

# **TRANSCRIPT\*\* - EPISODE #60 UK TRAVEL PLANNING** **PODCAST**

## **\*\*NOTE TRANSCRIPT AUTOGENERATED**

Intro [00:00:01]:

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 pick West Country Side to Seaside Towns.

Oz Harris [00:00:38]:

Hi, and welcome to episode 60 of the UK travel planning podcast. This week, I am thrilled to be chatted to Oz from London based private tour company, My Tailored Tours. You may remember that Oz was mentioned in episode 13 by Sheryl Rippeth Conway, who loved her family's private driver data with us to Stonehenge, Beth, and Castlecomb. I was very happy to meet up with us recently in London and announced my Taylor Tours as a UK travel planner preferred partner. I was enthusiastically agreed to come on to the podcast, and I started today's conversation by asking us to introduce himself.

Speaker C [00:01:14]:

Yeah. Sure. So Everyone calls me Oz, they all think that, an Australian, which is where you are at the moment, isn't it? It is. Yes. Yeah. Even my, my nephew is now calling me at Uncle Oz and Ozzy, but it's actually Oliver. That's my my full name. Irish grandmother didn't like, Ollie, so she called me Ozz. Yep. And, growing up, my dad was a history teacher. So I was always involved chatting about history at the the dining table and learning about stories. And then both my brother and I decided to go and study history at university, and him, along with all my other history, major friends, none of them do anything related with history whatsoever. Yep. I started to work at a a language school, mid university degree as a summer job, and part of that job was looking after the students on weekends and taking them on walking tours. So we would take you probably see them all the time. You know, the big large tours of 40 teenagers from Spain, and they're walking around and barely paying attention. I was one of those guys trying to give some information to them. And quickly, the school realized that I was actually pretty pretty good at it because I could just read something. And then without looking it again, I could just present it. Yep. So that then led, a couple of years later into me getting caught up to do a tour of Amsterdam. and, another company had found and heard about me and said, can you do a tour of Amsterdam on Friday? And I said, Well, I can give it a go. I've only been to Amsterdam once before, but we'll see how it goes. And they said, well, we really need someone to step in. Someone's just called in 6. So studied the history of Amsterdam and the Netherlands over the next 2 days, and it went really well. And this is 13 years ago. This is long before the idea of just looking at your phone and and putting in on

Google Maps where you're going. I was studying maps in my head. Yeah. And then trying to deliver it thinking people thinking of being there, like, a million times, but it all went well. Good. And then that company hired me. I moved to London because I'm originally from Kent. Yeah. then I started to do weekend tours and then eventually mini bus tours, which is getting close to where we are now. And on the minibuses, we would do sixteen people, small day trips. And after doing that for probably about 3 or 4 years, I was noticing that the thing kind of missing was that that when you've got, say, three people from one side and they they wanna spend loads of time at Stonehenge, and other people are, like, desperate to see bath and spend a long time there and want to add Jane Austin stuff as well as Roman stuff. and you're being drawn both ways, and it doesn't matter how much you know about things. I thought let's downsize. Let's also -- Yep. -- get driving and guiding sorted because quite often you find that the coach drivers can be a bit miserable sometimes. Otherwise, there can be sometimes So if you take out that element that you can't control and you take out the element of of people putting you both ways, then -- Yep. -- eventually in 2016, I thought, right. I'll give it a go. there wasn't much of a market for private tours back then. A lot of people thought that the best you could get was a was a mini bus rather than a coach and do those. Yep. And, yeah, it was pretty much the first person I know that that went out and and did this. And the problem was no one knew about me. Right. So I ended up for the next 2 or 3 years contracting and doing tours for bigger companies where they had small inquiries, group sizes of 1 to 8, and doing trips for them. And the real big thing that started to get us properly noticed was ironically just that the time off we had during COVID where we could probably work on our own sort of building brand because we were just straight out working for a lot of other people. And we to build up our own reputation. and then, of course, we were mentioned on the the podcast, which is great, and and that's why we're here today. Yeah. Absolutely. Well, like I mentioned at the beginning that Cheryl,

Oz Harris [00:05:27]:

in episode 13, mentioned you guys and how she had they'd had with her family had had an amazing, trip out to the Cotswolds and, Stonehenge a bath with you guys and how much it absolutely She just raved about it. And from that moment, I was outright re well, I really re really wanna work with you guys. So I was so happy when I actually managed to meet you in in London, a couple of months ago. I remember I was just saying it was pouring our rain, but we managed to meet beside Victoria and, have a good chat and talk to you about I can't believe it now. We're 2 months late then. You're actually on the podcast. term. That's gone quick, isn't it? It has. It has, but also because I know, that how much interest and how much people really wanna have the experience of having that own private driver tour. Yep. And the ability for exactly the reasons you said, the ability that you can tailor it exactly how you want for yourself, which of course is is kinda, I guess, that my tailor to us or your company tailor to us exactly about that about making the tour for yourself. So tell us a little about back some of the tours that you do us.

Speaker C [00:06:31]:

the one that you you mentioned that we that we did was was our most popular tour and still is the one that's in in full demand. That is, seeing Stonehenge in the morning, Yep. We we like to get ahead of the the groups as well as just having a private tour. We like to get ahead of them time wise as well. So it's always a slightly different start time. We'll figure out if

someone's staying near the tower of London, we'll get there really early because you gotta drive through London I don't know if anyone's ever mentioned on the podcast, but that the roads are just silly in London at the moment. Getting through the city is crazy. Yeah. So we'll probably start at 7 AM. Whereas someone starting in Kensington will start at 7:30. So we we make sure that the pickup time is exactly the right spot so that we can get down to Stonehenge, and drive past another site called Woodhenge, which we link in with the story of Stonehenge. We get there nice and early, get ahead of the groups, and sometimes we're on the very first shuttle bus that goes up to the stones, which is great. And we have a really nice walk around. And always, by the time that they leave, which is around about 11 o'clock, people are like, wow. can understand why you got us up early now because people don't always understand that at first. They're like, oh, can we leave at 8? Can we leave at 8:30? Enjoy our breakfast. and some of the other private tour companies that I know, they they say, yeah, don't worry. We'll leave at 8. We'll leave at 9. but they're shooting themselves in the foot in my opinion because -- Yeah. -- you've really gotta get a good start to the day. And and what as soon as people see Stonehenge, their faces like, it's something that they've wanted to see their whole lives and you're seeing it properly -- Yeah. Exactly. -- which is great. or before it just gets really, really busy. And by 10 o'clock, half an hour after it's opened, it's already busy. Absolutely.

Oz Harris [00:08:18]:

Yeah. Obviously, I'm just gonna mention a little bit about your so your history degree. So, obviously, you know, you you can talk all through all the history of these different places that you go into as well. You've got that background to it. So you're actually getting to use that that degree that you've got. I've also got a history degree. We did talk about that. So so, obviously, that, you know, that's a huge advantage as well that you've got that that knowledge and, they can share that.

Speaker C [00:08:42]:

Yeah. I love it. I did teach history for a little bit because I said my my dad was a history teacher. He got me involved at his school. shortly after I graduated, and I quickly realized that it wasn't for me. I always thought I might go into being a history teacher, but the the syllabus is so strict these days. Yeah. You can't teach what you wanna teach. It's these are the questions. These are the answers. And they've gotta put down these keywords, and it's heartbreaking to mark some stuff. You can understand that a a student's got a really clear grasp of what's happened in the past. but because they haven't said a specific word, you can't give them a mark. So I thought right. Yeah. I wanna talk about history my way, and I wanna talk about lots of different things. And the way to do it is is this.

Oz Harris [00:09:28]:

So, yeah, so that's why we got got involved in in tour guiding. And be a storyteller, because that's also what you're doing. And and that's the best way. I guess, obviously, I used to be a history teacher for a while, but also been able to tell a story because that's really what what gets people's interest, isn't it? Been able to tell a story of the people behind who built you know, who put those stones there? I think that's the kind of key as much as we know. So I

I've after being in stonehenge, where would you go next if if you're doing that kind of that stonehenge bath

Speaker C [00:09:58]:

a morning start, and then we would head, an hours countryside drive northwest into to bath. On the way to bath, we talk a lot about Romans, what did the Romans do to Britain, how they arrived in Britain, bit about Julius Caesar, and proclaudius. And then We talk all about the Roman baths, how it was a big part of their their everyday life in all their major cities, and then the the natural hot springs and and just the general importance of the Roman stuff. And then we scan forward to all the georgian stuff as well and talk about it being a big spa town with Queen Ann's visit in 1703. and then how lots of different people change and build up the entire city, which makes it,

Oz Harris [00:10:38]:

the only UNESCO world heritage city in the country. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. And a beautiful city to visit. So how long would you spend in bath and what what does a tour look like once she get to bath? So do you stay with the guests, or how does it work?

Speaker C [00:10:51]:

tend to drop them off right in the city center, which has very limited parking. So we drop them off as close as we can get them to the Roman bath. We get the clients normally to book their own tickets. So we do the tours and the tickets separately, but there is the option on our website to add the tickets if they want to as well. So we give them that flexibility. And sometimes people say, oh, we're not really interested in the Roman stuff. We wanna do the George and stuff, so then they can. they've always got the flexibility to to change what they wanna see, but normally, they'd spend about an hour to an hour a half seeing the Roman Bath Museum. Mhmm. there's no guiding allowed in there because it's a very small Roman Temple, and the floor is two thousand years old. They don't want Obviously, if I took three people around, then the big companies would wanna take forty people around, and it would just ruin it. So you get a really good audio guide. It takes you around, and and people know everything about it anyway because we've spoken about it for the previous hour on the way there. Yeah. Perfect. We give them a bit of time. Then sometimes We have lunch with them. Sometimes they just wanna walk off and get a quick lunch and explore the city. So it changes day to day. but generally, It's about 2 to 2 a half hours in the city center for lunch, Roman baths, and anything else they wanna see. Yeah. Perfect. Then when we pick them up, we drive them up to the northern side of the city to see, the circus and the Royal Crescent and the assembly rooms. And we talk all about how it became a a very popular spa town and and reinvented in 17 100. And you get, I mean, a great opportunity to see. Can I say that Georgian aspect of it? Definitely. and and again, the the coaches and and minibuses are now banned from going there. So we can get in there. Yep. But the the bigger tours aren't allowed to go there anymore. Yep. So that's good. So you can, yeah, opportunity to be able to do that and, get really kinda up there with them. And then and then after that, is that is that when the Cox Wall aspect of the turf kicks in? Exactly. Yeah. So then we we leave, and we've got about a half an hour drive into the Cotswold to talk about the countryside, talk a lot about sheep, medieval sheep. Yes. Absolutely. I've just -- -- be so big.

And the the pleases used to be so thick and and all that stuff. And then link it in with some tidbits and some stories and origins of names, which people really like. Yep. and then we we give them the choice to see 1 of 2, villages. And one of them is Laycock -- Yep. -- which is beautiful, little, little village with, lovely Abby -- Absolutely. -- church. And will you normally say for the for the Harry Potter or the Downton Abbey fanatic Yeah. Absolutely. They're really, really into that because there's a few different bits that were filmed there, or the one that we normally go to, which is more popular, is actually Castle Coom. Yep. Because Castle Coom, in my opinion, if you're not massively into the Harry Potter and the Downton Abbey stuff, I think that that is a prettier village. In fact, it was voted 2 years ago, the prettiest place in the UK. are you? Yeah. It was. Yeah. So, you get a really nice view and feel of that. if there's not a wedding going on, we we go into the the manor house. We go to the bottom where you always see people trying to get that that picture that you always see on Instagram.

Oz Harris [00:14:11]:

rampshot. And I was gonna say this is where, you know, again, we're talking about the advantages of of having your own driver tour guide is that

Speaker C [00:14:19]:

you know, I've been in Castle come a couple of times and can't get parked. Yeah. We've we've been through. So trying to get that shot from outside the car, outside the car, while Doug's driving, I'm going, go slower. Go slower. No. You can't park there at all. There's a car park, but it's about a 20 minute walk -- Yeah. -- downhill to the town and back uphill to to go back. So what we normally do is drop them off in the center, tell them all about the things to see, drive them around the whole town, which about 30 seconds. Yeah. That's fantastic. Right. Have half an hour. Take some pictures, go and explore, go in the pub if you want to have a look around, get some pictures, and then we pick them up about half an hour later, and then make our way back to London. That's perfect. Then again, you see the advantages,

Oz Harris [00:15:03]:

you know, you you're going out with you guys. Not only do you get all that information from you guys as you're traveling, which you know, was talking we did a podcast a couple of weeks ago, and, that was what we're talking about a couple of, tours that that person had taken. And she said that the one of the things was that she could actually talk to British people, talk to Brits and ask questions about British life and what it was like. And That's the advantage when you go out with you guys. You can ask all those sorts of questions about, you know, what it's like to live in live in the UK. How what it's English. What is, like, the British? You know, what sort of biscuit you have with your tea ors? You know, that sort of thing. Yeah. So you can sit back. You can enjoy the countryside. You can relax. You're not having to worry about driving. You're not having to worry about parking. You're not having to worry about parking fines. You're not having to worry about any of that thing. you can just sit back, relax, and, you know, let us and his team take the take the heat for the day, and you can just enjoy it.

Speaker C [00:15:56]:

Exactly. We worry about the parking fines, but they don't have to.

Oz Harris [00:16:00]:

Absolutely. You don't need to. So I know you said that's one of your most popular tours, and that that is the one that Cheryl and family talk, when they're with with you. So what what other tours do you do? Talk us through some of the other ones that you've got. We pretty much cover anywhere that within 2 to 3 hours of London. the furthest one and the one that we do and specialize in which which are not many tour guides know from London is glass and brie. So we we do quite a lot of the mythological King Arthur side of of Britain, and that links in with Stonehenge as well. So we drive down towards Stonehenge stop there, then we continue down the the a 303 and and see Glastonbury Tour, Glastonbury Abbey, Sometimes the challenge wells, if people wanna go inside there as well, I've actually got that tour tomorrow. Right. so doing that one, which is a much longer drive. It's the about a three hundred mile round trip. Wow. But there's not many as I say, not many private tour companies that actually do that. So that's a good thing if anyone's particularly interested in seeing the King Arthur stuff or seeing Glastonbury -- Yep. -- and returning to London on the same day, then we can do that as well. the northwest section of London, we would drive around to food and link that in with either Windsor Castle or the other side of the Cotswolds and not the two villages we mentioned, but probably stow the slaughters You can have a lovely walk between the upper and lower slaughter. We tend to avoid button on the water, but we can do that sometimes if people wanna go there, and then we link that up sometimes with Stratford on Avon as well. Yeah. Yeah. At Stratford in the Cotswolds, Oxford in the Cotswolds, or Stratford Oxford Cotswolds whatever people wanna do. and sometimes Warrick, I mean, Warrick on on Saturday as well. So people wanna do Warrick Castle and Stratford, then it's 2 hour drive up there, but only about 15 minutes in between the two places. So as the company name suggests, my tailored tours, we get a a plethora of different requests. And sometimes people wanna see the world in a day. And to be honest, we actually turn those down. Right. We've got a very good reputation online that we're we're slowly building, and we really like the fact that we know the places and we we don't want to to promise the world in a day if we don't think the tour is going to be good. So we would suggest from what they write, these would be the timings and either say, right, you've picked four places. How about you pick three places and you do this? And then they said, well, we want a bit more time here. I said, okay. Well, maybe you wanna take out site. And by the time you write down the actual timings, they understand it a lot better -- Yeah. -- because this is something that's very confusing. It could be very difficult for people overseas is to see these wonderful tours. For example, we don't actually sell online Windsor, and that is the most popular talk from London. It is. Yep. I personally having done that talk for about 3 or 4 years think that getting to Stonebridge at 9:30 when it opens and getting to Windsor before the castle closes is very difficult and to fit bath in between that's the only way you can do the tour geographically. It's it's it's a wrap run from the start. Yeah. Yeah. And once the clients don't realize it, it is quite stressful. in potentially getting involved in in, getting stuck in traffic or an accident on the way back to Windsor. And it's really hard to say that you've booked this tour you're not gonna get to go to Windsor, which I've had that happen to me twice back when I used to do this tour for for other companies. So we don't really recommend that. Yep. and we speak with the clients and they say what they wanna do, and we build something

that that they're happy with. And quite often, from the first email, they soon realize that what they wanna see isn't quite possible in a day. because Britain is small, of course, is much smaller than than many other countries. And we can get around quite quickly, but with the addition of the the way it is getting in and out of of of London and then getting around the town, we're just giving people realistic expectations. So when they arrive, we'd rather over deliver rather than overpromise and under deliver.

Tracy Collins [00:20:18]:

and I think that's really important. I mean, because you, you know, you guys pick up from from their accommodation and you drop back off at the accommodation in London. So that immediately, as you say, is gonna add time for the day. And and I totally understand what you're saying to us because we do a lot of and consultations where we kinda just help people fine tune that itineraries and often that's the we find it's more trying to take things out. because, actually, you've put too many things in and and, you know, it's about, having the quality rather than the quantity Yeah. Because otherwise, you can just end up rushing around and you really don't get anything out of it. And and I think, you know, that's the beauty of of booking with a private, a private tour companies like, like yourself is that you can actually say, this, these are the places we're interested in. You know, these are our priorities. Is this possible? Is it doable, you know, and if it isn't, you know, gonna give them that honest feedback? No. Actually, you can't, but this is what we can. Out of those things, this is what we can do, and this is how we can work the day. And especially, I guess, once you find out as well where they stay in London, because you're saying, like I say, it depends on how they stay in London. That also can add time to the day. And you don't want, also, if you don't be stressed around thinking that you've gotta drive from place to place, it's just it's just not much fun for it, for anybody, really, is it?

Speaker C [00:21:31]:

Yeah. And and one of the things, that you mentioned, which is good as well is sometimes we say to people, if if they are staying by on the border of Essex or in East London, we'll pick them up early, earlier than we would normally pick them up, get through the city nice and quietly. But if they wanted to in time sightseeing in the day, they would have the option if they wanted to get off the finish of the tour somewhere in West London or Central London and then just go straight into dinner somewhere central and then make their own way back at the end of the day. And we give them that option as well, and we say, look, we we just have to cater for getting through the city. We can drop you at your hotel. Yeah. but you can actually add time to your tourism, seeing stuff because you're traveling a long way to go see these things, and then we can drop you somewhere west. because you can get through the city in 20, 30 minutes if you use the the tube, whereas it's gonna take you an hour, hour a half to drive. Absolutely. Some people don't like doing that, which is fine. We drive them back. Yeah. But we do offer that as as an option as well for those that do feel comfortable to get through the city and maximize their sightseeing time. Yeah. No. That's a good idea. And I was also gonna ask you about, cruise transfers. Well, you do you do that from South Hampton, don't you? Yeah. We do. And Dover as well. we pick up at both of those places. we would link in Dover Castle with the port, maybe Leeds Castle, Canterbury, Chilham, a nice little village in Kent, and then drop off in in London or the airport. And likewise, South Hampton gives us, a really nice amount of of places that we can go and see. Normally, we would drive about 45

minutes up towards Salisbury. Go stop and see the cathedral or just for a photo. Stonehenge very easy, Winchester as well, sometimes requested Bath, Cotswolds,

Oz Harris [00:23:18]:

and then drop them off at the airport or or back in London. Yeah. So that's perfect. So so how many people can, like, you, you know, cater for on your tours? Is there, like, minimum maximum numbers?

Speaker C [00:23:31]:

As little as we've had single passengers booked with us before and book a few tours with us. Mhmm. Often it's between, I would say, 2 to 6 people, most popular group sizes. Yep. But we can take a maximum in some of our tour vans myself and and Christian, we drive 8 passenger seat tour vans. We do let people know if there's, like, 8 fully sized adults, they might find it a bit squish, particularly in the front double seat. So we we we explained that. But 7 is very comfortable in our in our tour vans. And We've got Peter and Will that takes 7 passengers and Mark as well. So we've got 5 of us, in the the the driver guide team. Mhmm. And we would just, yeah, explain those sort of sizes. We don't not every guide knows every single place. I do all the places, but then I've got my own specialists in different areas as as you do as well with your contacts. So if somebody wanted to book with you, with my teller tours, us, how would they do that? Well, they could just go to your website and and find us there, or you can go on on our website as well. We're also on on Viator and TripAdvisor can book through there, but we always recommend booking straight through us, because it's easier, and you can add the bookings and you often, yeah, get a better price as well. So it's good to both directly with us -- Yeah. -- on, my tailored tours.com.

Oz Harris [00:24:58]:

Absolutely. And I I will put a link to your website through on on ours. Obviously, we've already got you on our, preferred partners page because we have that with with everybody that we partner with and we recommend. So, you've already got, you've already got your picture on there and a link to a link to the website. And, hopefully, we'll get some links as well to some of the specific tours so we can actually list on our website, what what is available as well at mytillartus.com and have a check there. But do mention that you heard about us on on their podcast or through the website, please. That'd be that's helpful for us. but it's like, it's great. Honestly, it's absolutely wonderful to be able to partner with you as it's been, as to say, at at the very beginning, it was kinda on my wish list to be able to work with you guys. You know, we we pride ourselves as well as partnering with with companies that, are highly recommended that with people that we've spoken to who've had a wonderful day out. And, and as I say, when when Cheryl was describing the that how much the her and her family had absolutely enjoyed the that day trip with you. I kinda knew that you guys were absolutely right for us. Yeah. So, you know, it's it's brilliant to have you on board. So as I say, I'll put the links to everything in, into the in the show notes Is there anything, like, any one tip that you'd give to anybody kind of visit in London and considering it, a data, was anything you would kind of say to somebody for the first time that's considering that a private tour perhaps? Definitely.



Speaker C [00:26:24]:

A lot of people who have never booked a private tour and are thinking about the difference, they often say, yes, it's a bit more expensive. Of course, it is because we've just got to make sure because we're still paying the same amount of fuel as a as a bigger company. It's an economies of scale situation that we've got, but they really do say as soon as they go private, people don't ever go back to booking public tours. And that's not me saying it. That's what I get told on on a regular basis. and the extra money that they pay, you've paid all this money to go on holiday, to go in London, which isn't a cheap city to go and visit. You flown a long way. You've booked your hotels. Why not just do that a little bit more and have a much better free experience where you can have your own control of timings and say, okay. We're not gonna miss the the coach back home. will walk around at a nice pace. We'll get to the places before the bigger groups. And just in general, everything, they're they're just generally happier. and having lunch as well, it's sometimes it can be quite stressful as you've gotta meet an exact time. And and you've not been served, and you've gotta right, with your your food down and and quickly get back on a vehicle. So there's none of that with a private tour. You you've got the freedom and and flexibility to control your whole day. Absolutely. And, you know, worth every penny to be able to do that, honestly,

Oz Harris [00:27:48]:

totally, which is why, you know, it we promote doing that independent working with you guys and doing those private driver guided to us because they are just so just your experience is gonna be better. you're gonna learn more, which I'm always really keen to. You're gonna learn about England, about English people because you're gonna be with them in the car or British. I don't know if you're everybody's English that works for you, Oz, but You know, you're gonna learn that. You're gonna learn about there is a lot a lot more. And, you know, just gonna have a a a much more immersive deeper experience. That's always kinda, you know, something that I I see. So, yeah, I'm just gonna say thanks very much to us for coming on, and I'm sure we'll have you on a guest as on the podcast some time again in the future to talk through some more of your tours and and some of the stories that, you know, that you share and and, how things are going. but, yeah, it was brilliant having you on today. So thanks very much for coming on. Okay. Thank you for having me. It's been a pleasure. Thanks again to us for coming on to the podcast today. You can find links to the Toast discussed and more in today's show notes at [UKtravelplanning.comforward/pesoed60](http://UKtravelplanning.comforward/pesoed60) or pop over to book directly at [mytaylorstours.com](http://mytaylorstours.com). That just leaves me to say for another week, Happy UK Chop planning.