

[00:00:01.610] - Intro

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 town.

[00:00:38.810] - Tracy

Hello and welcome to episode 25 of the UK Travel Planning Podcast. In today's episode, I chat with friends Liz Attwood and Melinda Ecker, who, together with their husbands, visited England for three weeks in September this year.

The two couples had previously visited England together on a coach tour and wanted to spend longer exploring their favourite destinations this trip. In this episode, you will discover how they planned their trip, how they got around England, plus great info and tips from their time in the Cotswolds, St Ives, Bath, York and London. You will also find out some great eatery suggestions and more. So, without further ado, let's introduce Liz and Melinda.

[00:01:19.270] - Tracy

So do you want to just introduce yourselves and tell us who you are, where you're back and where you live in the States? Because obviously I know that you live in the US, but a little bit about yourselves would be great.

[00:01:28.930] - Liz

I'm Liz Atwood and my husband is Kent and we just yesterday celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary and I work in the healthcare setting and we've been friends with the Ekkers since our kids were about three or four years old. We met at church.

[00:01:48.690] - Tracy

Oh, wow, that's amazing.

[00:01:50.260] - Melinda

I'm Melinda and my husband is Ken and we live in what's called South Hill. It's about an hour south of Seattle and we actually live in the same neighbourhood. I've been friends for years and we have been Anglophiles for many years. This was a trip of a lifetime.

[00:02:13.940] - Tracy

Yeah, it was fantastic. And I know because obviously we spent a lot of time talking about it when we did the consults as well and talking to Liz previously about it. So when you were planning your trip, obviously you kind of had lots of places to choose from and we'll talk a bit more detail about where you did choose

to go. But, Melinda or Liz, would you like to just give us a kind of overview of the places that you did choose to go?

[00:02:41.250] - Melinda

Sure. Three years prior, we had been to England and spent a few days in London and then we took a tour, ten day tour, and through southern England, and I had all these plans of all the things I wanted to see and discovered. It was very much on their timetable and the things we saw were great, but we knew there was so much more we wanted to see. So based on kind of that and then some other things we wanted to do. We came up with some places we'd really like to go and focus on for two or three days in each area.

[00:03:18.670] - Tracy

So did you guys do that trip to England together three years ago? Okay, so that was cool. So that was a bus tour that you did?

[00:03:26.630] - Liz

Yes.

[00:03:28.210] - Tracy

Where did you go on that?

[00:03:29.480] - Melinda

Just out of interest, every place we went this time, we kind of went back to most of those places and stayed there. So we were in London, we went to Morton and Marsh in the Cotswolds and had a day tour there. And then went to Glastonbury. I bought a ring there that I love.

[00:03:52.600] - Liz

Salisbury. I know, cathedral.

[00:03:54.530] - Melinda

Salisbury. Yes, Salisbury.

[00:03:57.610] - Liz

Not St Ives. And did I say bath?

[00:04:01.470] - Tracy

Bath. Okay, so and that was on. So I think those coach tours are really good, but I think and probably you found this, it gave you an introduction and a taste of what you wanted a bit more of. So I guess that's

what you built on that with this next trip this year. So that's really good. So obviously we're talking about three years ago that you went on a coach trip, and obviously we've had COVID in between that. So that's kind of put a lot of people's plans on hold. So were you planning before COVID And then did you kind of put your plans in place or did you have to put on hold or how did it go?

[00:04:35.910] - Melinda

No, I think we were kind of done with COVID like everybody else after a year and a half or two years. And Liz has kind of been our travel planner under you. She does a lot of research. She enjoys that. She'll tell you more about that. And we're like, we don't know. We're retired and we got to be careful. And then we start talking about it, and my husband is like, okay, we're going, we're going to do this. And that is really half the fun. We've said this several times. Is planning the trip dreaming? Look at, oh, I found this place. What do you think? You know how when you eat something really good and it just leaves a taste in your mouth? This is how I tell people. This is how I feel about that trip. I'm just I don't want it ever to go away.

[00:05:28.570] - Tracy

Wow, that's so lovely to hear that you loved it so much. To be honest, I loved following your trip because obviously you put pictures on the Facebook group and kind of give us reports and it was amazing. It springs it because obviously we've met you so many times and it's so lovely to have that kind of connection and be able to follow your trip. And I know there were a few issues and there was some fantastic time. Most of it was fantastic few issues, but you dealt with them really well. We can talk about those in a bit. But obviously, I don't know, Liz, if you came to us via our Facebook group first, or whether you came to us via the website first, because obviously, doing the research, I'm hoping that you came across well, you obviously came across.

[00:06:09.820] - Liz

As it somehow yes, it was when we were trying to decide how we would get around, and both of our husband said, we're not driving. And so we said, okay, that means this has to be by train. So I started googling about train travel in London and through that, at some point, your website popped up and I started looking at it and I called them, we came over when I said, okay, and it was Ken's birthday and your book had just come out. And so I bought that first birthday and printed it all up and gave it to him that night and go, we need this, it's going to help us with our plans. And it definitely did. And then it led us to be able to talk to you about planning and it led us to your Facebook group, where so much more than just train travel is there. It was a great resource.

[00:07:08.640] - Melinda

Yes, absolutely.

[00:07:10.550] - Tracy

Brilliant. Brilliant. And it was so nice. I knew we just released the book and I think you were one of the first people that purchased it, so that was lovely. And we've actually just updated that. We've literally just started another Facebook group just for UK train travel tips, because obviously you've met Dogs, my

husband, he's the real UK train guru and I think he wanted to get a bit more than nitty gritty, so we've got it in the group and then he's going to have his own little UK train travel tips Facebook group as well. So that's recently been launched because we know travelling by train in the UK can be a bit daunting if it's not something that you used to, and it's obviously something that Doug's very passionate about. And we've travelled a lot by train, so we know that you did do quite a bit by train, but do you just want to give us a kind of quick snapshot of the places that you visited when you were over this year?

[00:08:01.130] - Liz

Sure.

[00:08:02.170] - Melinda

We started in London for where we've heard a couple of nights, and then we went to Morton in Marsh. We had driven through there before on our tour. We stayed three nights there and we took a local bus and went to Bourton on the water. A couple of times we went to that. We stayed in a very quintessential bed and breakfast there.

[00:08:29.250] - Liz

Acacia House.

[00:08:30.210] - Melinda

Acacia House. We were again trying to stay mid range in everything we did, and because there were the four of us, we could spit a lot of the costs, so we felt we did a really cost effective trip. And anyway, from there we went to Bath and beautiful. I would definitely go back there and stay. Beautiful. We stayed at the Canard there, it was a bed and breakfast, had beautiful breakfast and then take it from there.

[00:09:00.090] - Liz

Oh, then we went to St Ives and spent about three nights there. From there we had our longest train trip which is back up to York and then finished off back our last several days in London. And I have to say I got great tips from Doug. We bought the Brit Rail Pass and we figured out how many times we think we need to use it to determine which one we got. And he told me, when you get to London, we stayed in the Paddington area. So we were close to that station. He said, go there and book your reservations. We have reservations but book your seat seats. We went there and got that done literally the first day we arrived in town because I just wanted to make sure we had those seats. So that was a great thing to do because some of those trains were very full. I heard an announcement one day asking people to please move your luggage off the seats from around you because we have people standing on the train. So it was nice to have our seat reserved and it was good that.

[00:10:18.330] - Tracy

You did it when you arrived as well and you could leave it to that point because then you don't have to pay. If you go to a main train station, you can take your bookings when you want to travel and they can

book that for you so it doesn't cost you anything, which is another because obviously you pay quite a bit already for your Brit Rail Pass and then have to pay for reservations. It's also quite pricey. Did you have a first class brit? Rail pass.

[00:10:40.800] - Melinda

Yes, you did and we would highly recommend it. We were there in September so it wasn't quite as touristy but Tracy, almost every leg of our journey, we were like the only ones or just among a few people in first class and we didn't know the first time that they served food and beverages. So we brought our own little sandwiches and pretty soon they come along.

[00:11:09.350] - Tracy

Yeah, that's pretty good. We also like to travel first class when we are back as well. It's always good fun and you guarantee that you're going to get a nice seat and quite often food and beverages off served as well. So, yes, it's a lovely way to travel and I'm glad that it worked out and that you did that. So were you impacted all I'm going to throw this in there because this has been obviously we're now in December when we're recording this and there are still rail strikes unfortunately happening in the UK, that this still has not been resolved. I'm really hoping that it will be resolved at some point fairly soon because it did have quite a significant impact on some people's train travel plans this year. So did that impact you guys?

[00:11:52.550] - Liz

I have to say we were not really adversely impacted by that. Plus, it so happened when we were there, the Queen passed away and they continued servicing the trains run to honour her and to allow people to travel and get to London and stuff. But we were impacted on one of our legs. There was, for whatever reason, I think they announced finally they had to do with not enough workers yeah.

[00:12:27.840] - Liz

Leaving to get to bath.

[00:12:30.840] - Melinda

Yeah.

[00:12:31.630] - Liz

So that was the one issue we had. We had got there early and our first train cancelled, then the second train cancelled. When the third train cancelled, we said, we need to find another way, and that's when we contacted a local taxi service. Andy's he was fantastic. And he drove us to at first he didn't think he could because he had another reservation later and he was afraid he wouldn't have time to get back, but then he just set off. When he found out nobody picked us up, he came and got us and he was fantastic.

[00:13:07.790] - Melinda

Tracy he was like a tour guide, because it's almost a couple of hours or so to look to Bath, and so he was telling us, this is a duchy, the King now owns all this. And he had a brand new hybrid cab that was very roomy and comfortable and he was very proud of that, as he should be. We just determined as best we could before we went, we're just going to look at everything as an adventure because we were reading these stories on Facebook, on your Facebook page, about people, oh, my luggage didn't get here. And now I'm like, we're just going to go with it, we're just going to roll.

[00:13:47.350] - Tracy

I think that is absolutely the best attitude that you have to have. You really need to at the moment, going into travel, they're just things that happen, whether it's luggage or the trains or not enough staff in airports and not enough staff for railways or railway strikes or lots of things that are going on. And I think, absolutely, going into it without attitude is totally the best. You just have to go with the flexibility of knowing that things may go wrong, but you know what? We can adapt.

[00:14:15.290] - Melinda

Right?

[00:14:15.650] - Liz

Yeah.

[00:14:15.890] - Melinda

My thing was, I'm in England. Who cares?

[00:14:18.870] - Melinda

I'm here.

[00:14:19.780] - Melinda

I might never get back here again, so I'm just going to look around and enjoy the season.

[00:14:24.870] - Tracy

Obviously, you talked about so mainly you got around by train and then in London, obviously, tube, I guess. Tube, walk.

[00:14:33.270] - Liz

Cab.

[00:14:34.210] - Melinda

Cab occasionally, yeah.

[00:14:36.810] - Tracy

My mum likes the cab when we're in London, she's like, I don't want to go on the Tube, I'm going to go in the cab.

[00:14:43.370] - Melinda

Yes, we noticed. We felt like we were often the old folks on the Tube, and so.

[00:14:49.950] - Melinda

We were, like, kind of proud of.

[00:14:50.930] - Melinda

Ourselves for doing it. Liz and my husband had working phones, so between them and getting on the city mapper and things like that, we still got confused a few times. Here's the thing. People were so helpful and just like, oh, just go that way. One guy said, Follow me. He took us to where we wanted to go. We thought.

[00:15:17.350] - Tracy

That's brilliant. That's brilliant. Honestly, it sounds like you really just had, like, you met some amazing people and had helpful people, and everyone, without.

[00:15:27.180] - Melinda

The question, was nice, without exception. That's a little bit helpful. Maybe because I'm old, so I don't.

[00:15:32.750] - Tracy

Know, I want no, you're not. We just had this discussion before we start recording, which I'm not old. No, exactly. So, obviously we talked a little bit about the accommodation that you chose. So you went from mid range. So did you go for the kind of guest house, bed and breakfast style of accommodation?

[00:15:52.050] - Liz

So when we started in London, we went on the cheaper end, and we stayed at a Premier Inn. I have to say, it was fantastic. It had a great breakfast. It was a beautiful hotel, and it was very cheap, like £100 a night, including breakfast for both of us. And it was a very lovely place. Then we wanted to kind of, like she said, experience some of the great buildings and stuff, which meant a lot of stairs. But we stayed in bed and breakfast at the Acacia House in Morton Marsh and then in Bath and in York, we stayed at more like a guest house type place that were lovely. Especially, I have to say. No, not the canoe. The Tower house in York.

[00:16:47.190] - Melinda

Right.

[00:16:48.290] - Liz

Lovely facility. Beautiful rooms, all different rooms, every one of them, and beautiful meals. And then when we were in St. Ives and in London, we did Vrbo and Airbnb and stayed in a home.

[00:17:06.010] - Tracy

Okay. And they enjoyed those as well.

[00:17:09.160] - Liz

We did, I think, the one in London, it was quite expensive, and I don't know if I go that route again, but it was a great location and it was a lovely old home and it was fun. So, hey, we enjoyed we might not do it again because it was the most expensive place we stayed, but it was a fun experience.

[00:17:33.870] - Tracy

London does tend to be a bit more on the pricey side, so I think that's always a bit where I kind of say budget a little bit more for your accommodation in London because it's the capital. It's like every major city in the world, I guess. Capital city. It's going to be that much more expensive. So you went from how long were you in London for how many days?

[00:17:54.710] - Liz

On the front end, I think we were there three nights, and on the back end, we were there five nights. So we're actually in London eight days of our 21 days.

[00:18:06.330] - Tracy

You were that's quite a long time. So tell me about what you did in London. How did you fill eight days up.

[00:18:11.470] - Melinda

On the front end? One day, Liz and Kent went to the Harry Potter tour and Ken and I went to Soho District, basically, and we saw a mousetrap, because we'd never seen that. We just walked around a lot of different places that day. We went to Fortnum and Mason is Liz, let me tell you her experience there. She had great fun there and it's a beautiful store. Yeah, we went to a play on the Last Inn. We saw six. The Musical six. Loved it. We took the train to Hampton Court Palace. Hampton Court.

[00:18:55.200] - Tracy

Yeah.

[00:18:56.650] - Liz

We went on Tuesday and the gate said Closed. And we're like, we have a ticket. Well, we had a ticket for Wednesday. At least now we know how to get there.

[00:19:12.130] - Tracy

It's easy, isn't it? Getting Hampton Court Palace is really easy. It's not very far and it's really easy to get to.

[00:19:20.530] - Liz

And we took the Tube and then walked around the grounds of Kensington Palace.

[00:19:26.630] - Melinda

That was closed.

[00:19:27.520] - Liz

We walked around downtown London, around all the major sites, although because of the Queen's passing, everything was closed and you couldn't get super close. But we had been there.

[00:19:39.820] - Melinda

Yeah, we had done that.

[00:19:40.590] - Melinda

We had decided we wouldn't go to, like, Buckingham and Windsor Castle this time because we had spent a lot of time on the tour there, so we wanted to see other places.

[00:19:51.210] Melinda

Halls and Westminster we had done, but.

[00:19:54.130] - Melinda

We did walk all around there and we did a fabulous walking tour the last few days. Actually, I think it was second to the last day. We did many walking tours in almost every place we went, and they're so worth it. The one in Bath was free that we did. And he wouldn't take tips. Most people don't take tips there, as you probably know. Maybe it's changing, I don't know. But these guys that do these tours, it's their thing, they like it. And so my husband's favourite was in Oxford. We went to Christ Church, I think. So much history. I've got it all notes that we just loved it. We had a great walking tour in London from a guy who did you.

[00:20:38.780] - Tracy

Do the one in Oxford? Did you do that with an Oxford graduate?

[00:20:43.870] - Melinda

Yes, he was a professor. He had been a professor. He was older and he there for years and he was a font of information. He just had so much knowledge. He was fascinating.

[00:20:59.320] - Tracy

We did one with a university graduate, college graduate in in Cambridge this year, because it's somewhere that Doug had been to a few times and I couldn't remember if I'd been so I was like, we need to go to Cambridge. And that was a real highlight of our trip this year. We really enjoyed that. Because I think again, it's that having a walking tour or tour with somebody who knows the history, knows the area, they know the places to go and eat, they know all those kind of things. That you only know if you're actually immersed and living in a place, right? Yeah. It's a really good way to learn a bit more about an area. Some of those chairs are only a couple of moment. 2 hours. We didn't realise what we did wrong in Bath and how much of Bath had been destroyed in the war. It was interesting how much had to be rebuilt. So you learn things that you think you know. A lot. And then you go and you're like, oh, I didn't know that snippet of information or that snippet of information, so it's useful to hear.

[00:21:53.830] - Tracy

So obviously you've been in London before, so this was a chance to go and see some of the walk around. Soak in the atmosphere or you need to tell me about Fortnum and Mason.

[00:22:04.220] - Liz

No, I just love tea. And I was wanting to pick up a few things that I didn't have. We packed to travel for train travel, so we went on with carry on only so I didn't have room for extra things. And so I was like, being very, like, told I get this little thing. And then this lovely man told me, are you going to ship? And I said, Well, I was hoping I might be able to ship a few things and he said, well, you know, it's I think it was it's £25 to ship no matter if you buy one thing or a thousand things, so go for it and I did.

[00:22:46.470] - Tracy

Oh, that's brilliant, that's brilliant. What did you buy?

[00:22:53.450] - Liz

Cookies and tea and Christmas ornament and Christmas, like little towels and jams and all the things chocolates for my grandchildren, they're beautiful chocolate coins and just all this stuff.

[00:23:15.550] - Tracy

Fantastic. So did that arrive fairly quickly after you got back?

[00:23:18.670] - Liz

It was home, it arrived before we did.

[00:23:22.700] - Tracy

Wow.

[00:23:23.520] - Liz

We had to call our neighbour and ask him to bring it in at his house because I didn't want it sitting out for days on the porch no.

[00:23:32.390] - Liz

What?

[00:23:32.900] - Liz

It's already arriving? How is that possible?

[00:23:37.110] - Tracy

That's brilliant, that's absolutely brilliant and that's good to know that's something because I'm a bit like I prefer to do carry on only but then you have the problem even just the last trip that I've just done to Southeast Asia I went carry on only but I didn't come carry on back. I go with the intention of doing that and it's like, no, too many things to purchase.

So after London, then you went to the Cotswolds. You'd be in the cottage before on the bus tour?

[00:24:04.950] - Liz

Well, we kind of drove around there but we had yeah, we had gone ourselves. That first few days before the tour, we were in London and we booked a private tour through the Cotswolds. So we took the train to Morton in Marsh. They're no longer I think I tried to get a tour with them again. It was the secret cottage or something like that. Anyway, they're not doing them right now, so we weren't able to use them this time. But we had a lovely tour with them three years ago.

[00:24:39.500] - Tracy

Next time, you can always go with Victoria. Victoria Cotswold TeaCup Tour. Who's doing them now? And she's brilliant. She's actually going to be coming in the Facebook group to do a live with me in a couple of weeks time to answer questions about the Cotswolds because we know it's somewhere that is so popular to visit. And I can't get enough of the Cotswolds when I go back, I always want to go and visit. So it's brilliant having Victoria grew up in the Cotswolds, so she knows the area really well and she knows all the best places for tea and cake. So obviously you enjoyed Bath. You had a good couple of days in Bath. Yeah.

[00:25:19.460] - Liz

Yes, two nights.

[00:25:20.830] - Tracy

Yeah, it's Bath lovely, isn't it?

[00:25:22.360] - Liz

But it's beautiful.

[00:25:23.430] - Melinda

Oh, my goodness. That whole water thing. And we did a short little boat trip right where the water comes down, and at night it was gorgeous. The weather was just great. The weather in UK is a lot like where we live in september was great. I mean, it was pretty mild over time.

[00:25:47.710] - Liz

Beautiful.

[00:25:48.830] - Tracy

That's good. I mean, September can be it can be pretty good. And not too much the UK climate, I guess it's the same as Seattle. It's variable, you can't necessarily predict, but generally, September can be really nice time. And obviously the kids have gone back to school as well, so that makes it better because it's quieter. So it's actually a good time to travel, right? Yes. How was St Ives? Because obviously St Ives is we were in St Ives in July. I remember I did a little video for you when we arrived at the train station a little bit, because we.

[00:26:21.310] - Tracy

Were so excited about you guys going.

[00:26:23.150] - Tracy

To Saint Ives and obviously don't have fish and chips, which I know you did.

[00:26:27.560] - Liz

Yes, we did.

[00:26:29.450] - Melinda

We did.

[00:26:30.890] - Tracy

So, did you enjoy your time in Saint Ives?

[00:26:33.790] - Liz

It was probably a highlight of our trip. We loved it. It's beautiful there. We just walked around so much and we stumbled across a little community theatre that happened to be doing their show that night.

[00:26:50.820] - Melinda

Just on the street from where we were staying yes.

[00:26:53.170] - Liz

That Melinda found. And she went in and talked to them. Sorry. And it was Calendar Girls, the musical, and they did a phenomenal job. It was like a highlight. We took a tour through Cornwall, and we went to St Michael's Mount and we went to Minack Theatre and a lot of the area around there, the old abandoned coal mine.

[00:27:23.430] - Tracy

Tin mines. Yes. The reason I know that is my great grandfather worked in the tin mines in Cornwall and actually moved up to the Northeast. It met my great grandmother as he travelled up through the country of Derbyshire and settled up in the coal mines of Northumberland.

[00:27:39.990] - Liz

Really?

[00:27:40.930] - Tracy

So I can trace back here, back to my great grandfather from the TID mines. So it's very interesting to visit, isn't it?

[00:27:47.370] - Liz

That was fascinating. And we just love that trip. And I didn't know what to expect because I had booked with a gentleman and then when with the Queen's passing, I don't know what all he does, but he said he got called to London to work security. So he passed this on to someone else. He said, you'll be in great hands. That person was prompt, got in touch with us. Then I heard from him. He said, I'm so sorry, I've gotten sick. And so he goes, I'm passing you on to somebody else, but I know you'll have a great trip. So we're like, okay. And then he came and got us. He was so fantastic. He was also new. He goes to this other gentleman you were supposed to be with. He has a lot more of the history, but I can't imagine more history because this guy knew so much. He was so fun, he was just an everyday guy.

[00:28:44.230] - Liz

And he called apologetic at first about what he didn't know.

[00:28:48.510] - Melinda

He knew a lot.

[00:28:49.500] - Melinda

He knew a lot.

[00:28:51.850] - Liz

And it was supposed to be like about a five and a half or six hour trip. And when he dropped us back off at our doorstep, we'd been gone almost 9 hours. He just really gave us a lot of his time. He goes, Well, I didn't want to cut you short at Minack or at St. Michael's Mount, so I really appreciated that from him.

[00:29:14.500] - Tracy

And that's what we want, isn't it? Somebody who's responsive to where you're at and what you're enjoying. Because there's nothing worse than it is. I think sometimes you can go on these tours and it's different when you've got a private tour because you can have that flexibility, but there's nothing worse when you go and you want to spend that little bit longer, an hour longer, or half an hour longer. You're in a shop and then you have to leave. So it's brilliant having that flexibility. I think it may be Minij tours that you went with Liz, who we've now partnered with actually through your recommendation. Because when we look at who the private driver, tour guides and companies that we partner with, we want to know, we want to hear from you guys. Who is it that you've been with that you have had an exceptional experience with? Because those are the companies we want to work with.

[00:29:57.760] - Liz

I think for all of us, it. Was like one of our highlights.

[00:30:02.440] - Melinda

Absolutely. We were so proud that we conquered St Michael's Mount. We were kind of daunted by that, not realising it's. Quite a little hike up to the top. Oh, my goodness. It was so worth it. Worth it. It was beautiful. And all the things about it, it was just amazing. And Minack Theatre, I wasn't familiar with it. Liz had known about it.

[00:30:23.910] - Tracy

Isn't it beautiful?

[00:30:24.790] - Liz

I just said over there, you have to go to those two places. You just have to.

[00:30:29.550] - Tracy

Absolutely. And St Michael's Mount. Did you go on the boat or did you walk over the causeway?

[00:30:36.590] - Liz

We wanted to walk on the causeway, but it just happened the time we were worked. Conveniently to be there. We took the boat.

[00:30:45.650] - Tracy

The boat is amazing. I thought the boat was great.

[00:30:48.750] - Liz

Yeah, but we just wanted to walk on that ancient causeway. But that's okay. As we were coming back, the water was kind of going out and you could see it. It's just amazing.

[00:31:04.450] - Tracy

It is lovely. It is lovely. We went in July. We went over by boat and then we were looking up for the tides because obviously it's tired of it, depending on what the tides are. The tide went out, so we were able to walk back over the course rate. But it just means you guys need to visit again if you want to do that. Yes, absolutely. So then York. So you went up to York. So how long did you spend in? A couple of nights. In York.

[00:31:26.890] - Liz

Yes, we did.

[00:31:28.890] - Melinda

Lovely. The Tower house. The tower guest house was amazing. Every room, the owner, she has made a different theme and out of each room. And they were amazing. And they're roomy many rooms. You stay in there, they're not very big and that's okay because you're not spending a lot of time there. But they were beautiful.

[00:31:49.460] - Tracy

What was the name of it again? So you broke up. It kind of stopped a bit. So I don't know who got the name.

[00:31:54.530] - Melinda

Tower guest house. And about a mile and a half out of the main part of York, like where York Minster is and all that. So it's a little bit we had done a lot of walking. We loved York. The highlight was Howard Castle, which she had found. I think you found that. And that's about an hour and a.

[00:32:13.160] - Liz

Half no, about 35 minutes out.

[00:32:15.720] - Liz

35 minutes.

[00:32:16.420] - Melinda

Cab ride out. Beautiful. Related to Catherine Howard, one of Henry the Ace wives. We did the bloody tour of York. Is that what it's called?

[00:32:29.620] - Liz

Something like that. Blood Bloody Mary tour, I think.

[00:32:31.940] - Melinda

Is that nighttime? Excellent. Excellent.

[00:32:34.820] - Liz

Phenomenal.

[00:32:35.670] - Liz

A gal does it and it really was really good. It was very crowded. There lots of people. That was the only place besides Burrows Market, which we didn't mention, where it was really difficult. We could never get in to eat. I mean, most places we never made a reservation, but here we really should have.

[00:32:56.340] - Tracy

York can be crazy. Visit throughout the summer because it's a really popular destination for Brits as well. Will go to York because it is very popular. And again, making reservations at restaurants is yes, it's quite important. We were actually lucky because we did meet up with Mark and Kay, who we'd done an Itinerary consult for, and they were like, Come on, we're going to go out for dinner. And I was like, we haven't booked anywhere. And luckily, we actually managed to get in at the Guy Faulks Inn. And that was in June. That's the long holiday weekend for the Queen, so we were incredibly lucky to be able to do that. But, yeah, even in September, I guess, having to think, potentially, you could have got maybe gone and got a Yorkshire pudding wrap, though. The Yorkshire pudding wrap, we did do that. Did you enjoy that?

[00:33:48.580] - Liz

Yes, it was good.

[00:33:49.930] - Melinda

It was kind of on the go kind of a thing, right? Yeah, we took it, but it was good. And I actually bought a coat there at Mark and Spencer's. That was the one thing I didn't bring a warm enough coat, which I really only needed a couple of days.

[00:34:04.670] - Liz

But mostly for that night tour.

[00:34:07.530] - Melinda

Yeah, I guess it was the night tour.

[00:34:11.230] - Tracy

Look, you've got Marks and Spencers to go shopping, and I've been in that Marks and Spencers a number of times. That marks and Spencers. If you go to the cafe in that Marks and Spencers in York, you get a fantastic view of York. Minster.

[00:34:24.150] - Liz

Well, we did go to Yorkminster. We went to the church service.

[00:34:28.820] - Melinda

Yeah. Because the Queen passed away. The churches that we have reservations with, those all cancelled. But we went to services and that was very enjoyable.

[00:34:41.360] - Liz

Yeah.

[00:34:43.050] - Liz

We couldn't explore every nook and cranny, but we could see the church and get to experience being in the building by church. That was very fun. We loved that. It was something we didn't plan. And again, we loved doing it, so it worked out well. It didn't matter that we didn't have the tickets, we still got to enjoy.

[00:35:06.580] - Melinda

The beauty of it.

[00:35:07.800] - Tracy

Yeah, that's really good. So I'm going to kind of pivot a bit to the minute and talk, because we kind of just mentioned food there. So obviously you were booked into a lot of bed and breakfast, so you would have got some pretty good breakfast, I would imagine. Right, but what were the highlights in terms of food when you were over?

[00:35:27.130] - Liz

For me, I love to go into the different pubs, the old buildings, and having some of the traditional food, the bangers and mash fish and chips. We got some soup and good bread and just things like I love that quite a bit.

[00:35:46.590] - Melinda

There's a place in London that we had gone to three years ago, it's called Yen Burger, and it's just a little I don't even know where it is.

[00:35:55.440] - Melinda

It's near Borough Market.

[00:35:56.690] - Melinda

Near Burrough Market. And they just have some unique, really good burgers there. We went there again and just to mention a couple of few places that wouldn't be that. Oh, you got to go here. But the food was great. In Morton and Marsh. There's Reedsdale hotel and pub. We had a fantastic lunch there. I had like I think it was liver pate. I eat these different things that people don't eat. It was delicious.

[00:36:25.010] - Tracy

Oh, no, that sounds delicious.

[00:36:26.430] - Melinda

Well, is that what you had?

[00:36:28.110] - Melinda

Fish and chips?

[00:36:28.720] - Liz

I don't know.

[00:36:29.080] - Melinda

No, you had your Scotch egg there.

[00:36:30.980] - Liz

I had my Scotch egg there. And then I had the most amazing mocha creme brulee for dessert.

[00:36:38.120] - Melinda

Yeah, very nice.

[00:36:39.280] - Liz

So it was a very nice place.

[00:36:42.270] - Tracy

That's good.

[00:36:43.650] - Melinda

Also, there's a place called Grouch Coffee in Morton and Marsh that was right across from where we were staying. And Kent got a T shirt there. Liz's husband. Yeah, good coffee. And then in St Ives, we wanted to plug this one. There's a coffee place called Sea of Coffee, just right on the street and it's kind of you can sit up above. So nice. The lady was so nice. We kept going back there every day. We're from Seattle, we drink espresso all the time. So I wanted to plug one more little place in London. The day that they were at Harry Potter and Ken and I were walking around near Soho, I guess there's two of these, it's called Amelia's and it's a little Patisserie and coffee shop. And we didn't we really been walking a lot. We wanted a coffee break and sit down, but we're like, we're not doing Starbucks. Right next to Starbucks was this teeny tiny place called Amelia's. And Ken had, like, avocado toast. I had a bagel with locks and we had our espresso and sat there. It felt like a little bit like a French little bistro place.

[00:37:49.610] - Melinda

I said I could stay here for hours. Just the ambience and they were really nice. I just love that little places, those kind of places. It's kind of fun to find those.

[00:38:00.060] - Tracy

Did you do an afternoon tea when you were in London or?

[00:38:02.750] - Liz

We did it at the Jane Austen Museum.

[00:38:05.750] - Tracy

Oh, lovely.

[00:38:07.370] - Liz

And while we were there was the Jane Austen Festival. So we got to see so many people walking around dressed to the instagram. It was fun.

[00:38:18.220] - Tracy

Oh, that would be fantastic. They're lovely.

[00:38:20.330] - Liz

I have pictures with people.

[00:38:22.580] - Tracy

That's lovely. It all brings the whole atmosphere of Bath. Actually, when I was in Bath earlier this year, I actually went to the Jane Austin Centre. I don't know if it was a lady or waitress that was up in the tea room. She let me come and have a look and take some photos and look at the menu and it did look amazing. We just didn't have time because when we had three months, you think we would have had time, but we were just here then. Everywhere. Yeah. Targeted things for next year when we're back, so hopefully we'll be able to get that. We did so many afternoon teas, it was getting a bit I was thinking about my hips. We did a lot of walking as well, but I was like, I don't know how many afternoon teas I can have.

[00:39:00.010] - Melinda

We did do Sally Lunns also. We did that one. We have to mention honest burger in London. It's a chain, really reasonable. This is our whole trip. We felt like the food was so reasonably priced. We did one fancy restaurant. I think it's the ivy.

[00:39:21.430] - Tracy

Yes.

[00:39:22.200] - Melinda

For my husband's birthday. Yeah, the ivy march garden. But Honest Burger, we walked there several times in our last few nights when we were in London at that airbnb twice.

[00:39:35.230] - Tracy

Okay.

[00:39:36.310] - Melinda

And the second time we went in, we sit down and we look over and I'm like, I think that's Roger Allam. You know, the actor. Do you know who he is? Oh, well, we watch all things British and he's in, like, Endeavour and number of shows that we watch.

[00:39:53.630] - Tracy

I feel like I should know who he is. I feel like I need to Google him now.

[00:39:56.540] - Melinda

Recognise him. I probably will. Sound like he's right next to us and we're like, I think that's him. Noisy. I think it really is him. We're trying to be real cool, but I'm sure he was like, oh, brother.

[00:40:10.690] - Liz

We saw him, but we didn't bug him.

[00:40:12.680] - Liz

We didn't bug him.

[00:40:14.290] - Tracy

That's cool. I remember when you left, when you flew out from Seattle, you put pictures of your luggage on the Facebook group and there was a lot of interest in the luggage that you had, which actually, I'm going to link into that in our packing guide, actually, because it did look really good. So, first of all, how did you manage with just carry on? Because that's all you took. And I know you sent some stuff back, but apart from sending the stuff back, how did you find the luggage that you had? Would you recommend it? And also, I think what's really key and what's really important to say is that you did the right thing. Because if you're travelling around by train, you need to just be dealing with carry on. You don't want to be taking a huge amount of luggage because it becomes a nightmare.

[00:41:00.930] - Liz

That luggage in particular, it has these big wheels. We thought that would be nice, going over different kind of terrain and easy to go upstairs and stuff. And I think it did a great job. But I don't know if I'd say it did any better than Ken and Melinda's regular luggage, but I enjoyed it. It was nice, it was easy to move around, it was compact, so I did enjoy it. I mean, I'm glad I purchased it.

[00:41:31.930] - Tracy

And it worked well. So you also took carry on as well, Melinda?

[00:41:35.730] - Melinda

Yes, we did. It was a good size, but we each had just one bag. We were determined to do that and Liz and I talked off and on for months. We planned for a year, we planned for over a year. And so we'd go back and forth. How are we going to do this? I need more. I can't just take two tops or whatever. So we ended up figuring it out and it worked out great. I do remember when we left our first few nights in London and getting to Paddington Station, we had to go up over this bridge with a lot of stairs. My husband is 64 and the rest of us are shorter and so he was always ten steps ahead of us. I was struggling with getting my bag up these stairs. Funny, this young man just comes along and picks up my bag and takes it over to the other side. Like, thank you.

[00:42:24.190] - Liz

That happened to me a couple of times too. He was very nice. I think actually I was slowing him down, so he was like, oh, let me get that for you. And he grabs it and he gets it up. So I felt like I was kind of clogging the works a couple of times, but people were, again, very nice young men that were very helpful.

[00:42:47.010] - Tracy

That's really good. So, apart from I know you said you bought it, you had to buy a jacket. Melinda, was there anything that you anything that you packed that you wish you hadn't? So anything you took extra or is there anything that you didn't take which you wish you had on? Kind of two questions there.

[00:43:01.370] - Melinda

No, not for me. I was surprised how I got used to just wearing the same pants, like days in a row. Jeans, they don't get that dirty. You're just walking.

[00:43:12.990] - Tracy

Exactly. Yeah, exactly.

[00:43:15.070] - Liz

I kind of wished when I was in London, I had had something a little nicer, but most of my trip was just tonnes of walking and so it was more casual clothes.

[00:43:27.770] - Tracy

But it's pretty casual in London, though, I just tend to wear leggings and Jeep. It just comfortable. That's where we live, too.

[00:43:40.150] - Liz

We're very casual here and that's totally so I love that.

[00:43:45.220] - Liz

The key is have a great pair of shoes that you have worn and broken in and even if they cost you a little bit more than you would normally spend, it was so worth it because I had bought one pair of shoes I thought I might bring and they didn't come before I left. I wore them one day and I'm like, These are horrible. And then I got another pair of echoes that they were so comfortable and that made all the difference for enjoying.

[00:44:20.610] - Tracy

I don't think you can underestimate the importance of having comfy shoes. I've got my friends who just say I'm the comfy shoes queen. But you know something? There's nothing worse than you go on holiday and the first day you get blisters and then you've got to walk the next day or the next day, and it's just awful. So I'll tell you a little story. I had, shall we say, the most wonderful pair of black ankle boots that were the most comfortable boots I've ever had. Always wear them in the UK, worn them. They're just brilliant. I left them at my mom's this year when I came back to Australia and she's given them to a charity shop by accident.

[00:44:55.390] - Liz

No.

[00:44:58.350] - Tracy

I now have to buy another pair of boots, which I said I can't get in Australia at the moment because it's some as, there's no boots in store and obviously you need to break them in. The thing is another thing is you might get comfy shoes, but you need to wear them for a good amount of time before you go. Literally all I had when I was in the UK, so we were back for twelve weeks, I had my pair of boots, which I no longer have, and I had a pair of Birkenstocks, which is what I wear here in Australia, and that's what I wore. And that was perfect for me. Yeah, it is a huge and I know people say, I'm going to buy new shoes, just take shoes that you're comfortable in, because nobody really cares. Nobody cares because you guys love England so much. I'm hoping that you guys are going to be going back again at some point. And if you do, is there anything that you would do differently from this trip?

[00:45:45.110] - Liz

Well, me personally, I loved travelling with the trains, but if we did that, I think I'd probably maybe only want to go to one other place. I mean, we loved it and it was exactly the trip we wanted, but I think that in a future time I would find more, maybe discover one area a little bit more intensely, stay there longer and not do as much packing up and moving on. But that being said, that is the trip we absolutely wanted and it worked out perfectly for us. Right. But I think the next time around we might do it differently.

[00:46:26.650] - Tracy

Yeah. So base yourself in one place just to agree, melinda maybe a bit, maybe.

[00:46:31.230] - Liz

Or maybe just like between two places or something.

[00:46:34.060] - Tracy

Yeah.

[00:46:34.670] - Melinda

We figured we averaged about how many miles a day walking?

[00:46:40.030] - Liz

Well, our lowest was 4 miles, and that was the day we had a nine hour train trip. Our most was 16, 16 miles. I think we averaged between about ten to 12 miles a day.

[00:46:53.640] - Melinda

And walking now, that's, you know, not speedwalking. Yeah, but it's a lot of your feet.

[00:46:59.580] - Tracy

That's a lot.

[00:47:00.220] - Liz

But you're in a different place. People were like, I can't believe you did all that, but that's all we have to do. And then figure out where we're going to eat the next meal.

[00:47:11.870] - Tracy

Exactly. You don't really notice it, do you? Because you're kind of wandering from place to place and you've got your route that you're going to follow and you kind of go and then you stop off and enjoy visiting somewhere, and then you go to the next place and visit that, and then you get the next place. And then all of a sudden, at the end of the day, you go, wow, I can't believe I've just been so many steps. But it's a trip up by now, doesn't it? But again, having the comfortable shoes is the key to do that.

[00:47:35.570] - Melinda

Love to go to the Yorkshire Dales. We've watched different shows from there in the past and it's just beautiful. So that would be a whole different kind of trip. I think we'd probably spend more time there.

[00:47:48.230] - Tracy

So I would say that if you're going to do a bit more of the north, so obviously I'm from the north of the UK, north of England, I should say. I'm from the north of England, so I'm originally from Northumberland, which is the northernmost county, which borders with Scotland. So I would recommend, if you're going to do that, spend a bit of time in Yorkshire, spend a bit of time in Northumberland. Because Hadrian's wall absolutely stunning the Northumberland coastline. Absolutely stunning. And also, Northumberland has the most castles out of any county in England. And then go to the Lake District. So you've got kind of that you could do the three, I think that would be Yorkshire Dale is beautiful. And obviously you spent a bit of time you went to Castle Howard. Yeah. Castle Howard yeah. Explore a bit more of that and then perhaps spend a little bit of time in my neck of the woods and then go the Lake District is also absolutely beautiful place to visit. So that would be a little triangle for you to do, Tracy. Okay, yeah, that'd be great. Well, I never know, one of these days, might organise some tours around these places so you can come along with us.

[00:48:51.640] - Liz

That is awesome.

[00:48:53.530] - Melinda

Do it.

[00:48:54.170] - Liz

Okay, now sign us up.

[00:48:55.500] - Melinda

Sign us up.

[00:48:57.530] - Tracy

I will do. So I'm going to end because we've been talking for an hour, would you believe it? I always end the podcast by asking the same question, everybody, and it's basically, what is the one tip that you would give to anybody who's visited in England for the first time?

[00:49:11.330] - Liz

My tip would be, number one, connect with you guys.

[00:49:16.240] - Melinda

Absolutely.

[00:49:16.610] - Liz

Because you provided us so much help in your site. And not just you, but also the people that are on your Facebook page and stuff. They have great insights and suggestions. In fact, one gal wrote to me when she heard we were in the Cotswolds and she said, if you like Tolkien, you need to go to Slow.

[00:49:40.580] - Liz

On the Wold

[00:49:41.900] - Liz

Yeah. To that church. And that door I had absolutely no idea about in it. I love that place.

[00:49:49.240] - Tracy

That's awesome.

[00:49:50.140] - Liz

To me. Research. Research and talk to people and connect with good resources, which you guys are awesome resources.

[00:50:00.740] - Melinda

Yes.

[00:50:01.220] - Tracy

Thank you, Melinda.

[00:50:03.020] - Melinda

That's exactly what my husband said. Talk to a lot of people who have been there and connect with you, too, for sure.

[00:50:10.610] - Tracy

That's brilliant. Well, I have to say thank you so much to both of you to come on on the podcast today. It's been absolutely brilliant to talk to and catch up with you about your trip.

[00:50:19.530] - Liz

Thank you so much for inviting us.

[00:50:21.700] - Liz

Fun to talk about it.

[00:50:23.040] - Tracy

Yes, well, it kind of brings a memory is back as well, isn't it?

[00:50:26.680] - Melinda

So much, Tracy.

[00:50:28.100] - Meiinda

So much.

[00:50:28.890] - Melinda

I got to go plan now.

[00:50:30.890] - Tracy

Thanks again to Liza and Melinda for sharing their experiences and tips from their trip to England. Remember, you can find links to everything we talked about in this episode on our website ukravelplanant.com. Episode 25. Again, thanks so much for listening to the UK Travel Plan podcast asked Remember to leave us a review for a possible shoutout in a future episode. That just leaves me to say, until next week, happy UK Travel Planning.