, yes, that's true. This is about the Christmas card they love to have on this Christmas. So people, they are like, oh, because I'm getting pictures with one week standard. But people sometimes request, especially when they book like last minute, very close to the Christmas Day. They ask me, can you send quicker the photos? So I'm sending like 48 hours. And then they are using this for Christmas cards. So this is for this Christmas card.

[00:11:02.560] - Tracy Collins

Wow, that's brilliant. I never thought but of course you can do it so quickly these days. That's fantastic. This is my age show and that I'm thinking you have to wait until next year. But how perfect. Well, hopefully I'll be able to well, I will share in the Facebook group and on the website the photos that you take of us before Christmas. And you never know, some of you out there might receive one for Christmas as a Christmas card. So tell us some of the most popular places. Don't share all of them because we want to keep some secret. But what are some of the favourite places to take photos at Christmas?

[00:11:33.730] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Okay, I have like ten favourite places, but to be fair, I will share my three top places with you guys. Like a little bit secret, don't tell anybody. And then later the rest we're going to discover during the photo shoot with me. So, number one, I feel like this is the Regent Street. This is with this big angle lighting. And this is very beautiful crossing with the Oxford Street. So the two streets, they are kind of, like, connected and from one side you have the beautiful angles. Angels. So you have the beautiful angels. And from second side of the street this is Oxford Street. And there are also very beautiful lighting. I'm not sure about this year. How maybe the angle is going to change. Maybe something else is going to be there. But it's just very long street, very big street with so many lighting. And I feel like this is number one for them when they put so much effort. So the second street is Oxford Street is just next to the Regent Street. So can walk easily. When we have photoshoot, we take some pictures on Regent

Street and we walk to Oxford Street and we kind of have different vibes and the last places which one is my favourite?

[00:12:56.010] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Which one we can do during the day as well because there are so many like Christmas tree decoration that not necessarily you need to have night to have the beautiful lighting. But also there are so many standard decoration, christmas decoration that you can use for pictures, which is Covent Garden. And this is as well, what I love about these places. Because even it's rainy in Covent Garden is like hiding it's kind of some part indoor. So then we can cover ourselves from the rain or from the snow. So three best places where we can take the pictures. Of course, London has so many places which I'm sharing only with my clients. So if you're interested, let's meet for the shoot.

[00:13:49.490] - Tracy Collins

Absolutely. So come on then, Domi. Share with the listeners. How do they book with you? And I believe you have. A special offer for anybody listening into the podcast today as well. So come on, let's hear the details.

[00:14:03.870] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Sure. So on the website is scalingstudio.com. There is so many packages, you can just choose which one suits you. The best and then for example for family or couple we have special package. And then if you like to have like night Christmas photo shoot with the magic lighting on so then I will suggest you to meet after 05:00. P.m. You can choose any slot. There is not much left. Because always I'm for Christmas, I'm always fully booked. So I will not wait. I will hurry up and book the sessions. And then you can pay deposit.

[00:14:39.040] - Tracy Collins

Right.

[00:14:39.290] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Now and rest after the photo shoot. And then you can choose any of the slots which suits you the best. And because of this podcast, because of Tracy, and because of our great preparation I offer for you guys, -10% off. And when you're going to cheque out, you need to use this magic code UKTP ten. So it means, like, you're going to get 10% off our session?

[00:15:08.770] - Tracy Collins

That's brilliant. And I'll make sure in the show notes. For this episode I will put a link to Domi's website and also repeat the code so that you can use that and mention to Domi that you heard about her through the podcast. Yeah, and I mean it's going to be fantastic. We're going to have a wonderful photo shoot at Christmas this year and I know you guys out there, honestly you will not be disappointed. Domi's an amazing photographer, she's going to make you totally feel at ease. And where better in the world to have a Christmas photo shoot than in London?

[00:15:42.510] - Domi of Scalens Studio

Yeah, that's totally true. I cannot wait to meet you in person again. I'm always getting so much more energy, motivation to do even more and then yes, Christmas in London is one of really the best and I would just suggest to book everything as soon as possible because the hotel, they are sold out. So I always suggest don't really wait if you online just to give you a last tip about the bookings. If you want to have night photoshoots, I always suggest you to meet like 05:00 p.m or later or if you want to have kind of night photoshoot that the lighting is still on. But no people. Let's meet on 07:00 A.m because it's a great time that because the lighting is still on. It's kind of dark in London and then you don't have the people. And if you want to have like during the day, for example, we can go to Covent Garden and then have the Christmas tree pictures or the decoration, then we can meet around like 09:00 A.m is great time to book.

[00:16:46.690] - Tracy Collins

Perfect. Oh well, thanks so much Domi for coming on the podcast and I say I will be linking to your website and sharing the code again in the Show Notes but it's lovely to speak to you and I can't wait

to see you at Christmas.

[00:16:59.410] - Domi of Scalens Studio
Thank you for having me.

[00:17:00.870] - Tracy Collins
Bye bye bye. Thanks Tommy.

[00:17:03.990] - Speaker 6
Thanks again for tuning into this episode.

[00:17:06.450] - Tracy Collins
Of the UK Travel Planning podcast. I don't know about you but I.

[00:17:10.010] - Speaker 6
Can'T wait to experience the festive season in London. As always, you can find links to everything we
chatted about in this week's Show Notes@uktravelplanet.com episode 71. Next week I will be
reporting back about my experiences of a day tour from London to Paris.

[00:17:28.630] - Tracy Collins
So don't miss that episode.

[00:17:30.030] - Speaker 6
Would that just leaves me to say until next week, happy UK Travel Planning.