

Hi and welcome to the UK Travel planning podcast. Are you planning your UK trip but feeling confused or overwhelmed trying to work out the best ways to get around the country? If so this is the podcast episode for you. After listening to this episode you will have a greater insight into the different transportation options available which will help you choose the best ones for you based on your budget, travel style and itinerary and ensure you maximise your UK travel experience.

During the process of planning your itinerary it is vital to consider how you will get from A – B and evaluate all the options open to you. Whilst the UK is a relatively small country with a fairly decent public transport system, especially in the major cities, it is important to choose the best options for you.

For example, if you are planning to travel around the UK from city to city you will find that taking the train will be most likely the easiest and most cost-effective option. However, if you are planning to visit rural areas of the UK such as the [Cotswolds](#) you will discover that it is much easier to [hire a car](#) and take a road trip or if you prefer not to drive at all take an organised day tour.

In this podcast, we will cover how to get around the UK by train, car, aeroplane, coach and where necessary ferry! We also include practical tips, considerations, pros and cons plus any relevant advice.

If you want to know how to get around London we will be covering that in a future episode of the podcast but will concentrate on transport options away from London in this particular podcast.

Trains

As you will know if you have listened to earlier episodes of the podcast we are huge fans of train travel.

Train travel in the UK is a great way to get around, particularly if you are planning to visit major towns and cities such as York, Bath, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Liverpool etc

Train travel is generally efficient, fast (dependent on the service you choose) and often takes you into the centre of the town or city.

It is also a great way to enjoy views of the countryside and coastlines as you travel.

Additional pros of train travel are that it can be relatively stress-free (with preparation) and a relaxing, more sociable experience.

The cons are that it can be confusing if you are not an experienced train traveller, ticketing can also be pretty confusing and of course, you have to carry your bags and luggage with you (not great if you need to change trains or want to stop off along the route)

When including train trips in your itinerary consider if you want the fastest route from point A to Point B or do you want to stop off in places in between. For example London to Edinburgh direct or with a stop over in York?

Remember to add in extra travel times to and from stations too as this is often overlooked.

You can find out more about travelling the UK by train in episode 2 of the podcast which includes lots of practical tips, episode 5 about the Caledonian Sleeper Service from London to Scotland and in our UK Train Travel Guide ebook which was written by the cofounder of the UK Travel planning website Doug Collins and based on 25 years of working on the UK rail network.

Car

[Hiring a car](#) is possibly the best option if you want to head to some of the more rural areas of the UK. Taking a road trip around Cornwall,

Scotland, or the [Peak District](#) for example is a wonderful way to see the countryside and stay in smaller towns and villages.

Having a car gives you greater flexibility to explore at your own pace. It is a good option for families and means you also don't have to worry about getting luggage from A-B.

The cons of driving include the cost. In addition to rental fees you will need to budget for petrol (gas), insurance, tows and parking costs. Petrol is more expensive in the UK compared to other countries such as the US and Australia.

Manual (stick shift) cars are also the norm in the UK so expect to pay more for an automatic (and book as soon as possible due to less availability)

Additional cons are that if you are not used to driving on the left side of the road it can feel awkward and intimidating. If this is something that concerns you listen out for our next podcast where I talk to John Cortese one of the founders of Tripiamo a resource which has been specifically designed to prepare North American road users for driving in the UK.

Our tips include sharing the driving (though this will cost more), planning your route and taking advantage of park and ride schemes to avoid traffic congestion in cities and popular tourist attractions where available. Numerous cities offer park and ride where you park outside the city and take public transport into the centre eg Winchester, Durham, and Oxford.

We also recommend renting a smaller car as its more economical and easier to navigate on narrow country roads.

It is also worth considering taking a train to a destination and hiring a car from there (we have done this before from London to Fort William on the Caledonian Sleeper and picked up a car at Fort William train station)

If you prefer not to drive at all you could always book a private transfer or taxi from airports, cruise ports or train stations to your destinations.

Flying

If you are considering taking a domestic flight in the UK you may find that it is not the quickest or cheapest way to get between destinations.

I would recommend comparing the cost and time of taking a train within the UK rather than flying to a destination. It is often quicker to take the train – and cheaper if you book in advance. Many of the no-frills airlines require additional charges for luggage too.

Compare costs and don't forget to factor in the cost of travel to and from airports. Some of the airports are some distance from the city centre so time and cost should be considered.

If you are keen to visit the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, some of the more remote Scottish Islands or Ireland flying *may* be the most convenient and quickest method.

Coach

I will briefly mention coach services. Taking a coach may be the cheapest transport option but it is also the slowest! Years ago I travelled the UK by coach and whilst it can be a great budget option if you are time-limited this is probably not the most efficient use of your time.

Ferries

You may also consider taking a ferry from England, Scotland or Wales.

Most ferries leaving English ports (including Dover, Hull, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Poole) are heading for destinations including the Channel Islands, France, Holland, Belgium or Spain.

Most of Scotland's islands can only be reached by boat (or plane) however it is worth noting that the Isle of Skye is joined to the mainland by a bridge. Book tickets early if you plan to take your vehicle on a ferry as spaces book up quickly, particularly during the summer months.

Ferries to Ireland leave and arrive from Fishguard, Pembroke and Holyhead in Wales, Cairnryan in Scotland and Liverpool in England. Crossing time ranges from 2 ½ hours to 8 hours depending on the port of departure.

To summarise

We understand how overwhelming planning your UK itinerary can be. Ultimately your itinerary will be unique to your interests, time frame, budget and travel style and therefore the way you get around the UK may actually include a combination of the methods discussed in this podcast.

During our itinerary consultations and reviews, we have found that a combination of transport options is often the best fit for most people.

Just remember that the journey is also part of your holiday and not just about the start and end points.

As always you can find information about anything discussed in this episode in the show notes at [UK Travel Planning dot com forward slash episode 11](https://www.uktravelplanning.com/forward/slash/episode/11)

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Until next time - Happy UK travel planning.