

[00:00:01.610] - Speaker 1

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.

[00:00:37.130] - Speaker 2

Welcome to episode 28 of the UK Travel Planner podcast. This week. I'm really excited to have Rob Bruns. He was going to talk about his itinerary for London from his trip last year. Now, some of you may have heard that Rob on the podcast episode number 18, where he talked about the full itinerary, he was in the UK for four weeks with his family, but because after an hour and a half we couldn't fit in London, we decided that we'd do it as another podcast. So, welcome back, Rob. So pleased to have you. Would you like to introduce yourself? And can I just tell us about where you live, who you are, where you went in the UK, who you went with. Just a whole other background would be great.

[00:01:13.620] - Speaker 3

All right, well, I'm glad to be back, Tracy. We'll try to keep this one a little bit shorter than an hour and a half. Right, so I'm Rob, I'm a middle school teacher here in Columbia, Missouri, in the US. I went to the UK with my lovely wife Heather, who is also a middle school teacher, and our now twelve year old son Beckett, who was eleven at the time. And we had a trip planned back in 2020 and then, of course, it got cancelled and moved to 2021, and then it got cancelled and moved again to 2022 and we finally made it. That's why we spent four weeks there, along with about a week in London, which actually was at the tail end of our four week odyssey through the UK.

[00:02:09.500] - Speaker 2

So you landed at Heathrow. That's right. And then you did your kind of drive in trip for the three weeks up through England and Scotland and then back down to London.

[00:02:18.190] - Speaker 3

Correct. So, yeah, we were in London for about, oh, gosh, maybe like three, 4 hours at the very beginning there until we jumped on the train to York, and then about three weeks on the road, turned the car in in Oxford and got a car into London, where we spent the next the next week.

[00:02:40.420] - Speaker 2

Brilliant.

[00:02:40.920] - Speaker 3

We were tired by then, let me tell you.

[00:02:44.130] - Speaker 2

Yeah, I bet you and I know, we, we met up with you in Whitby when you were on your kind of way up to Scotland, weren't you, at that point? So if anybody wants to kind of hear about the previous three weeks before you arrived in London, episode 18 is the one to listen to for all of Rob's information about that part of the trip. So let's focus on London. So people often we always get asked about London because I think people find it overwhelming plan in London. I know it can be pretty overwhelming plan in the whole country, but I think London because a lot spend a few days in London, they kind of go, how am I going to fit everything in? So talk with you how you planned your London part.

[00:03:21.870] - Speaker 3

Well, I guess the first thing I need to tell people, you're not going to fit everything in. So I think the quicker you can come to that kind of realisation that you're not going to see everything that you want to see, the better off you're going to be, because it's overwhelming. And it was, I think, extra overwhelming for us because we did do it at the end. I kind of forget why we decided to do that, because we were tired after three weeks of jetting around the UK, but kind of the same way I planned

the whole trip. And again, this I think was a suggestion by either you and Doug or somebody in the group of making a list, brainstorming all the places you think you want to see. And since I was going with my wife and my son, asking them, of course my wife had a lot more input into that than my eleven year old because he didn't know really what was there. But generating that wish list. And then the next step, getting those maps out and seeing where everything is in relationship to each other. So I did it all on the computer.

[00:04:30.740] - Speaker 3

I took little screenshots of different parts of London and just started on the computer. Kind of putting little stars where things were and watching where the clusters were forming and kind of where we started.

[00:04:47.210] - Speaker 2

That's a really good idea because a lot of places are close together, so you can kind of do a whole day itinerary around one particular area. And that also stops this kind of having to go from one part of London to another, wasting time getting from one place to the other because you're better off actually planning a day. I often talk to people that go to the Tower of London, walk across the bridge, go to Borough Market for lunch, walk back over a Millennium Bridge to St Paul's, you can then go to the Sky Garden. There's lots of places around this. You can actually develop a whole itinerary around that day. I have to ask you, what were the top places that you really wanted to go and see?

[00:05:27.930] - Speaker 3

Oh, gosh. So I had been in London myself about, I think almost 30 years ago, right after college, so I wanted to see some things that I hadn't seen. We actually went out of London on several days. One of my big things, we were big Harry Potter fans, so we knew we wanted to go to the studios, of course, which turned into a day trip. And then my wife, who had never been there, her big things, she wanted to go to Windsor. She's a big royal fan, my son. One of the places that he did choose on his own was he wanted to go to Wimbledon. He plays tennis, we're all kind of tennis fans, so that was on our list. And then my wife was like, whatever you can figure out that we can see, let's go. And again, she realised we weren't going to be able to see everything we wanted to see, either. We knew we were going to be at the end of the trip as well. We knew we were going to be tired, so there are a lot of things we actually did put on the itinerary. You mentioned St Paul's, we never made it there.

[00:06:42.370] - Speaker 3

There are several things we had on the itinerary that we didn't make it, but we knew ahead of time that we wanted to enjoy this last week, of being together on this adventure. And there were just going to be some things that fell by the wayside.

[00:06:56.540] - Speaker 2

Absolutely. And I think it's important as well, because it is so tempting for the entire itinerary, really. But London in particular, to put too much in and to kind of think that you can do more than you can in a day because it's exhausting. Absolutely.

[00:07:13.450] - Speaker 3

Oh, my gosh.

[00:07:14.310] - Speaker 2

Yeah. I think people genuinely don't realise how exhausting London is, the amount of walking that you do. I mean, even if you're jumping in cabs or getting the Tube from place to place, there's still a lot of walking around areas. So it really is something you've got to think really carefully about how much realistically you can manage as a family or as a person when it comes to getting around. So I think that's really important. You did a couple of day trips. Did you take the train out to Harry Potter studios and to Windsor?

[00:07:47.100] - Speaker 3

Rob yeah, we jumped onto the train and took it to Watford Junction. This was the time of the train strikes and luckily that one was a day that was still okay and untouched, so we were excited about

that. And, yes, just grabbed the bus that they have from Watford Junction into the studios. When we talked last, the other podcast, we had an amazingly charmed vacation, other than one little incident in Edinburgh, that we will not talk about that, but everything just always worked out for us the entire time, which I wish that for everybody who goes travelling like this, but, yeah, we spent the day there. I think we arrived probably about 930 10:00 and we're there until, like, three in the afternoon.

[00:08:43.610] - Speaker 2

You can spend a day there. Dug and I've been in numerous times and we still spend hours and hours there. And obviously they change things as well, different themes so you kind of get a different experience when you go. Even the last time we went, it changed from the previous time that we've been there. And it's a very popular day trip. And obviously you went out to Windsor. Did you go out for the day out to Windsor as well? Did you get the train out?

[00:09:06.690] - Speaker 3

Well, we did. We got a train from Waterloo and put that into Windsor. I think we got there around I think we had entry around 10:00 or so at Windsor Castle. Stayed there for a while, we had lunch, tried. Food is always on the top of everybody's list, we discovered. Oh, gosh. What is it? Nando's chicken place. Yes, that was a hit with our son.

[00:09:35.270] - Speaker 2

Doug and I have a thing about going to every Nando's around the UK, mainly because I really like minty peas that they do.

[00:09:41.930] - Speaker 3

It's good. I have to say, when we go back, we will be going to Nanda. And that is also the day, just because of, again, kind of plotting things on the map. We took a train then from Windsor in the afternoon after lunch to Wimbledon.

[00:09:58.730] - Speaker 2

Yeah, perfect.

[00:09:59.550] - Speaker 3

And hit Wimbledon in the museum. And it was actually pretty cool because this was the Friday before opening play on Monday. So there's the hustle and bustle of everything getting ready, so we couldn't go onto the court or anything like that, but that was fun. And then you took the underground, I think, back into Camden Town. So that was a long day. But we hit Windsor and Wimbledon and then I think we had a pretty good fun night at Camden Town when we got home that day.

[00:10:32.600] - Speaker 2

Yeah, that's actually well planned as well, because you kind of did that circuit. So kind of making use of the time. Do you want to talk through your other days? What sort of things did you do, obviously? Did you do Harry Potter with another something else that day? Or was that Harry Potter kind of the main part of that day? It sounds like it was most of the day anyway.

[00:10:53.090] - Speaker 3

Yeah, that was our main deal that day. So the first day we arrived, we arrived in the evening from Oxford and just kind of moved into our Verbo, started some laundry, hit up the sainsbury's for food and all that, and just kind of went over our plan for the next seven days. But the next morning we were up and at it and we kind of did what you were talking about earlier. We did the Tower of London at Tower Bridge, went over to Borough Market and then we came back and did the whole Tower Bridge walking across the glass, which was great.

[00:11:34.850] - Speaker 2

Did you enjoy the food at Borough Market?

[00:11:36.670] - Speaker 3

Oh, my gosh. Well, we're a foodie family. Food is a big part of our life. So when we went to Borough

Market, it was like it's the promised land. It was a little overwhelming at first. Same thing with Camden Market, which we probably visited probably three or four times while we were there in London, because the stalls, I mean, it is crowded and the choices are endless, but we had lunch at Borough Market. That's where Beckett says he's had the greatest out of all the cool food from all over the world. You could get there. That's where he says he got the best mac and cheese in the world, was Borough Market.

[00:12:20.910] - Speaker 2
Well, there you go.

[00:12:22.270] - Speaker 3
If you like mac and cheese, go to Borough Market.

[00:12:25.870] - Speaker 2
I think I'm actually going to plan this year to do a food tour of Borough Market. To me, I think that's going to be because I also love food and I think I'm going to just book that because then I'll have somebody who knows the different places to go and maybe can try lots of different things. So that's something I'm definitely going to book on. So I'll take lots of videos and pictures and I'll report back, because you.

[00:12:51.770] - Speaker 3
Can spend so much time just kind of wandering around going, oh, my gosh, I don't know what to pick. What's over here? What's over there? So you can spend some time just kind of walking around looking at everything.

[00:13:03.150] - Speaker 2
Absolutely.

[00:13:04.330] - Speaker 3
And I think that was our first day. We did a lot in that first day. I think we were pretty exhausted. We did jump on the big bus tour, I think, that evening, because we were just like, let somebody else drive us around. And we didn't know how much we were going to see within the next five to six days. So we thought that would be a good way to kind of see some things.

[00:13:29.510] - Speaker 2
Yeah, I think they're a good idea because, like you say, you can sit back and you get to see kind of the main highlights and the main buildings, the main landmarks and that sort. I remember going New York a few years ago and arriving later on in the day, and that's what we did. We just jumped on the bus and went around. New York was a great way to see the city and I think for London as well, day that you arrive, maybe if you've got time, get on the bus or go on a boat or the bus. I think that's a really good use of time. As you say, you get to see you don't know exactly what you're going to maybe able to fit in. And you probably went past guests and past St. Paul's End, so maybe you'd see it from the outside.

[00:14:06.180] - Speaker 3
Exactly.

[00:14:08.750] - Speaker 2
So how was the next day after that? What did you do?

[00:14:11.330] - Speaker 3
The next day was Harry Potter. So that was our next day. And then the next day was, let's see, we did Windsor and Wimbledon and then evening at Camden Market. We ate a lot that evening. And then the next day, let's see, we headed to Westminster Abbey. That was kind of definitely one of the traditional spots that I think everybody has that my wife is like. That's definitely one that we need to hit.

[00:14:42.360] - Speaker 2

It's so interesting as well. And I think obviously, because of the Queen's Pastorship, we're seeing a bit more of Westminster on the TV. I don't know, it was a bit poignant when I was looking at thinking I was in there, I was walking down that, you know what I mean? You saw all those pictures.

[00:14:57.860] - Speaker 3

Yes. Well, it's a place people see on TV or in books. And then we were able to walk around and point out people to our son, that even our son knows who Isaac Newton is, or some of the authors that are buried there. We all enjoyed that. And then that was the day we had tea. Our big splurge at was the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory tea at one Aldridge. So that was not as good as Chatsworth House, but it was a pretty good one. It was lots of sweets. I think Beckett had six or seven mugs of hot chocolate. They treated him very well there. And then we went back to Camden Town for a nap, because that evening we also went to The Lion King, so we wanted to make sure we were awake.

[00:16:01.400] - Speaker 2

Yeah, you did a lot that day. You would have needed all that stuff, hot chocolate or the chocolate to keep them going.

[00:16:08.790] - Speaker 3

Well, we didn't get home, I think, that night until I was just looking at pictures yesterday. I don't think we got off the tube until a quarter to eleven in Camdentown and then it was still hopping. Of course, it was Saturday night in Camdentown, so we just kind of hung out and walked around or one of the main streets there. And then, of course, Beckett spotted the bubble cones or the bubble waffles.

[00:16:35.300] - Speaker 2

Yes.

[00:16:36.750] - Speaker 3

So we did have some things like from our Instagram list, you see all the hot spots to go get stuff.

[00:16:46.290] - Speaker 2

I think what you need to do is share all of those places with me. So I've got the list and when I'm in London this year, I'll be staying down in London with some friends. I'll go and hit all those spots and I'll be putting them on my Instagram.

[00:17:03.990] - Speaker 3

Yes, I mean, we've got pictures of all the food, so it'll be easy to go through.

[00:17:08.360] - Speaker 2

Brilliant. I'm sure people love that, whether you've got kids or not.

[00:17:14.410] - Speaker 3

I got a buffalo waffle too.

[00:17:17.370] - Speaker 2

Exactly. Yeah. No, I was going to ask the next day. So Saturday night, next day, we left.

[00:17:24.180] - Speaker 3

In a little bit.

[00:17:25.710] - Speaker 2

I was surprised. And you were there in summer, so it was still it's late until late.

[00:17:30.210] - Speaker 3

I know. That's the freakish wonderful thing about the summertime, that extra light. Well, even in the morning, day starts early and it goes long, so it was lovely.

[00:17:43.490] - Speaker 2

We were recording episode yesterday and just staying because you went up to Orkney, which is really, really far north, obviously, off island, off the north of Scotland, and I don't think it got dark.

[00:17:53.750] - Speaker 3

Yeah, well, it keeps you excited, that light and the body, how that works. You just felt energised. As long as the light was out, you're ready to go.

[00:18:05.870] - Speaker 2

Then your bubble waffles and your sodas.

[00:18:07.780] - Speaker 3

That's right. Well, the next morning, we went right back to Camden Town, actually, for breakfast, and we finally decided we needed to buy an extra suitcase to haul stuff home. So went back to Camden Town, got breakfast, found a suitcase, did some window shopping at the cool shops that they have there, locked along the locks. I'm sure there's a special name for the boats that are along the canal there, but we actually got to see the locks in action and how they work, so that was kind of cool for all of us.

[00:18:43.420] - Speaker 2

Yeah.

[00:18:44.790] - Speaker 3

And then this day was another kind of big splurge. So I'm the baker in the family, so I'm a little bit of a GBBO nut. And I don't know if you've heard about the big London Bake. I think I might have mentioned it to you, but I don't know if you've heard about it.

[00:19:03.950] - Speaker 2

Yeah, no, I hadn't heard of it.

[00:19:05.820] - Speaker 3

There are two locations in London. There's an east and a south one, and it's basically a recreation of the Great British Bake Off, which is an excellent idea for whoever came up with it. And you go, you make a little reservation and you can do it on your own or with a group. So the three of us went late afternoon, and they have all the equipment and the recipe and the ingredients, and they basically reenact an episode of the Great British Bake Off with you baking whatever they had planned. And since it was the Jubilee, the thing that we baked was a Jubilee Crown Cake, I think they called it.

[00:19:57.390] - Speaker 2

Did you win?

[00:19:58.240] - Speaker 3

We got third. We should have won, actually. No, I'm serious. They had this lovely lady who kind of MCD the whole event and judged the cakes at the end. Well, the thing that sunk us, Tracy, was the oven. And I felt like we were actually on the TV show, because you see people on the TV show sometimes not turn their ovens on.

[00:20:23.430] - Speaker 2

Oh, yes.

[00:20:25.110] - Speaker 3

Everybody else there was British, so they knew what they were doing. And as poor Americans, I thought the oven was on, and after about 15 minutes, I'm like, I don't smell the cake.

[00:20:36.890] - Speaker 2

Yeah.

[00:20:37.290] - Speaker 3

And our oven wasn't on, so we we got behind. So I had an ice, a warm cake. If you watch the show or you bake yourself, that's never good.

[00:20:49.150] - Speaker 2

Yeah. I just think you have to go back and do it again. You have to have another go next time that you're back.

[00:20:54.450] - Speaker 3

Yeah, because she made the comment that our flavours were good. They were the best. But since the middle was like a molten volcano, we came in third. We're still proud of our third place finish.

[00:21:08.020] - Speaker 2

Absolutely. Of the photo. I've got the guys standing there.

[00:21:12.310] - Speaker 3

Yeah, it's great. I would highly we were looking for some experiences. We kind of want to do stuff when we travel, and so this was great. So I would definitely recommend this. If you're out there and you enjoyed baking or you love the show, or you just want to do something new, this this was fabulous. I can't say enough about it. And then you get to take they give you a cool little box to take your creation home, which we ate on it for the next two days. Yeah, that's pretty cool.

[00:21:51.170] - Speaker 2

How long in advance did you have to book that, Rob?

[00:21:53.250] - Speaker 3

Oh, gosh, it was a few months ahead. I mean, I can't remember for this one specifically, but most of our stuff was booked at least three to six months ahead of time.

[00:22:06.420] - Speaker 2

Yeah, because you're very organised, I have to say. That was one thing. Itinerary consult with you.

[00:22:12.010] - Speaker 3

I'm a teacher, we got to be organised.

[00:22:15.690] - Speaker 2

And I'm not as well organised as you are, I have to tell you. I tried to be that is my goal in 2023, to be a bit more organised, but I think I just simply juggle far too many things and then I hear that and everywhere in my brain, I think. So after the Bake Off day, that.

[00:22:33.410] - Speaker 3

Was a Sunday, and then we had one last day, that was a Sunday, and then Monday was our last day. And for a long time, we kind of struggled with what to do with that last day. Because you're like, this is it. This is like the last day, not just in London, but the whole shebang and you had mentioned during our Itinerary review had mentioned Greenwich, which I had never visited when I had been there many years ago. And Heather, being she's a social studies history teacher, she's like, I really want to go there. She teaches 6th graders, which those are about 1112 year olds, and they always start off at the beginning of the year with some basic map skill review. And she's like, I want a picture on the prime meridian. I need to have that. So we got up that morning and jumped on that was, I think, our first and only boat trip. But we jumped on the Uber boat, took it up to Greenwich, went up to the Royal Observatory, spent about an hour or so there. Actually, I'm a science teacher, so I enjoyed the science part of all of that as well.

[00:23:49.670] - Speaker 3

And we jumped on the boat back to London. I mean, there's so much more you can do in cutting painted hall. What is it? The cutter.

[00:23:57.710] - Speaker 2

Shark. Yeah, there's a cookie sack boat, the boat, the Tulip staircase, the Painted Hall, which is absolutely stunning in the naval college. So, yes, you can spend a whole day in Greenwich doing all those things. Absolutely.

[00:24:17.000] - Speaker 3

Yeah. It was hard to a point to go, oh, we came just for this, and then we were leaving. But like you said, that's a good excuse to have to come back. So we headed back into London that day, and boy, did we walk. I mean, we just hit the road. I got out the map and said, well, what do you guys want to see? It's our last day. And so we kind of hit some of the highlights. Piccadilly Circus and walk down Regent Street and hit Seville Royal and Soho and Carnaby Street. And Beckett wanted to go to Hamley's. That was on his list. He had somehow found that out online about the toy store. So we hit Hamley's. He also found out that there was an NBA store. He's a basketball player. So we hit the NBA store. I think that was in Soho. And then we hit the British Museum. And that day it was kind of rainy, over cast, but also warm. And so you probably know what the British Museum was like inside. It was a little stuffy. And after four weeks on the road, yeah, we didn't last very long in there, but again, Heather teaches ancient civilization.

[00:25:38.690] - Speaker 3

So we kind of, like, picked out our specific parts of the museum we wanted to.

[00:25:43.480] - Speaker 2

And I think that's a good idea. What I do every time I go to the British Museum, I just don't think you could do it all. You just have to kind of one of the particular areas that you want to go and have a look at. Everybody wants to see the Rosetta Stone. Everybody goes, that's a busy, and that's a really good idea. And then that was it. Then you flew out the next day. That was at it. Wow.

[00:26:05.860] - Speaker 3

That was pretty much it. We headed back to Camden Town and went to the market again and hit the was it hands? Hans and Gretel in Camden Market, where you can get another crazy place to get ice cream. Yes, we got ice cream at least every other day somewhere over the four weeks and just total random story. So you know Wendy's, the fast food restaurant?

[00:26:35.060] - Speaker 2

Yeah.

[00:26:35.820] - Speaker 3

Okay. So there's one in Camden Town, and we were after the British Museum, going to go to Harrods and go buy some food and go have a picnic in the park. But we we were so exhausted. We were like, OK, forget that. We're just we're going to go get some easy food. We're going to go get a meal deal on Sainsbury's or Tesco or something. And we got off the underground spied, the Wendy's, and we're like, this is horrible. On our last day in the UK, we're going to Wendy's. And we walk up to Wendy's, go to walk through the doors, and there's like these people standing there and they're like, Wait, you can't come in. And we're like, we can't. And we strike up this conversation and they're like, well, we're opening tomorrow. And we're like, oh, we're leaving tomorrow. Well, it so happened that this is like the second or third Wendy's that they are, like, relaunching in the UK. And they were having a soft opening for the employees and their families. Well, the manager of the restaurant is like, well, you know what? These Americans are leaving tomorrow back to the US.

[00:27:40.660] - Speaker 3

Let's have them come in and test our Wendy's out. So we got invited in to the soft opening of the Wendy's in Cantontown and got a free meal and started out with the employee. Yeah.

[00:27:57.030] - Speaker 2

So how was the food? Was it as good as the Wendy's in the States?

[00:28:01.450] - Speaker 3

Well, I think he didn't introduce him as such, but I'm pretty sure the head honcho of Wendy's UK was

there. And he came up to our table and asked us, like, okay, so how does this compare? And we're like, It tastes just like home. And so I think he was happy with that.

[00:28:23.790] - Speaker 2

That's a cool last evening. And it kind of was quite nicely into conversation about food because we've kind of mentioned Borough Market, we've mentioned the bubble cones, we've mentioned Hansel and Gretel for ice cream. What were your other main when you were in London, what were the other main places or food experiences that you had that you'd recommend?

[00:28:42.010] - Speaker 3

Well, I mean, we ate a lot at Camden Market. Honestly, it was so nice and close to where we were staying that we ate there quite frequently. As far as ice cream goes, I want to say it was Chin Chin Labs or something like that. I think that was in Camden Market as well. They make the ice cream kind of, like, right there in front of you with dry ice that was really yummy and good. There's a little Italian restaurant we found. I'll have to send you the name. I don't think I wrote it down. It was just down the road from our verbal I mean, there's so many really good places to eat in Camden Town. It was kind of easy to walk out the door and pick something and it was going to be good. And to be honest, we ate a lot on the move. To be honest, by the time we were in London, like I said, we were tired. We were happy to be there. I know people talk about London being an expensive city, and I think that's kind of up to choices you make. And by the time we got to London, we were very well acquainted with the meal deal, and I think we probably got meal deals at least once a day.

[00:30:02.850] - Speaker 3

For lunch, we splurged on the Charlie and Chocolate Factory tea, ate a lot out at the markets, and I think.

[00:30:13.110] - Speaker 2

That's a great tip. And. I've got a couple of articles. I've got one on three things to do in London, because there are actually quite a lot of free things you can do, but also one on kind of how to budget things, so how.

[00:30:24.410] - Speaker 3

To budget for London.

[00:30:25.200] - Speaker 2

And one of those things I kind of recognise, you know, go for the meal deals. Perfect.

[00:30:29.110] - Speaker 3

Yeah.

[00:30:29.770] - Speaker 2

Great way to save money.

[00:30:30.880] - Speaker 3

Yeah. When you're a middle class family with a kid, I mean, you're watching your budget and like I said, this is towards the end, so you're trying to be mindful of that. And really, the meal deals are great. We picked up dinner, I'm sure once or twice while we were there, we picked up dinner at the Sainsbury's near where the verbo was, popped some stuff in the oven or the microwave.

[00:30:54.470] - Speaker 2

And that's advantagement, obviously, because you chose to stay in a verbo. So tell us a little bit about the verbo that you stayed in. So you were obviously in Camden.

[00:31:02.630] - Speaker 3

Yeah, which wasn't our original choice. I'm trying to remember the first iteration of the trip back in 2020. I don't remember where we were staying, but that that's a toughie to find accommodations in London because, again, it is expensive, but we knew we were going to need laundry by then. And

again, we were trying to find something for us that was affordable and we knew that we wanted to be able to eat in breakfast and or dinner. A few times, I probably went through three or four different airbnbs or verbose in the London area and trying to figure out, like you said, the distances from everywhere. And so the one in Camden Town was kind of the last one we had reserved that we were drawn to it the more we investigated the Camdentown area. And this verbo was like, literally 10 seconds from an overground station, two minutes to the tube station, a minute or two from a sainsbury, a large one, restaurants everywhere, the canal. And this was an area that I did not ever get a chance to see when I was there. And it just seemed like a cool place. So we kind of just went on blind faith and it turned out to be lovely.

[00:32:45.240] - Speaker 2

I'm going to say it worked out really well. And I think the key, a lot of it is thinking about those things. Markets for food, you're near supermarket for food, you're close to transportation, which is huge. And I always say that to people, is that if you imagine you've been out all day, you don't want to get back by Tube and then have a 25 minutes walk to accommodation.

[00:33:08.890] - Speaker 3

That was such a lovely feeling to get to the Tube station. And now we had, like, barely a five minute walk.

[00:33:16.430] - Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely. So you didn't do any tours or anything when you were back over?

[00:33:22.320] - Speaker 3

We didn't. We definitely considered, and I had probably never even thought of it until meeting you guys and becoming a part of the community you've built. And I don't know, we kind of like being on our own. I think when we go back, we would definitely like to try some tours that are for our, quote, first time. We kind of like the adventure of just going and being on our own time frame. But my wife and I definitely look forward to taking some tours as we hopefully get a chance to go back in the future a few more times.

[00:34:07.390] - Speaker 2

I hope so. That would be great. I know before Christmas, you sent me a picture of a present that you bought for your son, which was brilliant, absolutely brilliant. And what a good sport you was.

[00:34:22.530] - Speaker 3

That right? Yes. Well, souvenirs so souvenirs for us at least, mainly consisted of thankfully, our son loves to read, and we all love to read, so he wanted to buy books wherever we went, and so books and t shirts. And of course, he loves his hoodies, so that's kind of why we had to buy the extra suitcases. His hoodies take up so much space.

[00:34:52.590] - Speaker 2

Yeah. And there's only so many you can work on an aeroplane.

[00:34:55.910] - Speaker 3

Exactly. But we were out I think it might have been the day of going to the Lion King, and we noticed on the tube map on the platform that there was a station called Tuting Beck, and our son's name is Beckett. Oh, my gosh. We just left hysterically because he's an 1112 year old boy. Yes. For Christmas, we're like, oh, well, we need some sort of keepsake. And I don't know what I thought I was going to be able to find online, but you figure you can find almost everything online. I didn't. And so I made designed him a t shirt with the underground station logo and tooting back on it. It's just so cool. He found actually several stores during the four weeks throughout the UK. That were either called Beck or Beck or Beckett. There was a Beckett tea room. A beck's tea room. And so we were always on the lookout for anything that was kind of related to his name. And then yeah, when we found the underground station, that was like, again, perfect.

[00:36:10.390] - Speaker 2

All of them stand beside the sign or did you not measure that?

[00:36:15.670] - Speaker 3

We have pictures of yes map and we never actually went to the station itself. Okay. But we have pictures next to the that's really cool. The map and the tube there.

[00:36:28.650] - Speaker 2

That's really good. Was there anything that you bought silver's wise? Obviously, Beckett likes his hoodies and his books and stuff. Was there anything you and Heather bought in particular?

[00:36:37.730] - Speaker 3

Well, we had to decide. So since we've been married, we've always done magnets, and we have so many magnets that we were like, we need to come up with something new for this trip. And so I think very early on, when we were in York, we found these coasters and we said, oh, coasters. We don't really have coasters in our house, let's do coasters. So we now have they're like, behind me on the coffee table. There must be like 30, 40 coasters from all over the UK, including places in London. So the coasters kind of became our.

[00:37:16.670] - Speaker 2

Yeah, and they're easy to take back because the light is exactly we collect and fridge magnets. So that's brilliant. So I think we'll kind of wrap up rob, that's been brilliant because you've given us a really good kind of is there anything else that you kind of think I've missed out? Because I know I sent you a few questions beforehand. I think we've kind of gone through everything pretty well, and I always ask the one question at the end of when I chat to anybody in the podcast, and I asked you the same question about kind of the overall trip to the UK, but I'm going to ask it for this as well. Is there any tips that you would share from this or your number one tip for anyone visit in London for the first time?

[00:37:59.290] - Speaker 3

Well, something I did write down was and this went for our whole entire trip, and maybe it's because we also had to cancel and postpone our trip several times. We watched a lot of documentaries and films, movies and stuff before we went. And, you know, if you're if you're travelling with kids, you know, depending on their age, they have such a hard time sometimes making connections with, you know, the places you're going. I mean, I don't you know, he's eleven and twelve and I still don't think he fully understands, like, we flew over an ocean and even though he could see it on a map, that's hard, I think, for young kids to comprehend. The other big thing is have a plan, but just be open to not following the plan. Because I'll tell you, my wife, the entire trip, she really enjoyed when we got to London, she was like, oh, yeah, this is different, this is very fast paced, very crowded. It's just a different energy, I think, especially since we had been all around the countryside and in much slower locales beforehand. And like you said, realising that you're going to do a lot of walking and to pace yourself and don't overdo it because you can't enjoy it if you're exhausted and your feet hurt and all that other stuff.

[00:39:28.620] - Speaker 2

No, I think that's really good. What I loved about your trip as well is the fact that you did get the time to you had three weeks to actually explore the UK because you were there for a long time. You didn't just spend your time in London, but even when you were in London for the seven days that you got out to see other things. Yes, because I often say to people in London, London is wonderful, I love London, but it is not representative. It's, like any big city around the world, is not necessarily representative of the country. Majority of people don't live in London. And you'll get, as you travel around the UK, you'll hear different accents. I'm from the north of the UK, so I sound very different from people that live in London or live in Scotland or live in Wales. And I think getting out and actually meeting more people outside of London as well is brilliant. And having the opportunity for Beckett to do that as well, it's brilliant. So when are you coming back?

[00:40:25.050] - Speaker 3

Well, I tell you, we are racking up the miles on our American Airlines credit card. Let me tell you, Tracy, we got a planet, we've got him six more years before he's off to do whatever he's going to do, and so

he really wants to come back. But also, he was very bummed that we did not get out of the UK. He wanted really to go to Paris as well, which at one point was part of our itinerary, but again, starting to think like, oh, gosh, how exhausted are we going to be? We ended up taking that off the itinerary, to his sadness. So the two big things we'd like to do over the next six years is to take them kind of on a train ride around Europe and let him hit kind of the traditional hot spots.

[00:41:37.790] - Speaker 2

Yeah, we did that with our daughter, I think, two years in a row, when she was about, I think, eleven and twelve. And then the next year she said, don't do that again. I just want to go and sit on a beach somewhere.

[00:41:48.050] - Speaker 3

I know. And that's where Heather and I are at right now. We're getting to the point where we just want to go back to England and sit and watch the world go by. So the other big thing is, we'd love to do a Christmas trip. We've never gone anywhere during Christmas, other than locally, and whether it's York or someplace else. Yeah, not necessarily London. I don't think we want to be in London during Christmas, but maybe York and hit London for a day. But we're thinking Christmas next year, christmas 2024, we'll see.

[00:42:28.750] - Speaker 2

Okay, well, we're hoping to get over both of us at the end of the year for Christmas. Actually, I love London at Christmas, it's probably my favourite time to be in London, but, yeah, it is very busy, but it's just magical. And this year, when you saw last year, 2022, all the snow, I was like, oh, get me over to London. I actually looked at flights, look at flights, and I was like, how expensive? I didn't. Anyway, we're going to wrap up this episode, so I want to say thank you so much, Rob, for coming on. And I just want to say to everybody who's listening that I'm going to ask Rob for some photographs from his trip, which he gave me on episode 18. We've got pictures of the Kenneth trip around England and Scotland, so we'll get some pictures of some of the fantastic places that Rob visited in London. And we'll also have links in the show notes for all the places that Rob mentioned in the episode. As always, there, you can find that@uktravelplanning.com episode 28. But that just leaves me to say for this week's episode, thank you very much again, Rob and happy UK travel planning, everybody.