

# **Episode 83 UK Travel Planning Podcast - Transcript**

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## **Intro 00:08**

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

## **Tracy 00:47**

Hi everybody and welcome to episode 83 of the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Yes, I cannot believe it. This is episode 83. It's nearly two years since we started the podcast, so thanks to all of you for tuning in and listening every week. So in this episode, I will just say I'm actually recording this in Wales, where it's a beautiful view out the window but it is pouring down with rain, as Doug and I are house-sitter at the moment.

## **01:11**

But this episode is about getting from London airports into London itself, because we know we get asked all the time I'm going to arrive at Heathrow, I'm going to arrive at Gatwick and I need to get to my hotel. So how do I do that? Which is the easiest way to do it? Now, there are lots of different options and we talk about those on the website, but I don't know about you. But I've got to the point in my life where I just want the easiest option. When I've arrived after a long flight, I'm tired, I'm disorientated. If it's a brand new place that I've never been to before, what do you want? You want to be met and picked up and whisked to your hotel. So that is why we at UK Travel Fund have partnered with Riz from XFA cars to provide this service for you. So this podcast we have got Riz. So hi Riz.

## **Riz 02:01**

Hi everyone. Hi Tracy, Thank you for having me.

## **Tracy 02:04**

So, Riz, I've invited you on to the podcast this week to basically chat about the service that you offer and for all the details about why people should book a transfer, what the benefit of it is and actually what it is that you know. Your company offers people to get from the airport to their hotel and actually all around the UK, because you actually do transfers all over as well. But I thought we would have a chat today about why it is that we work with you guys and what's so special about the service. So would you like to introduce yourself and share a little bit about your background, riz?

## **Riz 02:37**

Yeah, sure, absolutely. So I pride myself pretty much in customer experience or customer journey. I've got nine years in retail and the foundations were built with Enterprise Rental Club, which is where I picked up. Their vision was not just meet customer expectations but exceed them and that kind of stuck with me and in terms of my career path that led me more deeper into customer service. So I was with Vodafone, which the American customers may be familiar with Verizon, so a big sort of share with them and again I was leading customer experience, customer journey. So customer service has been close to my heart from a very, very long time.

## **Riz 03:15**

Even now, I'm contracting as a business analyst and a hybrid project manager, and again, that's all around customer journey. So lo and behold when I think of my own experiences travelling. As you correctly said, and you pointed out, you know, after a long journey, I think what you want is a stress-free experience where all the trouble is taken away from you.

## **Tracy 03:33**

You've put a really valid point there, riz, and it's something that well we've been travelling, certainly in the last few years. You know, I just want to have that VIP experience. I want somebody, when I walk through with my name on a board, will take my luggage, will take me to the car and will whisk me to my hotel, and I don't want any hassle. I just want to be able to know that once I get off the plane I don't have distress. I'm a bit of a stressy person, which people find really funny considering what I do, but I like to be organised, I like to know.

## **04:05**

I mean, doug and I have just come from, you know, three months travelling all around Asia and every time we've had I don't know six flights, but every time we were met at the airport and taken to our hotel. And yes, it may cost a little bit more, but you know you're already spending quite a lot for your vacation anyway. So having that investment when you arrive, to have a smooth, smooth transition from the airport to your hotel, I just don't think it can be. I don't think it's actually valued enough. But I think it, you know it really does and can't make a huge difference to the start of your holiday really.

## **Riz 04:39**

I couldn't agree more. I think it's a different take for different people. In times of where you see the beginning of your holiday, for me personally, it's the moment I touch down, because obviously it might be the moment they check in at the other side, and I don't think there's any more reassuring than getting a greeting or hello or welcome, you know, from the company that's supposed to pick you up or the person you've trusted to be responsible for taking care of you from that moment on this to get you to your hotel or wherever you wanted to go. And, like you said earlier, it's different for everybody. You know, I don't say you get what you get what you pay for, but what I do want to say is, yeah, the elephant in the room for me would be and I hear it all the time Uber is cheaper. And I think I do want to actually call that one. I

say, yeah, uber might be cheaper, and they probably are cheaper in a lot of cases, but but then we're not comparing apples for apples.

05:27

There are two completely different services. I'm not competing with Uber. I am dealing with professional people who are there, who will give you a smile, who will be there with presentable cars as well as themselves. They will communicate with you. They don't leave the stress to you including myself and I'm sure some of the customers that have worked with me in the past already for probably voucher the fact that London doesn't sleep, and neither do I. So you know, you could email me, call me, message me, whatever time of day or night and you'll get a response. That's number one thing guaranteed from me, so you wouldn't ever be left sort of wondering. You know what's happening next. And I don't just do that for the customers. I take pride in what I do. I take pride in the service that I'm trying to deliver. And actually that for me, begins even if you've got a five o'clock pickup, I can assure you at 3.30, I'm speaking to the driver to make sure he's there and it is not there. I've got a pandian place to make sure you will never know what actually happened in the background. So to make all that work, it does take a lot of hard work and commitment and which is why I say you know it's not just about Uber can do this for 50 quid and you want 96.

06:28

Again, it's the fact that the Uber driver won't meet you at the terminal. They might monitor your flights? They won't. You know you you'll order one and you don't know what car is going to turn up, whether your luggage is going to fit in now or not. And, by the way, that's another point I want to speak about.

06:41

What I really want to bring home in terms of the message that I'm trying to deliver there is this this isn't my call on what car you should have. This is really done to you because you're at the advantage as a customer to know what you're bringing with you, what luggage, what size is what, realistically, you know it will fit into. I can only sort of base my judgment on the guidance and didn't expect the largest possible bag that may or may not fit. What I can't do is to assume you're going to bring the smallest to the medium sized bag and it will fit, and then quote you for a service and again promise you the world at the front end and then really sort of ruin your holiday before it's even began, because when out the airport you're tired and the car that turned up isn't quite what you thought you were going to get, or it's. You know there's a misunderstanding in there. So yeah, so I will put them the figures out there for guidance.

07:28

If you feel like you know the customer, feel like actually I can do in a small car, I can adjust with toe, and so by all means, please, I'm at your discretion You're very welcome to say actually I don't want the MPV, I want the smaller car, we'll do it and actually to be honest with you, there's no harm in saying you know I've got a price in mind. This is what I'm thinking because I work with lots of different drivers. Some drivers have different type of vehicles.

Some obviously take pride in the car that they drive, others probably don't. They work more on the finance sort of things. So they will just be practical A to B and if that's what you're looking for, not a problem, I can do that as well. But yeah, I'm more than happy. Where I've got additional sort of comments in the boxes, please let me know. If you got quotes that you're comparing, if you've got a price in mind that you think is more justifiable than what you've got on there, I'm happy to try and work with that. I won't promise that I'm going to be Uber I probably won't, but I will try the closest I can. And having said all of that, these prices are.

**08:23**

Well, they're trapped almost on a daily basis on checking the competitors as well and, just on that note, actually just probably worth mentioning as well. So it's not just a hotel, it's also, you know, an airport to be on hotel beyond London. So, whatever journey you'd like, any bespoke plans you'd like, if you need the driver for the day, for a week, whatever you prefer, you tell me. And it's not even just down to and again, I don't want to quote names, but I just had a, you know, recently that was spiked at the train station. I've got a last minute call saying hey, we've got tickets to France, we can't get there. I've paid for a very expensive hotel. Can you help me and believe it or not? I was on the phone literally within 20 minutes trying to make calls to get driver to drive in France and I unfortunately couldn't do it immediately there and then, because I was also about 150 miles away, and I said actually I can come later today myself.

**09:11**

I'll be more than happy to. So this is what I mean by that specialist sort of bespoke service that's built around your needs as a customer. So, yeah, I'll do wherever I can or wherever it takes to make sure that my experiences are great for you, not just at the point of seeing you before and after. I'm fully committed to your experience.

**Tracy 09:29**

I think as well as you've made some really really important points that I think you know people need to consider when they are booking.

**09:37**

I think particularly the cars in the UK are smaller than perhaps you may be used to in an Australia and North America. They are much smaller so that the boot space or trunk space is not necessarily going to fit in all the luggage. And I think that is something really important to consider because I know in the past we have had comments where people have said oh, you know, there's five adults and we've got eight suitcases and three bags and we've got a cheaper quote. But actually, potentially, what you've got a quote for is one car that isn't going to fit all your luggage. So, yes, you may be able to fit four adults in a car, but can you fit four adults plus the luggage in a car as well? So what actually might happen is they turn up to pick you up, can't fit you in, so you have to have a second car anyway, which doubles the amount that you had planned to pay. And I think that's important because you go into those details, don't you Riz with people.

## **Riz 10:29**

I mean the form is designed to effectively ask anything that you know. I think that couldn't become a blocker for that journey not being able to take place as planned. And I think you know, just to mention, actually also nowadays not only do we get a smaller version of the car that you might get across the pond, but also, with the hybrid cars and the plug-in hybrids, we get less boot space as well. So I try to be as generous as I can when I say those numbers, and I know it sounds shocking to say one large bag and two small bags, but again you know that's again a subjective what is large bag to you? What is large bag to me? What I can't do is say two large bags and then suddenly we start. So I think probably enough for me to set on on the luggage side.

## **11:10**

I don't get anything out of, you know, misquoting anybody or telling you you need a bigger car when you don't. Because actually I'd rather not lose your business just because I've outpriced the quote that you were expecting, but I'd rather be realistic. As you said earlier, I don't want to be there at the airport saying, right, let's order another car and I thought that's going to cost you. Because, again, I think that's the last thing you probably want to hear when you've got already a mindset of you've landed and you're sort of you know, reasoning yourself in the hotel and not, you know, sitting in another car to your right.

## **Tracy 11:40**

If your flight is delayed, say, say half an hour, and it takes you a little bit longer to get out through immigration and everything, collect your bags, go through immigration, all that sort of stuff that you've got to do. We know that some companies, if you will only wait a certain length of time before then they add charges on. So how long do you do your gas wait?

## **Riz 11:57**

So I don't believe in charging you for the job and then just disappearing because it's seen as the time's up, so there's no time up, if I could sort of say that out loud. What I do mean by that is we believe and we work on reasonable sort of you know measures here. So we say, okay, we've looked at the flight monitoring, so we monitor your flight at no cost to you, even in the economy, even though you're not paying for that part of it. But we monitor in the sense that we make sure it is still arriving. The difference, of course, is we keep an eye on it until we wait for you to let us know that you're ready to be picked up in terms of economy and electricity, so you will never be left stranded not being picked up because you know your flight is delayed or was taken longer. What we do try to do is make contact with you from the moment your flight lands and hopefully we're hoping that you know we can get through, whether it's by phone, by message or however means that might be. I do request customers to sign up onto the Wifi which is available for your charge, and again, it just makes that use of communication, which is why I request the phone number up front so that we can attract as much as possible, both before and after I do land it. So what I do is I, sort of reasonably speaking, I give half an hour from the time the plane has landed and then I instruct the driver to go in, and then I've always, always, paid the driver at least one hour's worth of parking. So

that gives us peace of mind of minimum half an hour and a half of the driver's time that they've committed to already.

**13:22**

Now, if and so far that hasn't happened, but if there was a situation where we know we've just found out this is going to be completely different situation now it's going to take a lot longer. I'm happy for that driver to either agree to wait longer. I will communicate with the driver. If they cannot, I will, of course, you know, rearrange another driver, which is what can be. So that's part of why you're paying the price that you're paying. And again, my promise to you is you wouldn't be left stranded. You wouldn't be left, you know, because it's now been an hour and I've not seen you the hours as a guide to say listen, we'll easily, happily wait, we'll be happy waiting an hour. We expect that we anticipate that. I've had people come out in 15 minutes and then I've had somebody take an hour and a half, so it does vary depending on how much luggage you're carrying, what the queues are at the other side of immigration, if you've got a biometric passport or not. All these things are taken into consideration.

**Tracy 14:11**

Absolutely. I know I've landed at Heathrow and got through very quickly. It depends, if you land and there's lots of other large flights coming in at the same time, it can be a bit hectic and take longer. So you've got all those factors in. But the thing is, if you know, if you know you guys are at the other side, you know that you can. You don't have to be panicked and worrying and thinking oh, that's my lift gone, I'm not. How am I going to get to my hotel? It's, it's that stress has gone.

**Riz 14:34**

And and actually just to add on to that. So you know, I've got people who are making the reservations for the arrival of the flight time and then some are panicking, thinking I shouldn't put that time down because it's going to take me longer. In all honesty, the moment I have a flight number, that's all I need. It gives me a guide to say, okay, the driver will be on standby looking at that flight. I will be monitoring it.

**14:54**

I've had a customer moment very recently again, I don't want to call him names, but thank you because you know who you are and their flight was due to arrive at 9.20am and then it was delayed till 8pm. And this is what I mean by. You know. I got an email at three in the morning because they were, you know, stranded at the airport because they couldn't fly on the the plan day, and they said you know if you can make arrangements, and I was back in touch with them and we arranged for the drivers to be there. I was there, met them myself, actually. So it's just both sort of things where we will go out of our way to make sure not just meet your expectations but exceed them.

## **Tracy 15:27**

I just want to also just say, because we we have had quite a few of the Facebook community members who have booked your service and we've had some wonderful feedback, so I'm actually just going to read a couple out. So this is going to make your head swell. Thanks for the recommendation, Tracy. Seven of us flew into London a few weeks ago from Australia after a very long flight and, believe me, I know how long that flight is. Riz and his colleagues were there to take us to accommodation. Riz was lovely and so helpful throughout the whole booking process. We are very happy with the service. Thanks, Riz and Tracy. That's from Vanessa, and then we have another one.

## **16:00**

Just want to say a huge thanks and give a very strong recommendation for Riz of Ex for cars for anyone's airport transfer needs. All was exactly as advertised and the peace of mind was absolute. Riz personally met us and picked us up right outside the exit from Baggage Heathrow and delivered us to the front of our hotel without any issues, despite a couple of rather large suitcases. We could have considered their Elizabeth line and then looked into a further car needed to take us from the end of the Elizabeth line to our hotel and decided the extra cost was very worthwhile and the end more time efficient to book with Riz. So such a positive, friendly and informative experience, nothing too much short Thanks to the Scroop and Tracy for putting us onto him.

## **16:38**

Five stars from this traveling couple We've had to say wonderful feedback, very professional, vip, lovely service, somebody you can depend on. Take that stress away when you land at the airport. So, Riz, we ask this question to everybody at the end of the podcast. But what is your one tip for anybody arriving or traveling into London for the first time?

## **Riz 17:00**

Wow, I should be better prepared for this one. The one tip I'd say is well, bring a jacket, first of all, and an umbrella, secondly. People are super friendly and if you need anything, please do not hesitate to ask. You'll find people will go out the way to help you. If they feel like you know, they see that you're obviously not quite at home, they will make sure that they are welcoming, and the same goes for me. Nothing is too much trouble, very overspoken, whatever you need. Imagine you were there before you even arrived in London and you needed something done. If I'm available, you may shout. I'd be more than happy to try and do wherever we can to make that work for you. So, yeah, don't forget your umbrellas and your jackets. Even though it might be sunny outside, don't trust the UK weather.

## **Tracy 17:48**

It's rather rainy at the moment, isn't it? We've had rather a lot of rain over the last week or so, unfortunately. Thanks so much, Riz, for coming on this week's episode of the podcast. We actually have an article which links to your website so people can actually book directly with you. But if you want to read a little bit more about Riz, there'll be the show notes for this

episode and also links to our article. So to [uktravelplanet.com](http://uktravelplanet.com), forward slash episode 83. For this week, I have to say it's been fantastic talking to you, Riz, so thanks so much for coming on.

### **Riz 18:19**

Thank you. Thank you, Tracey, Hopefully see you again soon.

### **Tracy 18:21**

Oh, thanks again, Riz. All that leaves me to say is my usual tagline at the end of each podcast happy UK travel planning from me, Thank you.