

# EPISODE #95 UK TRAVEL PLANNING PODCAST

## TRANSCRIPT

\*Note this is AI generated so excuse any errors

### Intro 00:03

Welcome to the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK Travel Planning website, Tracy Collins. In this podcast, Tracey 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.

### Tracy Collins Host00:41

Hi and welcome to episode 95 of the UK Travel Plan and Podcast. This week we have a trip report from guest Deb Pecker who, while only spending a few days in the UK while attending a conference in London, managed to pack some of the highlights of the UK capital into her itinerary, plus a day trip to Windsor, Stonehenge and Avebury. Of course, with the help of our very own Riz of Exfa Cars, he ensured transfers to and from London and beyond went smoothly and stress-free for Deb and colleagues. So if you're planning a short trip to London for perhaps a conference, like Deb, and wondering how much you can actually fit into a few days, this is a great episode for you. I began by asking Deb to introduce herself and tell us whereabouts she comes from.

### Deb PeckaGuest01:27

My name is Deborah Pekka, I live in Pennsylvania, and so I drove to Dallas for my flight. Dallas Washington DC airport for the flight. Which said that I could get British Airlines and I have to say, hands down, British Airlines were awesome.

### Tracy CollinsHost01:48

That's awesome to hear, Deb, and recently I took my own British Airways flight from London to Bangalore in India, and I thought they were absolutely amazing too. So how long were you in the UK for?

### Deb PeckaGuest01:59

Deb. We had a seminar to attend on the 3rd, so we left Dallas Washington DC airport on Friday the 1st and then that got us to Heathrow the next day, Saturday. But we arrived at early early, it was 6:30 in the morning. Sleep because of course that's the worst thing you can do, but I didn't find that a problem, it was so exciting. And then meeting Riz, and you know he's showing us all these different places and where we were, so that was a waker upper.

## Tracy CollinsHost02:37

Oh, that's brilliant. So give us a bit sort of brief overview of your itinerary when you were in the uk okay.

## Deb PeckaGuest02:45

So we arrived early, we met riz. Uh, he took us to london the check-in. Of course it was too early for the room, but, um, I chose Tower Hotel. I wanted to be on the Thames and near a landmark, so the view was of Tower Bridge, which was amazing. So we had lunch at Sky Gardens again, thank you for that on the Facebook. So then after Sky Gardens, and that was their brunch, that Ox Cheek, which never heard of it. So when I saw it on the menu, that was the be-all, it was amazing, it was fabulous, just fabulous. So then we walked back to, and we ended up walking to Sky Gardens and then we walked down to Tower Bridge, toward Tower Bridge. Then at that point it was late enough where we could check into the hotel and relax for a little bit, walk around the area, and then the hotel had this fabulous restaurant, the Vicinity, and they had these fire pits on the patio. It was just Sunday.

## 04:21

Hussein from XFA, riz's partner or works with Riz he picked us up at the hotel to go to Woking that's where the seminar was. So he called me in the morning and said traffic was going to be a little heavier than anticipated, so we probably should leave about a good 20 minutes before the scheduled time, which was fine. So they were watching. I mean, they even watched the traffic control footage. It was just fabulous. So we went to Woking. The seminar was all day. It started at 9 and didn't end until 6. And Hussein picked us up at 6. And so then we just went back to the hotel and then had dinner around the hotel because it was already late and we were all day in a seminar. It was a wonderful seminar, though I wouldn't have traded that for the world. But Hussein was interesting because he would tell us about the different landmarks as well as we were coming back from Woking. So that was a long drive. The countryside was beautiful.

## 05:38

Then, monday, we did the Guru Walk with Richard. You had to reserve your spot but it was free by donation, which of course we made a good donation for his time. The walk with Richard was for changing of the guards, so we met at 10 o'clock at the square. He explained all the history around the places that we walked. Again, fabulous, just fabulous. Going through St James Gardens was just so fun, and then of course he explained about the different birds and how they got there with one of the movies, so he had such attention to details, which was great.

## 06:34

We saw both ceremonies. So he would say my group and he'd hold this and he'd have a wristband of my group and he'd say, okay, that's enough for this, there's nothing more that you're going to see. So let's go here and wait for this to happen, because this is the next big spot. So then we would go there and we were in the front when they were doing the

changing of the guards. We were right up front and watched the whole procession and the changing of the guards and the ceremonies, and oh, it was just amazing.

## 07:13

And then I saw too so because of your site, though, and I was checking all the things, I would get these pop-up things on Facebook about the changing of the guards and the Jews and Jones which, by the way, thank you for the England Jews and Jones but it was interesting, because when you go to pet the horse, some people are holding the reins and that's an absolute no-no. But of course, thanks to visiting the sites, I knew not to do that. So I was petting the horse and the horse put his face in my chest and that was just the be-all. So that was really fun. And then the picture with the horse was you know, that's going to be a framed for me and the different streets. And just see what's down this side street and the terraces on the apartments, just this beautiful flowers and arrangements on the terraces, the people, it just was fabulous. We did find then a Portuguese restaurant, and so we had Portuguese food, which was really good, and then we just wanted to continue walking and we ended up touring St Paul's and meeting the people in there and they were so gracious and so kind, lighting the candles in St Paul's. So, you know, I took pictures of the candles, sent it to the people I lit candles for, and so then, after that, went back to the hotel, ate at the little Italian restaurant on a side street near there, and so that was dinner that day.

## 09:18

And then Tuesday we met Riz. He gave us instructions to cut down on the travel time, so he even tweaked it out so it would be less expensive, and so how can we do this more economically? It was just so kind, and so we took the tubes to Hayes and Harrington yeah, hayes and Harrington, yeah, hayes and Hartlington, yeah. So we met him and then we went to Stonehenge, so he drove us and we were able to see all the farmland and the, and I'll tell you, it poured, tracy, and he said it's okay, just wait for about five minutes, the sun will come out. Sure enough, it did. So, yeah, it was fun.

## 10:09

So on the way he took us through, because he said do you have time? And we said, well, we have the whole day. So he took us to Windsor Castle. So we drove all around Windsor Castle and the park and so then they were changing the police at that point so they closed the road off. So we got to see that. And then Tim said, oh gosh, I wished I had my coffee. And Riz said, well, it's okay, I know where we can get you coffee. So Riz found a place for Tim and Joey to get their coffee. But then on the way to Stonehenge, it was just such a beautiful ride. But I had messaged Riz before and said again your site. But I had messaged Riz before and said again your site, facebook, that somebody posted. I don't understand why everyone is going to Stonehenge where they could be going to Avebury and they can actually touch the stones and walk around the stones and be so close to them.

## Tracy Collins Host 11:28

I do like Stonehenge and I can never understand when people go. It's just a pile of rocks. I'm kind of going yes, but those stones were moved there thousands of years ago. We don't even really know how and what and why. So I kind of have total respect for that. And then Avebury and then I think having both experiences is amazing, because Avebury as well is fantastic and, as you say, you can go right up to the stones, you can touch the stones. I've got some fantastic photos the last time we were there, because I just absolutely loved it as well, and you can walk through the fields and there's the sheep around and also just kind of watch for the sheep poo.

## **Deb Pecka**Guest12:03

But apart from that, so we did go to Avery and, as I said, you know if you would have time, would you mind? And he said, oh, I was going to suggest that. I'm like, oh, okay, perfect. So then we of course invited Riz to come have lunch with us, and so it was more of a dinner, but we ate at the Red Lion. It was wonderful the first time I ever had steak pie, and the pastry was phenomenal. On Wednesday I needed to come home, so I went back to the airport. That was my trip. It was just once in a lifetime.

## **Tracy Collins**Host12:50

It was short but sweet. You had an amazing time.

## **Deb Pecka**Guest12:52

by the sounds of it, it was, and I was able, because of the site and the documents that you had, I was able to make sure of my clothes, make sure of the sites that I absolutely wanted to see. So I was able to go down and do the itinerary and make sure that everything was confirmed and had the tickets that we needed with Tower Bridge and with Sky Gardens and Sky Gardens. They didn't open the tickets for or the reservations for a certain amount of time and as soon as they opened it, I went on and got the reservations.

## **Tracy Collins**Host13:37

Yeah, they open on a Monday three weeks before. It's free. It's very popular, so it gets booked up.

## **Deb Pecka**Guest13:42

Oh, so it gets booked up, oh and it was packed, Tracy, it was packed. There was not a table, and what I found interesting, too, was that it was a leisure dining experience. They didn't push you to hurry up and eat your first course. They didn't push you to leave. It was a two hours. They give you two hours, which I thought was amazing. With every restaurant we went to, it was the same way. You were not rushed, it was polite, the manners were just refreshing. Everyone was so mannerly, so kind, and I didn't always find that in the place that we've traveled to, not always it was fascinating. So, yeah, but I have to say everything that we did it was really from the website, from the Facebook pages. So all those things were the only thing that I actually listened to. And Tim and Joey said how did you know this?

## **Tracy Collins**Host14:57

I'm like well, facebook and Tracy, you're a member of our private Facebook community, so you have to apply to join that. We vet everybody. We're very strict. You have to fill in the questions, agree to the rules and then you can join our group, which has now hit 20,000, which we're really proud of, but it's still got a great community feel Congratulations.

15:17

And we've got two websites. We've got the uktravelplanningcom LondonTravelPlanningcom. We've got LondonTravelPlanningcom. So we've got two sites One obviously for general UK travel that has got a lot of information about London, but I felt there was so much to write that we have a separate site which is dedicated to London. So that's got lots of information on that. And obviously we've got the podcast which you're talking on now, deb, which is very popular. We have thousands and thousands of downloads a month. It's phenomenal how the podcast has grown. I'm so proud of that because really we've only just had our second year anniversary and I've only been doing it weekly for just over a year now and we're going to hit I would say not too long before we hit quarter of a million downloads.

## **Deb Pecka**Guest15:55

Oh my gosh, congratulations.

## **Tracy Collins**Host15:59

Thank you, thank you. But you know, and it's been so lovely because you've come on into the Facebook group and you've said how much you've appreciated all of the resources. You've said how much that you've appreciated all the support and help from Riz and Riz and I are the same, and, doug, we absolutely all love what we do. But what makes it extra special for us is when we get that feedback and you walk around with a big smile on your face that day because and it doesn't take, it doesn't take too long to do it, but it's just taking that 10 minutes or 20 minutes to just leave that review. It makes such a difference to us, yeah it does make a difference.

## **Deb Pecka**Guest16:36

We talked about his children. Who's saying we talked about his children? We talked about my husband, the grandchildren. It was like we've been friends forever. So it was so nice to travel with people that you were so comfortable with.

## **Tracy Collins**Host16:52

Oh no, it's great. So you covered your itinerary. You covered how you got around, which was fantastic, with Riz, and you had a little bit of time on the tube, so that was great. You stayed in an accommodation near Tower Bridge. That was fantastic. You've talked about amazing food that you tried, which is lovely to hear. You took the right packing things. So what would be your top tip, deb, for anyone visiting the UK for the first time?

## **Deb PeckaGuest17:14**

I would say, enjoy the process and look at the Facebook page, look at the websites, look at the documents on creating the itinerary, and what do you hope to see? What has been something that you look at England for? So that to me, of course, was changing of the guards and getting my picture with that horse.

## **Tracy CollinsHost17:42**

Well, I have to ask you, deb, if you can share some of those photos. I'll put them in the show notes for this episode because I'm sure if you're listening you'll be thinking oh, I'd love to see this picture. But for this episode, deb, I'm going to say thank you so much for coming on to the UK Travel Panel podcast. It's been fantastic to talk about your visit to the UK.

## **Deb PeckaGuest18:01**

Well, thank you for inviting me. I appreciate it.

## **Tracy CollinsHost18:05**

Thanks so much, deb, for coming on to the episode. We always love talking to you about your trip reports, and we know how much you all love listening to them too. You can find links to the places that Deb talked about in this episode, including Exfa Cars, so you can book a transfer with Riziz, and also for the hotel that Deb stayed at, and for the Sky Garden and any other places in London that we talked about and places that she ate. They will all be in this week's show notes at [uktravelplanet.com](http://uktravelplanet.com). Forward slash, episode 95. I will also include photos in the show notes for this episode, including the photo with Deb and the horse from the Changing of the Guard, and also some pictures of Avery, and also some lovely pictures that Deb took with herself and Riz and Hussein. That just leaves me, though, to say until next week's episode, happy UK travel planning.