

Exploring the UK from Land's End to John O'Groats: Mandy's Epic Journey (Episode 103)

Welcome to episode 103 of the UK Travel Planning podcast

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 towns.

Tracy: Hi and welcome to episode 103 of the UK Travel Planning podcast. This week I am joined by guest Mandy, travel lover and blogger who is here to share her trip report from the UK. For those of you who listen to our other podcast, the global Travel planning podcast, you will recognise Mandy's voice because she was an episode 19 last month sharing about her global travels. Mandy loves inspiring others to have a go and step outside the comfort zone and just say yes. She's a very experienced traveller and has been all over the world, I think every single continent and 66 countries. And she's really inspiring to talk to. So in this episode, I started off by asking Mandy to introduce herself and give us a little bit of information about her background before we started talking about her trip to the UK.

Mandy stumbled across your podcast whilst walking her dog

Okay, so, Mandy, would you like to introduce yourself, tell us where you live and how you heard all about UK travel planning, please.

Mandy: Well, hello. Thank you for having me on. my name is Mandy, my husband's Trevor. We've been together for 36 years now and, we've just really cracked on with our travelling now. So we're from the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, and very recently retired and we've just ramped up our travels and I stumbled across your podcast whilst walking my dog and I got sick of listening to music and I wanted to learn stuff. So all my young grandkids and kids all say, learn stuff, mum. So I did, I just turned something on, thought listen to something about the UK, want to learn about where we're going? And, I got onto this one lot and I didn't like them at all. They swore all the time and they were just nasty. So at the end of theirs, your podcast popped up and I just continued on listening to it and I went, well, hello, hello, hello, I think I will listen to these guys. And I just, I listened to everything and some of them twice and I took notes and this is all just every hour, walking my dog in the morning and I just came back completely empowered for our trip.

Tracy: Oh, that's so lovely to hear as well. we just love it and I love talking to Australians as well, and all Americans out there as well. I love you talking to you guys as well, but Mandy's from very close to where I live in Australia, so I think we were kind of destined to meet as well, because we're very alike, aren't, we? We've managed to have a few conversations and I'm like, yeah, we're kind of like sole travel mates, I reckon.

Mandy: I agree.

By the end of this year, you'll be on every continent

Tracy: So let's talk about. Because you're actually going to be coming onto my global travel planning podcast. I'm going to put a shout out to that in this one as well. to talk all about your travels all around the world, because by the end of this year, you'll be on every continent.

Mandy: That's correct. Actually, it was at the end of, 2019, we'd finished, doing all the continents, and then Covid shut us down completely. and that gave us a chance to actually do some work around the house because we were spending all our time and energy, travelling, which was great. This is what we like to do. Then we came home and went, oh, wow, that pool needs water in it. Now. Let's put some money into the house. But, yes, all seven continents. And then by the time this year's finished, we would have done 66 countries together.

Tracy: Oh, that's amazing. That's amazing.

Mandy had a seven week holiday to the UK last year

Well, this episode, we're going to concentrate on your trip to the UK. So how long were you in the UK for, Mandy? And give us a brief overview. I know you were there for quite a while, but give us a brief overview of your itinerary.

Mandy: Okay, so we had a seven week holiday from during September through to early November last year, 23. And, my first goal, I like doing. I like getting to the top or the bottom or the east or the west of places like the most westerly point or the most southerly point. So I thought, let's do the end to end thing, because I heard about. That's a thing, the end to end. So land's end is a common place to go, obviously. But I'm

a real lighthouse fiend and I wanted. I found that it was just John O'groats. It was Dunathead Lighthouse, which is the tip of Scotland. So I thought, okay, and we're Aussies, so I thought it's only, I don't know, 700 and something miles. That's just like a day's work and for Aussies driving, so. But you throw everything else in between, we'll turn it into seven weeks. And as well, we also had three sets of friends that we had met on previous holidays that we wanted to go up and stay with them. And particularly we spent a week in Wales with our welshy friends who we met on a cruise to Russia a few years ago. So we've kept in contact with all our little travel family, which I love, and, Facebook's really good for that. So we keep in touch and then hopefully they come over to see us and then we go over to see them. So we threw in an end to end goal, three lots of friends and turned into a seven week adventure. I had a friend of mine who did a two week bus tour, so I, I printed out the photo of her map that she went on and it had a really good guide of general stops to go to, you know, New Yorks and your Edinburghs and Inverness and Chester and Southampton and all that. So I just added what I wanted to do and from then, I then got onto your podcast or your website and downloaded all those wonderful documents which made me realise that I can't do it all. And we laughed the other day about I was driving or coming down from Gretna Green down towards York and I said to my husband, I think we can just swing by the Lake District on our way. And I looked at the map and it's kind of like, I don't think we can. So Tracy and I, we laughed about one does not swing by the lake district to add to the day. So, I use your podcast advice to say we can't always fit everything in. So I had everything written down of what the main things I wanted to see and the things I'd like to fit in if possible. And that's a really good way of organising it. So the things that I wanted to see, we didn't miss out on. And we got to add lots of cool things to it as well, as well as our friends adding stuff that we never even knew about. Wales was just done on a whim. We were theirs for seven days and they just took us to castles and, horse drawn boat rides and, up snowdonia Mountain Railway and Brecon beacon train, trips.

It was just magical. Wales is awesome.

Tracy: It's brilliant. Yes. Doug spent a bit of time in Wales, last year, I think he went and did some stuff in north Wales and then we were doing, we were house sat in Wales in January this year, which was really, really lovely.

Most of your trip was done by car so most of it was driven

So, okay, so you planned your trip, you had your idea where you wanted to go. You're, doing the end to end thing. So you're going from M. land's end to the northernmost point of mainland Britain and Scotland. Obviously there's islands further north and that the Orkneys and Shetlands, if you want to go even that bit further north, but then to ends are basically, lands end to John O groats. So we've done that as well. And it's a nice thing to do, isn't it? So how did you decide how you were going to get around the UK?

Mandy: Right, so we flew into London and spent a few days in London. And what was really cool, we stayed. We'll get to the accommodation part next, I think, where we stayed there, that was really, really quaint. But, we basically, just, after a few days there, jumped on a train, or first of all, London. We pay passed our way around London very, very easily. I didn't buy any train cards because I didn't think we were going to use them that much. We were going to hire a car for most of the trip. So we just paid pass with my visa card. It was just on, off. And the station guards and everyone by every station was super, super helpful. They told us what, the Elizabeth line or the northern line, and you just follow the arrows. It was really, really easy and really quick. Taxis, too much traffic, too expensive. the trains were great. So we just did that for a few days. And then we

headed south, just to Surrey, which is a little bit out, bit south. And then from then we were with friends, and then we hired a car from their place. Actually, no, no, from Southampton. From Southampton. We then went to, We did Stonehenge, and then made our way through Devon down to land's end. From land's end, all still by hire cars. We went up through bath and then the Cotswolds, and then we got to Cardiff, where we had seven days with friends. So we ditched the hire car. And then from, after there, we went a, train from Chester to York. And that's when all our trouble hit. Because do you remember when all those storms were hitting Scotland? I suppose it happens all the time, but there were really big storms. And we got on a train in York to head to Edinburgh. No, to Inverness. We're going all the way to Inverness. And we got on the train and they just said, go home, turn around, abandon all hope. You're not going any further than Edinburgh. And was like, oh, no. I had tickets the following day on the jacobite train. And I was gutted. So we got stranded in Edinburgh for a few days, and we just had to change plans. So we then picked up another hire car. From there we went Fort William, isle of Skye, picked up the north coast 500, which is the. I've never heard of that until your podcasts. And we love driving. My husband's a really good driver, so the narrow roads, dodging sheep and the, and the stone walls didn't perturb him at all. He loved it, was a challenge, he thought, especially when it said, you're supposed to do maybe 60 miles an hour, he goes, I'm doing 16 miles an hour. So we got all the way up, we did sky, we went all the way up to Orkney, almost to Orkney. Couldn't get across, the waves were too big. Then we made it all the way back down to, Edinburgh, and further south. And we only caught a train back to London when we were in York, so most of it was done by car. And we found enterprise car rental, a really fabulous car company. They gave us upgrades, we got an automatic every time. And they changed when we had to change our destinations because the weather. So that was very, very good. And they were really affordable. So that's a big plug for them. They were terrific. So we drove lots.

Tracy: That's good.

You took some train journeys, so you enjoyed being on the trains

And I know you took some train journey, so you did the journey from York down to London on the train and then from, Oh, trying to think what you said now to York, from Chester to York, was that what you said?

Mandy: Yes, Chester to York, York to Edinburgh, then pretty much York back to London. Those were the three main ones and the rest was all by car.

Tracy: Okay, that's good to know. So you enjoyed that? Enjoyed being on the trains? Duke's gonna ask me if you asked me that, so I'll have to ask.

Mandy: You love trains. My husband is a train fiend, so anytime we could get on a steam train, we were boots, and all for that one. And it gave him a chance to look out the window or stare out the window with his eyes closed, because he's a good sleeper. But, it was a nice rest to get on the trains. And here's a tip. You buy a first class ticket, don't have lunch in Starbucks before you get on the train because they feed you on the train. Didn't know that one. yeah, that's.

Tracy: That's so true. That's so true.

Mandy went on a seven-week tour of Britain and Scotland

So you obviously, you travelled all the way around. You went England, Wales, Scotland, back down. So what are the standout places that you stayed in? Because I know we've chatted about that you like kind of quirky. Different places to stay.

Mandy: Yeah. Well, when I was 18, I did a Kontiki tour of Britain and it was called a concept tour. And every two days we stayed in something different. We even stayed in a youth hostel. Then we stayed in canal boats or a castle. So I've always had that in mind, that I like to have something different. And I believe sometimes the overnight journey or when you get to a place, can be part of your vacation, not just a hotel night, and then you go somewhere the next day. So, stand outs were, I booked everything on bookings.com or airbnb. I try to have everything with a free cancellation up to a point in case you need to change plans. And, it worked a treat. We stayed in a castle in Devon. We stayed in a longboat in London, which was probably our favourite. It was the most uncomfortable, but it was gorgeous. And it was so uniquely different to our life here in Australia. So finding it in the dark all the way from an Emirates flight was quite hilarious. But it was tranquil and beautiful. And you just have the ducks on swans going past you in the morning and then you just walk to the train station. It was five minutes. It was really good. we stayed in a converted jail cell in Fort William. My husband was really impressed with that. It was bunk beds and bars, but it was a classic. And I thought this a memory, you know, those things are fun. You know, you immerse yourself physically into something and it's much more memorable, I believe. and from there we went to a log cabin on sky. So that was, ah, ah, two little log cabins in a guy's backyard, virtually in dunvegan overlooking the lake. It was. And we had seals outside. It was amazing. And, Yeah, just salmon landing right at the top near John O groats was beautiful. They don't even allow kids there because it's right on the cliff. And, it was just terrific to do quirky places. But I do recommend ground floor units if you can possibly think ahead because you're lugging all your suitcases up and down three or four or five flights of

stairs. And at the end of seven weeks, I think luggage was probably just my least favourite thing in the world. I just so sick of living out a suitcase. We packed too much. That's always a tip of pack less, pack less, but, cute places, lots of steps, so pack less. And, think outside the square sometimes it's pretty much the similar sort of price. Half the time, if you look around okay, that's great.

Tracy: Well, and also I'll get the names of those places that you stayed at as well, Mandy, because I can put those in the show notes. So if you're thinking, oh, I like the sound of that prison, we'll put that in the show notes.

What were your favourite places and your favourite experiences during your trip

So let's go back to the places that you visited and what were your favourite places and your favourite experiences? Because I'm kind of all centred, kind of the experiential travel. What is it that you experience that you're always going to remember?

Mandy: I think, we, loved St. Michael's mount down there, down the bottom near Penzance. that was probably even one of our first castles, but also the best. It was such a beautiful, display, like how it's just been restored and everything, and just getting across there, either walking one day and then boating the next because the tide was in or out. and then from that day, that afternoon, we went to the Minack theatre. And honestly, I think I booked it over breakfast and we got in. It was the last show of this particular play. My husband has never seen a live play before. He think he'd rather, you know, not do a play. And, he loved it. But the funny thing was the drive to the Minack theatre. I thought the Minack theatre, I heard that was just on the sides of the cliffs near

Cornwall. And I thought, okay, well, it's just Cornwall's just Cornwall. Cornwall's massive. And, this drive up to Minack theatre took ages. It was just donkey, tracks. And we thought we were in the middle of nowhere. And then you see a little tiny sign saying Minak, theatre car park. And you were there at the top of the cliffs. And, nowhere. Anything else for miles around. And halfway down the cliff is this theatre and sort of the, amphitheatre, seats carved into the side. And it was just a highlight. We had gorgeous weather. We were really blessed for the first half of our trip with really, really good weather. So, it was amazing. That was a highlight. another highlight would have been most definitely in Wales. The Snowdonia mountain railway going up. it's steep and they just either have a steam train or a diesel. Push your, carriage, up the mountain, and then you see all the mountain bike guys pushing their bikes up and you think, oh, sucks to be you when I'm looking out the window. Because we were really comfortable. That was hard. They would be pushing it up for three or 4 hours, was to ride all the way back down. However, when we did Ben Nevis, you can catch a cable car, about two thirds of the way up. and they get to put. The mountain bikers get to put their bikes on the back of the cable car and just ride down. Now, even I could have done that, but I probably wouldn't because I'd kill myself. But, there's so many fun things there. And then on the same day that we did the Snowdonia Mountain railway, of course, obviously in Wales, we then drove and did a horse drawn longboat ride along the canals in Llangollen or something like that. It's very hard to pronounce welsh names. You need to buy a vowel. And, that was beautiful. I love horses, I own horses, so doing a heavy horse. Tracy's laughing at this. And, along canal was just brilliant. And then from then we drove further and we did a, aqueduct. Ah, canal. Ah, boat across a really tall aqueduct, which is something I really wanted to do. And then also in Carnarfen, we went and stayed really close to the Carnarfon castle. We had two nights in a hotel that was, built in 1522. And we had a ghost, appearance. Not appearance, but a ghost experience. One night in one of the rooms with, we're staying in, and Trevor and I both woke up and thought, did that

really happen? That we. Twice during the night, we thought we heard something. I heard footsteps and a click of a door, and we felt a presence. And then when we walked downstairs the next morning, I said to the lady at the desk, I said, is this place haunted? And she said, which room are you in? And I thought, okay, well, that's a yes to me. And we still had one more night. I thought, oh, no, what are we going to do? But nothing happened. The following night, we were safe. But if you're ever going to have a ghost story, why not have it in a, four or 500 year old Castle Inn? Hey, what do you reckon?

Tracy: Oh, absolutely. I probably wouldn't have stayed the next night. I will just have to tell you that.

Mandy: Oh, funny.

Tracy: I'm a chicken. I'm a chicken. I've told you that. No, that would be, that'd be enough for me. The first night, I wouldn't have slept. The lights would have been on. I would have been sitting up in bed, I would have woken up dog. I would have been like, right, something's going on here. Next night, I would have checked out, would be running miles away going, no, we're not staying there. In fact, that is one of the reasons I actually, don't stay in a castle. love to, but I kind of go. And every time I think about booking it, I go, no, Tracey, you won't sleep. So not a good idea.

Mandy: I think it's funny because, you know, the house that we live in now and the house that we lived in before we built both houses, so this. Unless there's a sacred site under our ground, we're pretty cool. And no one's lived in our house. So this was very new to live in very old places for us. Very, very new. We're brave.

Tracy: Yeah. All that. They're spooky and creaky floorboards and, No, no, not for me.

Did you take any tours when you were there? Yeah, we did

So did you do. I know you didn't plan a lot of this yourself and used a lot of our resources to help you do that, but did you take any tours when you were there?

Mandy: Yeah, we did. We did. Yeah. As you say, we did a lot of touring ourselves and I did a lot of research at home. Even m booking things and looking, into opening times is really essential, too, because we were there in late autumn at the end of it, and a lot of these castles close. so we made sure, like, even, Howard Castle. Castle Howard in York, that was going to be closed on our way back. So we made sure we saw it on the way up. But tour wise, listening, to your podcast, I heard about the walking pub tour in London, so we were down for that. That was really great. And we actually had tickets to the Lion King that night. So it actually delivered us around lyceum theatre at the end of it. So that was really great. Perfect timing. And then, we did on our last night was Guy Fawkes night was our last night in London, and we did a jack the Ripper tour. I wanted to do a key ceremony and we have a friend, one of the guys that we stayed with, he's a former scots guard, and he was trying. He got us into Windsor Castle for nothing. And he was trying to get us into the key ceremony as well. but because it was Guy Fawkes night, there was a private function and he couldn't get us in. But, he had so many great stories taking us around, Windsor castle. He actually had the honour of standing vigil for the queen when she was lying in state at Westminster Abbey. He was one of the guards at one. You know, he had two shifts of standing there and he said he was so nervous and just like, little stories. Wow. He wouldn't have gotten that from a. From a book or a guide. But, And then we also. What else we do? We, oh, we did the London bake. The big bake or something. I heard that on one of my, listening to your podcast, I heard one of your readers, talk about that. And we're great british Bake off junkies, I can tell you. We have seen every episode maybe twice. And, so we were down for that.

That was our second night in London. So the first night we did the Lion King, and the second night in the evening, we did the bake off tent, which was so much fun. And we even came third. And it was one of those cases that if you had a look at the cake online and then you had a look at the actual cake that we made, it was one of those nailed it moments, as in, no, it was, That was a really fun thing to do. And we did an outlander, ah, tour as well, out of Inverness, which was great because we were kind of outlander fans. And I'm not. I'm not ashamed to say I was an outlander fan. And that's what really got us to learn so much about Scotland and about Culloden. And I've never heard of Culloden, and I'm a Crawford. And one of the things that we, did, was seek out, our Crawford castle. So our clan castle, which, is in ruins near Moffat in, ah, sort of like the lowlands of Scotland. And, that was very emotional to find the Crawford graveyard and to, go through the old castle that William Wallace even conquered at one stage because his mother was a Crawford. So I did a lot of research, and when I got back home from walking the dog, I just go straight to your website and everything was there that I needed to know. All the links that I needed to know were right there, so away. And so I booked it and then read more about it. It's fantastic. So you get to look forward to it and it's all sorted.

Tracy: That's brilliant. And also, I'll just let you know at the moment as well, Mandy, because I know you're a big outlander fan, is that I'm actually talking to Charlotte from Edinburgh black cab tours, who actually knows Sam, Heughan. And she's going to be coming on to talk about all things Outlander.

Mandy: I'm down for that. That's so good. You know, we did. We went to, Lally Brock and we went to Dune Castle and everything that was, you know, it was just terrific. And everybody else, there was one guy on our tour that he said, I don't even watch Outlander. But I thought this could be fun because you guys are crazy.

Tracy: Oh, that's brilliant. That's good, right?

I'm going to go food, because you kind of mentioned it on podcast

I'm going to change the topic from two. I'm going to go food, because you kind of mentioned it when you did that. They did the pub food. So what were your favourite foods? Were there any standout foods that you went, oh, wow. Stand out places that you ate that you went, oh, my goodness, I can't wait to go back, you know?

Mandy: What?

Tracy: What did he enjoy?

Mandy: Well, my husband loves a roast dinner, so he was always looking forward to, a Sunday lunch. And from learning on your podcast that you have to book Sunday lunches, Sunday roast. You're not going to just walk in, because you're not going to get it at nighttime. Know that much. It's a lunchtime thing. So we were staying with friends and they took us to Winchester, which is. Winchester was really interesting because that was a former capital of England at one stage. And it's got the big, cathedral or church there that's got the knights of the round table, on the wall. That was great. I digress. There was a wickham arms, pub right nearby, and that had the best, roast dinner on the planet. It was our first, but we've had them during, and that was still the best. It was just everyone had something different, but it was really good. Then there was, Trevor loves a cornish pasty. He wanted to try a cornish pasty. And we were within a couple of probably five minutes of leaving the, vicinity of Cornwall on our way out, and was like, we haven't had a pasty in Cornwall yet. And, so we pulled over to a service

station, and there was Warren's, pastry shop or pie. Warren's pies. And Trevor had the biggest, most beautiful, golden, cornish pasty there. And it still was the best that he had. So if there was ever a Warrens, and especially if you're driving, it's fantastic, you're going to get a great cornish pasty. scones. Okay. You've got to have your jam on the bottom, cream on the top. But we came across two different people that had the opposite, but we found lemon curd, and the clotted cream is just next level. That was so good. And as far as not liking something, in Scotland, I had a deep fried Mars bar and a deep fried fruit mince pie. And it was. Oh, m sorry. I had one bite just to know that I'd never ever, ever eat that again. Why destroy a perfectly good chocolate bar? It was gross, but it was fun. And the guys, when we ordered it, I said, this is the first time I've ever had this and this is going to go home to Australia on what I write about because this is, gross. Not yours, just the idea. So that's. But each their own. It's unique. It's unique that you've done, you've done.

Tracy: More than me because I've never tried one before. I mean, I don't like the fruit mince pies anyway. Yuck. But definitely wouldn't want to deep fry a mars m bar. I mean, no, no thanks. So, I mean, you took a step further than me that I've looked and went, no.

Mandy: I'm game. I have a tattoo on my inner arm that just says, just say yes. And so maybe when it comes to a deep fried ice cream, I'm, just going to put a piece of basking tape over there and I just say no.

Tracy: I just cover it up.

Mandy says when you're travelling, think about how much you take

So I'm going to ask you about tips and I know you're going to talk about, packing. and I think that's, that's a key, a key tip, that you've already said actually is when you're travelling, really think about how much you take with you. So I'm going to ask you to save you save your number one tip to the last question, if you can do that, Mandy. because I love to end my podcast with that particular question, but, let's talk a little bit about your packing and what you would give to anybody who is going to the UK. I mean, you went for a long time, so you had to think carefully about what you were taking.

Mandy: Yeah, yeah. And we were going through, late, coming into autumn. So, it was going to be cold and layers and, you know, we Aussies, we just. Trevor, just, when he goes out, he just brings out his best pair of thongs to wear on his feet. So we had to really think about shoes and walking hiking boots. so just like one pair of runners and one pair of flip flops and one pair of hiking boots and a long jacket that can roll up. But I always say, too, that if you don't want to look the same, like, I think the last couple of weeks in Scotland, I look the same. I just had jeans and layers. Ah, thermals and my rib jumper and a jacket. I look the same in every photo. So I started to buy a couple of scarves. I bought a London scarf, which I really love. And, just have. What I say to ladies is just put five silk or nylon scarves in your bag. They pack down to nothing, weigh nothing, and they can make you look different in every photo that was. I mean, it's kind of like after seven weeks, you know, if you want to look, we've got photos on our wall where I'm from, different holidays, and Trevor's wearing the same thing. They could be years apart.

Another tip is to check opening times for places before booking a holiday

All right, another. Another tip.

Tracy: Comfortable, Mandy, you go.

Mandy: So another one, which I said before, is just cheque opening times for places, even restaurants on the isle of Skye. We were there on a Sunday and Monday and I read that a lot of the restaurants aren't, open on Sundays and Mondays. So I booked something, six weeks in advance, which is for a little tiny place, seemed silly, but it was packed because everyone around there knew that they were going to be. Everything else was closed and you can always cancel. So look at those things. And same with castles or attractions, is to, look at their opening times and whether or not they're closed for the season, because they do, especially further north you go. They do tend to shut down. And another thing that I did, I actually bought an Australian national heritage card to get into places, cheaply. So it worked around England a treat. There's a lot of places with this Australian one that actually works with many countries around the world, not just Great Britain. So I think even, the first two times it already paid for itself. And it means that when I get home, I can still use it in Australia instead of just on the one holiday. Because sometimes the localised heritage cards are only good for two weeks and we were there for two months. So, that was a good tip. That saved us money and it was not very useful in Scotland because Scotland likes their own things and they had their own heritage thing. So I don't mind, I don't mind paying entry into these places because it's not expensive and it keeps the upkeep. It all goes to a good cause. That's cool. And to be flexible, I think that's another tip, is to be flexible. Don't lose your nana if something gets cancelled or if, the weather gets in the way. You just need to have. That's when I say book, refundable accommodation. As long as you're within, outside of the 24 hours period, you can cancel. So be flexible and, go with the flow. Sometimes it's travelling. Smile.

Tracy: Oh, I totally agree with all of those. I mean, I always say that to people, you never know. We always book free cancellation with accommodation. So many times it's just saved us when we've got sick or we've changed plans or we just want to have some flexibility to do that.

Mandy says pack less and pay for parking everywhere on your UK holiday

So those are really great, tips, Mandy, but I'm going to ask you, what would be your number one tip for somebody visiting the UK for the first time? Well, the number one thing that you should say you've learned from your trip, that you would say this is what you need to keep in your mind.

Mandy: Well, I actually forgot a couple things, so I will end with the number one, which I've kind of mentioned before, but also the speeding fines. You make sure that if you're driving, don't go over the limit. There's cameras everywhere. And to pay your parking, we got given like a 70 Australian dollar fine at Land's End when there wasn't a car in sight and it was about five minutes to five, we thought, oh, we didn't even see the car parking sign, so we forgot. So pay for parking everywhere. That's a big one. Otherwise that's going to really add up. But my biggest tip, which I did mention, I think, is pack less. It's a motto that I need to put on our suitcases and I've always said lay it all out on your bed and then halve it and, figure out just a couple of nice things. But for two months, we still pack too much. So we get ourselves down to a medium sized suitcase and a carry on for a trip that long. And if you go into cold weather, there's nothing much else you can do because you need jackets and you need a pair of boots and stuff. I can't ever think of doing a whole holiday on cheque in luggage on, like, one bag.

Especially out of Australia, they're very, very strict with a seven kilo bag and I see some people, they got backpacks and carry and they come on with three bags. Not in Australia, you know, so we're used to that. We're used to the, luggage guards. Very, very tough. So, but at the end of the day, you don't want to be lugging all those up the stairs, you don't want to be lugging them in and out of your boot, of your car and on and off trains really quickly or having to put them high up on a luggage rack on trains. So be mindful of that. Just do yourself a favour and pack less. If at the end of the day, buy another jacket and tie it around, you know, just buy a jacket over there if you're missing something, which better than taking stuff that you don't need, buy it if you do need it. It's not the end of the world. If you paid all that money to get there, you can afford another jacket.

Tracy: 100%. No, 100%. That's so true. And there are great shops, even if you, you know, for toiletries, for medical stuff and boots, chemists, there's just so you don't have to take everything because you can go buy loads.

Mandy: Poundland for glasses. I found Poundland. It's like a dollar shop. And, we got glasses, Lena, those reading glasses that used to be \$1.99 in Australia, now they're \$25. Kind of like the ones I'm wearing at the moment. They're at \$1.99. Poundland. It was fantastic. and you get panadol and Urofen if you. My husband just had a new knee put in ten weeks before this holiday, so we needed to get some pain relief and things like that. Those places are just great to stock up on those things. Don't bother bringing that from home. Find a poundland.

Tracy: Ha. Perfect. That's perfect.

Mandy has a blog called Spending Kids Inheritance about bucket list destinations

So, Mindy, thank you so much for agreeing to come on the podcast. I'm just going to also give a shout out for the fact that you have your own blog. So just want to give us a quick chat about your blog and where people can find it.

Mandy: Excellent, thank you. I started a blog back in about 2018 and it's called Spending Kids Inheritance. My son came up with a name because he said, well, mum, what do you think you're doing? Oh, okay. Spendingkidsinheritance.com is my domain name, so if you google that, you will find, on my blog and it's all about bucket list destinations and, you know, I've climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and I've swum with sharks and we've done Machu picchu and Galapagos and, petra and all those fun things and we've got Mozambique at the end of this year and we've got Iceland and Greenland coming up in a month's time. So I love writing, I love talking, as you can hear. So, come on and have a look. There's lots of great photos because I really, have a lot of good time just taking photos. And I'm just an iPhone girl, so, I'm no pro, but I'm a chatterbox and I like to write about living life the best you can. Actually, I've got a tattoo on my other arm that says adventure before dementia. That's me.

Tracy: Oh, that's perfect, Mandy. And, as I say, we're just about. After this, we're going to record an episode of the Global Travel Planning podcast. So I will put a link in the show notes for this episode as well. So if you want to hear more from Mandy about her amazing travels all around the world, pop over and take a listen to that episode because we're going to be talking about some of the fantastic places that she's been. And I've had a good look around her website and ah, yesterday, watching the videos of, the migration at the Maasai Mara was just fabulous. Absolutely fabulous. So that's now

on my to visit list next year.

Mandy: Excellent. Excellent. Thank you, Tracy, for having me on and it's a blast I love. I will continue listening to all your podcasts and anytime I can help and have a chat, I'm happy to. And thank you for everything you do for all of us, for nothing. Thank you. You're a blessing.

Tracy: Thanks, Mandy. It's been so lovely to chat to you. Brilliant. Thank you for tuning in to this week's episode of the UK travel Planning podcast. As always, show notes can be found@uktravelplanning.com if you've enjoyed the show, why not leave us feedback via text or a review on your favourite podcast app? We love to hear from you and you never know. You may receive a shout out in a future episode. But as always, that, just leaves me to stay until next week. Happy UK travel planning.