

From Stonehenge to Canterbury & Beyond with Tailored Tours

Welcome to the UK travel Planning podcast. To help you plan your perfect uk vacation

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.

UK Travel Planning podcast welcomes Oz from my tailored tours to discuss upcoming tours

Tracy: Hi and welcome to episode 104 of the UK Travel Planning podcast. This week I'm joined by the Lovely Oz from tour company my tailored tours to chat all about his tours to two of my favourite destinations, easily accessible for a day trip or two from central London. I'm not going to tell you where, as I will let Oz explain all. Some of you may recognise Oz from episode 60 of the UK travel Planning podcast when we chatted all about his popular Stonehenge and Bathurst from London. And, some of you will have been fortunate enough to have actually spent some time with Oz on a tour, perhaps. But for those of you who haven't yet listened to that episode, I started by asking Oz to

introduce himself and his company, my tailored tours.

Oz: It was brilliant to talk with you. We did a very short episode around Christmas to wish people merry Christmas. And then we did another podcast. what was it? Episode 60.

Tracy: Episode 60. Yep. It was, yeah.

Oz: Yeah. Where I introduced everyone to my tour company, which is called Tailored Tours, that I set up back in 2016. And really since then, since COVID ended, we've been very, very busy and there's been a lot of demand for private tours, I suppose, because people start to really realise the benefit of them.

Tracy: Oh, absolutely. 100% agree with us.

Oz: Yeah. So we focused last time on our, most popular tour, which was Stonehenge, Bath and the Cotswolds. But since then, we've been speaking and we realised that there's actually a lot more that we do that we could offer to people that listen to the podcast. So I think that's what we're here to discuss today.

Tracy: It is.

We had a chat last time about your most popular tour

So I thought what we'd do is, because we had that chat last time about your most popular tour. So we'll cover the Stonehenge and the Bath and the southern Cotswold

trip. So if you haven't listened to that episode, that is episode 60. So you can hear about Oz there. but tell us a little bit about who you are, Oz. Why should people come and, book through your company? What is it that you offer? What is different about going with tailored tours.

Oz: Well, what we do is we offer a completely bespoke package which really is in the company name and the title. And from working as a tour guide since 2008, I've, gone from working with much larger groups and slowly, as I've got to be more knowledgeable about everything to do with the industry, we realised that really not one size fits all. So, every tour is different. People email us, they book, one of our ready made tours and then they say, oh, we're really into Tolkien's. And can we see certain bits in Oxford that are linked in with him? And we said, yeah, sure. We can show you his grave, we can show you where he lived. Or someone might say, we really love to see this little church in this tiny little village in the Cotswolds. Or we've even got a client that wants to trace their family heritage and go to certain parts of Kent that are, very remote. There's only 200 people living in the village and they just want to make their own tour. And that's really what we offer. We offer a completely bespoke package for clients that want to say, right, we're done here, we want to go on. We want to spend more time in this particular place. So we did focus more on a very popular tour that does sort of run like clockwork last time, but it is possible for people to create exactly what they want with us.

We cover Kent, as far north as Oxford and as south as Dover Castle

Tracy: And what's the area that you will go out to? Oz. Because I know we've talked about Kent, we've talked about the Cotswolds, we've talked about going out to Salisbury, Stonehenge, out to that direction, all the way up to Bath, as, far north as

Oxford, as far south as Dover Castle.

Oz: Yeah. So, in terms of the places that we cover in Kent, we head over towards. We sort of use Canterbury as a main base because it's a beautiful city and it's got the oldest cathedral in the, in the country. And we'll combine that with either Leeds Castle or the Battle of Britain memorial, the white cliffs of Dover and Dover Castle. And you get to pick amongst those sites and make a sort of package and they all kind of work together. We wouldn't do both castles visiting properly in a day because at the same time we want to make sure that people have got realistic expectations and have enough time to properly explore the sites. But, another one of our most popular tours, we would go down towards the white cliffs and see the Battle of Britain memorial in the morning. Stop, off at Dover for a, photo of the castle. Heading to Canterbury, for around lunchtime, seeing the cathedral, having time for lunch there, and then visiting Leeds Castle in the afternoon. So that's another very popular tour. And then towards the southwest, we've covered things like Stonehenge and Bath, but we also do tours of Salisbury and we head over to Glastonbury. I think we're the only private tour company based in London that actually do that. we do a stonehenge and Glastonbury tour and we're working on, at the moment, myself and my colleague Christian, on a new itinerary which isn't launched yet, which will be Jane Austen themed. So we'll go to see her house and Winchester Cathedral and Stowerhead as well. So if there's any Jane Austen fans, we'd like to hear to see if you're interested in that sort of thing at the moment as well.

Tracy: So what you can't see, if you're listening, is the fact that I am jumping up and down for joy and shaking my hands and going, oh, wow. Yeah, yeah, yeah. In the background, because I am so excited about that. Oz, seriously, that is going to. I know that is going to be so popular because do you know how many times we get asked

about that? So many times. There are so many Jane Austen fans out there right now who are going to be going, right, that's it. I know who I'm going to go and see all the Jane Austen sites with. So that is brilliant. When is that coming out? I'm excited.

Oz: That was yesterday. We were talking about that, myself and Christian. We were having a coffee and bath, and it was actually his idea. He said, you know, I've been looking. There's nothing really out there for focusing solely on Jane Austen stuff. And all the clients that come to Bath with us, a lot of them, probably a third of them, are talking about Jane Austen. So we're working on that now. Literally, as of this week, we'll be looking into itineraries related with that. and then for the Glastonbury people out there, there's a lot of King Arthur stuff as well. So people that want to see King Arthur's tomb and see the Abbey climb up Glastonbury tour, that's a really nice tour as well. Then we've got the north west section of London, which would be based more on, well, the Cotswolds as a centre, because the Cotswolds is a very large area and I don't know if we covered this last time, but it's almost 800 sq. Mi and, ah, this is something we're often explaining to our clients. They're picking nice little villages, but you've got to sort of match them with the correct city. So you're not going to be seeing somewhere in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds like Burford with Bath, you'd be seeing the Wiltshire Cotswolds or part of the West Gloucestershire Cotswolds. So at, the very heart of that area, we would combine with places like Oxford or Stratford upon Avon or even Warwick Castle. Warwick Castle is a brilliant place for families to come enjoy live archery and jousting shows and birds of prey. So we do that and of course we do Shakespeare stuff. at Stratford upon Avon we've got the Shakespeare's birthplace and the church where he's buried. So we go and visit those. but again, whilst we have these set itineraries, they're sort of guidelines and if people want to mix and match and see certain things, if you pick all of them in one day, we'll say, well, this is what it will look like. If you want to do a drive by and say, hi, Shakespeare, buy Shakespeare and then straight into the

Cotswolds. But we do that for you. And I think you do that as well, don't you? You do a lot of the itinerary planning and that's the sort of extra bonus with us is because not only do I run the tour company, but also we know exactly what's going on contemporary, so we've got people on the ground that are doing tours, that are also creating itineraries as well. And that really helps us know what to add in a day and what's possible whilst still enjoying all the sites.

Tracy: Yeah, and I think that's important because, you know, we can make the recommendations not to try and put too much into a day and say, you know, if you're going to get the Cotswolds or, you know, popular one that we get asked about is the, is the Windsor, Stonehenge, bath, southern Cotswolds, which I think is. It's a lot to do and I know that some of the larger, bus tour companies do that. but, you know, that it just ends up being too much in my mind, it's far too much. And I think the advantage of, you know, when I, when I recommend, people look at booking with you guys is that, ah, you know, you can tailor make it exactly what you do. You can say, these are the things that I'm interested in, you know, I really want to go. I may want to go bath and I want to go to Stratford upon Avon. Well, that's not going to be particularly very easy in one day, but that's something that you can advise on and say, well, okay, and kind of make that judgement with them about what is going to be worth doing in a day. so, I mean, that's the advantage of being able to tailor make the tour, which is what you offer.

Oz can take up to eight people on a tour van

So what's the minimum amount of people that can come on a tour and the maximum amount that you can take?

Oz: there is no minimum size. We have taken single travellers that don't want to book on a public tour. They want to spend their valuable time whilst they're in London, seeing exactly what they want to see, rather than compromise. So we've had quite a few single passengers book with us. mainly it's group sizes between, I would say two to four, like a couple or a family of four. But we do sometimes get like two families travelling together, or larger families of eight people, siblings and their families. we can take up to eight people in the tour van. That's if we do a day trip, whereas we would lower it down to six people if we were going to be doing something like an airport transfer and a tour, or a cruise transfer. So lots of those places that we mentioned in the southwest can be linked in with Southampton. So if you're finishing a cruise, you need to get to the airport or you need to get to London and, and you've got a day free, really as just a transfer day. We can pick you up down at the docks and take you to any of those places like Stonehenge, Winchester Bath, Cotswolds, Glastonbury. We could do that over towards London or vice versa. If you're going from London down to Southampton, we could stop at Stonehenge and then Dover. that really opens the door for a lot of kent stuff too. So it's right next to the castle. The cruise terminal is next to the castle, so you could easily see the castle and then get dropped off at the ship or picked up, and then head around into Canterbury and then finish in London. So we offer those two, but they wouldn't be for eight people because we've got to take into account the amount of luggage that people are going to have as well. eight is filling the van up to its maximum capacity. some of our, other, my colleagues as well have got seven seater vehicles, so eight isn't always possible, but seven is definitely possible with all of our, our, vehicles and there's a team of six of us now, which is good as well.

Tracy: Yeah, that's fantastic. And I think, it's important that to kind of just say that you can go and pick up from the cruise port and take down to the cruise ports in Dover and Southampton because again, we get asked that, ah, a lot about, you know, I'm, arriving

in Southampton and I need to get into London or, you know, or they're in London, need to get down to Southampton. And it's a perfect way if you want to go to Stonehenge and you don't want to do a group tour, but you actually, you know, you're going to get going down to these places anyway, Southampton, you might as well incorporate the tour in your day as well. What a perfect use of time. It's a really good way to do it. It's a good use of time. You know, your luggage is going to be safe in the, in the car with you guys. So you can go and explore to your heart's content and then get yourself down to the ferry terminal to leave, to go on your cruise. Or alternatively, if you're arriving in from New York or wherever on your, on your cruise ship, what better than getting met by one of Oz's team and whipped off to see one of your on a bucket list England experiences on your way to London? I mean, this is, this is the way to do it.

Oz: Well, I would think so. It is. Yeah. A lot of our clients would agree with that as well, that have been travelling with us so far. yeah. But a very good thing to do would be to try and plan ahead with this as well. So if you are hearing this podcast as it comes out, we are pretty much booked up this summer, unfortunately. But if you are planning ahead towards the end of the year or next year, then definitely just get in touch. It doesn't matter if it's a year or two years ahead, we often take a, small deposit just to hold the date with us. And the earlier you get booked in, the better. And we'll only take the full payment a couple of weeks before the trip. So it's good to just get that, planned ahead, and just email over. And the earlier we start planning, the more bespoke we can make the trip as well and book things well in advance.

Tracy: Yeah, I think that's important for people, you know, that are thinking about, you know, thinking ahead, is to know that you need to, you know, you guys are nearly fully booked up for the. For the summer already, which is. It's scary, really, when I hear that, that already you're so busy. I mean, it's fantastic for you guys that you're so busy. but it

just shows you. And often we'll get asked in our Facebook group, you know, can I. Can I just leave it to arrive in the UK and then book things as I arrive? or, you know, get there. I like to be flexible, but sometimes you just can't do that. If you want something, you know, as bespoke and kind of this luxury tour option, which is what you are, you're kind of that end of it, you have to really, think ahead and get booked. And I know quite a few. We've done quite a few itinerary consults and I know you've had some, some bookings from our lovely clients, so that's going to be lovely. I can't wait to hear back from them because they'll be coming on the podcast, all of them, hopefully, to do a trip report. so it's always good to hear kind of feedback about how much people have enjoyed going on the tours.

I want to ask Oz what his favourite tour is

I'm going to put you on the spot, actually, Oz, because I want to ask you what your favourite tour is.

Oz: Oh, gosh. that is putting me on the spot, actually. I usually say to my clients, and this is kind of true, that I don't really have a favourite tour in the sense that I do love doing tours of Kent because it's my home county. So I love going home there for those reasons. The tour we did on episode 60, I do most often. So that's like my office almost. And people say, oh, don't you get bored of going to Stonehenge? I'm standing in front of the world's most famous stone circle. I'm not bored. I'm never going to be bored of this. This is brilliant. I love what I do. So that's a really nice tour because I know exactly how it's going to pan out. But then when I sometimes get a tour that is something I've, not done for ages, it's also really nice going out and saying, oh, gosh, this is like a little holiday break for me as well. so whatever we do, I absolutely love it. Honestly, I'm so

lucky. I never realised how lucky I was to do what I do until we had almost two years out of work. With the pandemic, we got back and I was just so grateful and I will forever be grateful of what we all get to do. And a lot of my, driver guides now we've met since COVID So we built up over the last two or three years and again, they're all. They all absolutely love their job as whenever I see them and we're all at Stonehenge or a particular site and meet up with them, I could just see beaming smiles on their faces. They just all enjoy what we do. I've definitely dodged that question. and I'm gonna have to pick one. So I will pick the Canterbury Dover and Leeds Castle trip just because it's got close sentiment to my heart being my home county of Kent.

Tracy: Okay, brilliant. And I'm gonna say, that even though you haven't launched it yet, I really want to go on your Jane Austen tour. So put my name down for that one, please, because I feel that maybe going to be my favourite. But hopefully if I'm over in the UK later on in the year, we can go out, we can get some pictures and some video, we can get this shared. I think that will be really cool. But also I'm hoping and if you listen to the podcast, this is something new that I'm going to do. And again, I'm kind of putting Oz on the spot here, but I know you'll be able to deal with this is, what I'm hoping to do is just do some short little snippet recordings with some of the kind of popular questions that we get asked about going on different tours, and get some little video question answers. So I can share them on YouTube and in the Facebook group. So actually, if you have a question for myself or Oz, anything about his tours, you can do that via text message or you can email me or you can go via the link on their website. Or you can go on Oz's website when you go to book and you can ask him all sorts of questions, can't there?

Oz: Yeah, absolutely. our website. Yeah, [www. Dot mytailoredtours](http://www.Dotmytailoredtours). And you can go straight through there, you can contact us. There's a WhatsApp link to contact us directly and there's also, a contact form on the homepage and you click through it asks

what date you want to travel, how many in your group, and then the notes section which is where you can just fill it up with whatever you want to see. If there's multiple day itineraries, you can get in touch with us with that as well. And then we'll get back to you between 24 to 48 hours later. With the plan.

Tracy: Brilliant. That sounds really good.

Oz always end the podcast with a question about advice for first time travellers

and I'm going to ask you one question again. I'm asking. There were loads of questions, but that is kind of my job as a podcast host. and I've already asked you what your favourite tour is bought. And I kind of always end the podcast with a question about kind of what would be your advice for a first time traveller? And I guess when it comes to booking on a tour, you've probably covered it, but I'm going to say, what would be your advice for somebody thinking, okay, I really want to do a private, private driver guided tour. I have lots of ideas in my head in terms of I might want to go to Canterbury, but I also want to go to Stonehenge, or I want to go to Stratford and at Ponthaven, but I want to go Dover. what would you say to somebody who's got all these ideas in their head and they're just not quite sure about what to do as a first time traveller come to the UK? I want to go with you guys, but I just don't know what to do.

Oz: That happens more than you think. And we then dive a bit deeper into their points of interest. in fact, this morning I was answering an email, someone was saying, we want to go to Kent. we definitely want to see Canterbury. Which castle is better, Leeds Castle or Dover Castle? And I said, well, in my opinion, Leeds Castle is a lot prettier for

many people. They say it's one of the prettiest castles in the country, it's got a water moat. And then shared a photo of what it looks like and then said, well, but the interior is a bit more modern, so it's kind of like, art, nouveau art deco style, 1930s, very french influence. Whereas Dover, if you want to stand on the edge of the cliffs and you want to see a proper fortress, like the key to England, the castle that's defended this country multiple times, that's for the history buffs out there, particularly those that like 12th century sieges and they like, sorry, 13th century sieges and they like, World War Two history as well. So we ask these questions upon getting questions, what's the best? Because we do realise that not everyone has the same interests. a lot of companies may beg to differ with that and say, oh, everyone wants to just see the same thing. But unless you ask questions ourselves, you realise really what people want to do. So there isn't, again, an answer. So I've managed to dodge another question and the answer is whatever you're interested in, we will find out the best things that match your interests to the sites that you want to see. And, some people just love countryside and they love to take wonderful pictures and then we can pick out certain things. This particular village in the Cotswolds might be the most idyllic one that you want to get some pictures and do you want to combine that with an ancient stone circle? But you don't want the crowds of Stonehenge, so we might take you to Avebury instead. So we've got all these ideas and we put them out there. We give people multiple choices, but we just obviously make it clear that you can't go and see something that's 3 hours west of London and then see something that's 2 hours southeast of London. So we do that as well and manage expectations.

Tracy: That's brilliant. So I guess it's kind of ask the question and then be prepared for lots of questions back from Oz and his team.

Oz: Absolutely.

Tracy: So thanks, Oz. It's been an absolute pleasure to chat to you. Always is. It's really good. And, as I said in the show notes, you're going to find, links to Oz's website and you've got social media, so we can put a link into that as well. yeah, but. So thank you so much, Oz, for coming on. It's always a pleasure to chat to you and find out what's going on with with tailored tours.

Oz: Thank you very much.

This week's UK travel Planning podcast features the latest travel advice

Tracy: Thank you for tuning in to this week's episode of the UK travel Planning podcast. As always, show notes can be found at, 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.