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TRANSCRIPT - UK TRAVEL PLANNING PODCAST EPISODE #66 - UK VERSUS US (PART 2)

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.

Tracy Collins [00:00:37]:

Hi, and welcome to episode 66 of the UK travel planning podcast. This week's episode, I am really happy to talk to Catherine Johnson, who you may remember from episode 56, chatting about her trip to the UK in May of this year. And in this episode, we are gonna do a follow-up to episode 55 where I talk about differences between the UK and the US, mainly because the inspiration for that post actually came from Catherine. Because we met, in London, and she told me she was starting to make notes of things that struck her as different as an American, visiting the UK. So I thought it'll be great to invite Catherine on to the podcast so we can kind of expand on that episode 55 where I talked about some of the differences. So hi, Catherine. Glad you could join us today. Hey, Tracy. It's always fun to talk with you, so I'm happy to be back. Yeah. And you, you sent me all your notes because you made some fantastic notes, when you were in the UK. So I'm gonna use all of that in a in an episode. We're talking about it today, but in a in a show notes. And then I'm gonna actually do a whole article, based on it as well so that people can actually go through because, obviously, there's a lot of things on the list, so we're not gonna be able to talk about all of the things today. Otherwise, we might be here for a few weeks.

Kathryn Johnson [00:01:50]:

Right. Just hit the highlights.

Tracy Collins [00:01:52]:

But I thought, yeah, we could talk through some of the definite things that really struck you time when you were there and you sort of reflect on thought, actually, this would be really useful for people to know. So -- Yeah. So would you like to kick off and think about some of those things that you wanna share?

Kathryn Johnson [00:02:06]:

Yeah. I will say that overarching, what I think I've mentioned to you before is it felt very familiar to be in England because it's an English speaking country. and it's a different

culture, but it wasn't completely foreign. And I had to really slow down and pay attention to some details that are definitely different. And I highlighted our differences and even crossing the street. I'm very glad that in London, They always have look right, look left because I was naturally looking the wrong way -- Yep. -- for being in London. Yeah. I was used to America.

Tracy Collins [00:02:41]:

But also, I'm I'm just gonna interject on this one because even with me who I'm I'm used to driving on the left hand side, so technically should look the correct way to start with. I nearly got flattened by a bicycle, because you've gotta watch out in London for the bicycles because they seem to come whizzing from anywhere

Kathryn Johnson [00:02:58]:

And there's a lot of intersections that are not Four Streets. They're -- Yes. -- like, they're multi it's Three Streets or Four Streets. So you have traffic coming from potentially 5 or 6 directions. Yep. Yeah. And you don't know who's gonna hang up the light when. Exactly. And then the bikes go wasn't passed. Yes. Yes. We really paid attention to the do not walk or the walk. Yeah. Really, we relied on those pretty heavily, but it was just good to slow down and read details and it's it's easy to get caught up in the rush of the city, and we live near a big city. So we are used to going at a quicker pace. but I would say, that's what I made some mistakes. And that's when I didn't read signs, and that's when things happened, like, we didn't pay attention to the do not take the stairs. Please take the lift because it's a lot of stairs. That's gotta be covent garden. COVID garden. That was a that was us walking down. Oh, no. 192 stairs. Anyway, she could've have woken up. Yeah. I it was. It was. But it's it's I think it's just there are differences, and that's when I started writing them down because I thought, oh, I don't want anyone else to make this mistake. Don't don't make my mistake. Learn

Tracy Collins [00:04:10]:

learn from us, learn what we did wrong, learn what we did right. And it's I think it's what's really useful, and we've had some really good feedback on kind of that that episode 55 of the podcast. It's just preparing people for things that that you may not expect. And like you say, you -- And there's there's gonna be things that gonna be different. And there's enough small things that Americans can do to prepare

Kathryn Johnson [00:04:32]:

before coming to England, that makes all the difference in the world. Yeah. From a comfort standpoint, you can survive without any of this, but strictly from a comfort standpoint of -- And just so that it doesn't take it by surprise when you get there and kinda go, oh, there's no washcloths. Oh, there's no washcloths. Yes. And I on that, I did travel. I did, in your group, people were recommending getting some little disposable washcloths, which I did, and they were fantastic. And I'm so glad I had them. Because again, that's something I'm used to. So I wanted to keep doing that. We I also traveled with a very small bar of soap because, none of our accommodations had a bar of soap. They all had liquid soap. And that's just something

Tracy Collins [00:05:16]:

I prefer above, so for my skin. So it little things like that. Yeah. You could prepare with and and bring those. Totally. So tell us about some of the things that that happened, which made you think, oh.

Kathryn Johnson [00:05:27]:

Okay. So bottled water. That's one of them. We, We our first accommodation that we stayed at, they must have a lot of Americans there because they had a an ice cube tray So we made ice cubes every night and then filled our water bottles with ice cubes and water, but then when we would be out during the day, frequently, we just it was a little warm, so we wanted we wanted cold water. Mhmm. And we were actually in the cuspolds with Victoria, and I just grabbed water and sat down. I grabbed 2 I bought 2 water bottles. I knew I was very thirsty. And I opened my water bottle, and it started to fizz. And I was very not, I was not expecting that. And she laughed. And she said, oh, you like sparkling water? I said, no. I just wanted plain bottled water. In America, it's not common to get sparkling water at your local convenience store or a gas station or you have to purposefully go out of your way to get it. And I just didn't pay attention. There were 2 different color caps. One was still, one was sparkling. I just grabbed 2 water bottles, bought them, and went and sat down. So small things like that. Yeah. not but I've opened it. I can't return it. So I was stuck with that water.

Tracy Collins [00:06:44]:

Good to know, though.

Kathryn Johnson [00:06:46]:

Yeah. It was it was just a obviously, it's a small thing, but I I looked after that. That's what I read. You kind of knew. Every single. I knew. I knew to look. Yeah. I also knew when we went to a restaurant, and I would order or a pub. I would order water. I would always ask for a tap water. Yeah. because otherwise, they would bring you a bottled water. I'm sorry. Correct. Correct. So that was very, Yes. So as we do, we do just to ask for tax. Yeah. Yeah. And then they would hear our accents, and then they would say do you want ice? Like, because

Tracy Collins [00:07:20]:

apparently that's not a common thing, and we always said yes. Yeah. That would take some ice because we are American. Yeah. It's not so big. I mean, we'll have, like, one ice cube or something, but not a full glass full, mainly because I like the drink. I don't want it too diluted. Right. Right. Right. One thing. I was always finding it a bit. But, anyway, yeah, everybody likes a really different things, but you will not get a glass full of ice in the UK. You under you will not. Yeah. And also,

Kathryn Johnson [00:07:47]:

in I think in every restaurant we went to, you also don't get refills on your soft drinks.

Tracy Collins [00:07:53]:

So if you order a coke, you get a coke. Yeah. Or a cup you don't get re there are no refills. You can get them. You will buy them. Yes. You can get them, but you have to ask for them. So places like, you know, if you go to Nando's, for example, which is we really like to go to Nando's women in the UK, and you can get a bottomless drink there. So you can go and refill it as many times as you want. But, yeah, you don't assume that that's what you're gonna get anyway. You actually have to ask, and a lot of places won't have that. Correct. You have to go and buy each individual drink. Yeah. Yeah. So that's a good one. And I I was gonna ask you in,

Kathryn Johnson [00:08:25]:

in America, when we have a waiter or a waitress, they are assigned to you. And they are your waiter or your waitress. They bring you the bring you your food. They take your order. They bring you the bill and everything. It seemed

Tracy Collins [00:08:39]:

our experience in England and also in Scotland was kind of everybody kinda helps everybody, and they all jump in. Is that Oh, it doesn't tend to be how it works. It depends where you go. I mean, some restaurants, yes, then then the waitresses or waiters will have certain tables that they're they're in charge of. But in other places, if you go to a pub, for example, it's they'll just bring out to your trip. So it's, I guess, it's whoever's in the kitchen, they'll just bring it out, okay, table. So it'll depend. So I think to that effect, we sat in a few places where we were waiting for our

Kathryn Johnson [00:09:12]:

bill our our check to be brought to us. And I think restaurant experiences, tended to be a little more relaxed. than they are are here in America. You know, we eat, we're done, get the bill go. we had to always ask for our bill, And we, at first, were looking for what I would say was our waitress or waiter. And then I started looking around and realizing everyone kinda helps everybody. So we just asked anybody. Yeah. Ask it. Yes. Yeah. Ask it. They were like, yeah. No problem. Yeah. You brought it to us. It was no problem at all. It just wasn't something that we were used to. We learned then after a couple times to be proactive. Yeah. That's, yeah, because you could sit there for a while. I mean, it's just just touching one of the wait or waitresses eyes just to say that. And they were always so kind about it. They were no one ever made us feel

Tracy Collins [00:09:58]:

bad about asking or that we were rushing or nothing and not nothing along those lines. No. They can't they would expect me to ask me most of the time that expected us because it's not as rushed. And I was talking to somebody the other day, and she was saying that it's like, they they loved that fact that it was far more relaxed in Oh, it was wonderful. Yes. You gotta get an out you know, you know, yes. You can just sit and enjoy your meal. It's just you're

gonna have a pub and just sit and enjoy it. And I mean, some place you go to, they might book you in a sitting. So they might say, you know, you can have the table from 6 till 7:30 or 7:30 to 9. So especially if they're doing 2 sit ins. But but a lot of times, you know, if you gotta put, it's very much more relaxed, you can sit. It was and even our sittings that we had, the one was 2 hours. The other one was 3. That's a long time. It was we we were fine. We were fine on time.

Kathryn Johnson [00:10:44]:

I will say also that, most places, actually, almost every place. If they had straws, they were paper straws. I don't think we had any plastic straws in the UK. which, again, I don't I don't care either way. but some people in America feel very strongly about their straws. So I would just recommend travel with a straw. If you don't want a paper straw, bring 1. Bring your own metal or silicone or something. Duke does that because, in Australia as well, they're not like, there's no plus draws allowed, and they could not know plastic straws. So it's obviously about the environment, so there's no plastic. So -- Sure. Sure. -- so Doug

Tracy Collins [00:11:24]:

he doesn't like paper straws at all at all. And also he'll say often, I don't need a straw. I could drink out the glass. It's fine. Correct. but what he does do is he has a, He has a a bamboo straw that we bought in a barley that he takes, and he just uses that. Oh, he's got a, a a metal one that he takes and he uses that. So -- Yes. -- he takes that. I've got one as well, so we take those. And often it's just kinda saying to them before they put a straw in there, I don't wanna straw, or you know, and and as you say, if you don't like paper straws, take something with your ticket, something that you can use instead. Absolutely.

Kathryn Johnson [00:11:56]:

Absolutely. And I I know we were gonna talk about, tipping. Yeah. that's a big thing in in America. It's it's at least 20% for the meal. almost every restaurant that we went to had a built in 10 or 12%

Tracy Collins [00:12:13]:

like a service charge, which was like a tip. Yeah. But Nobody asked us for any tip beyond what was already built in. Yeah. That's becoming more common now that that service charge of 10 or 10% 12 a half percent We saw that a lot, actually, in a lot of places that that's just included now, and that is basically your tip that's included. in your bill, which is, I'd say that's a relatively new thing. It's not something -- Okay. -- I think we saw that 100 a few years ago, but definitely in London that you will see that included. So there's no expectation that you're gonna tip, in a restaurant. Obviously, like, if you go into a bar or something, you don't tip, when you order drinks, you don't you don't tip there. One thing I will say, and this is just really, an appeal on behalf. No. I I did it at at a lovely, lovely tour, and, some they're beautiful, lovely, American guests on this tour that I was on. but they tipped the guide at the end of the tour in US dollars. That's not helpful, which was really it was really strange. and And they said, oh, they don't really ever get the currency of the country that they visit, which I anyway, but it was very so the poor girl was kinda stuck with this \$20 tip that she couldn't do anything

Right? I mean, she could. She'd have to go and exchange it. So then but she said to just put it in a draw home with the last one that she got. So it's just considering that if you're gonna tip, just take some some currencies take some pounds and and tip in that. It's just better.

Kathryn Johnson [00:13:39]:

That is the only reason we brought cash or that we even needed cash in our experience. was, just to do just to be able to give some tips. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. And which we were glad we did, but even some of the street buskers. They had, a QR code that you could Venmo them or Cash App or whatever. Absolutely. Yeah. You can. It made me laugh, but Good for them, you know, for knowing

Tracy Collins [00:14:04]:

know your audience, I guess. Moving with the times because a lot of people don't carry anymore. I mean, I did get pulled out a couple of times, but I did the cash challenge and, and, I did spend money because I needed it in when I was in Lincoln because the, the machine for the taxi guy wasn't working, so he needed cash in London as well at Cobham Garden. I bought a scarf, and the guy would only take cash there. then, obviously, sometimes using some of the bathrooms, we'll talk about toilet side bathrooms in a minute, that you needed to have, like, 50 p. So you needed a little cash. So I would say, do take some. If you want a tip, yes, you take some, please don't tip in American dollars and, you know, have have a little bit of cash around just in case you need it, you know, don't don't need much, but take some. we we always had some just in case. Yeah. So I just wanna talk about bathrooms because this somebody meant it's been mentioned in the Facebook group actually about the difference in the bathrooms in -- Okay. I'm just gonna say,

Kathryn Johnson [00:14:59]:

from an American standpoint, I'll I'm gonna talk about 2 things. I love that there's actual privacy in the actual toilet stall in a I was just in a, an airport last weekend, and I could have fit my entire cell phone through the through the gap between the door and and the part that you hinged the door to. There was no privacy. I just I did not like that. And in America, when there's a waiting line for the bathroom, they tend to wait in the bathroom right in front of the stall. And I'm not a fan of that. No. I think I wouldn't be either. There was so much privacy. All your doors actually close. Like, wall to wall. It it was wonderful. I I love that. I will say what was different and Americans should know this is most of bathrooms are very small. Yeah. and they are not a place where you go, in America, a lot of times we go to the bathroom, and you stop and I've seen people brush their teeth in the airport or or they, brush their hair. They touch up their makeup. The bathrooms in the UK, the majority of them, I'm sure there are exceptions to the rule. The majority of them were very tiny. It's go in, do your thing. Wash your hands down. Yeah. Absolutely. If you have if you are traveling with someone, leave your jacket, your purse, your bag, leave everything with the other person because there is no room to

Tracy Collins [00:16:28]:

put your stuff. That's a really good tip. Really good. I usually give everything a dog, and then I go -- Yes. Yeah. We take turns. So much. That's how we went. We took turns. much, much easier. Definitely. Definitely. Let's talk about, I'll start. I need to talk about dates and times. Now I have -- Oh, golly. I I struggle. I I really struggle with this. Okay. So I'm now asking the entire population in North America. Why do you write the date the way that you do.

Kathryn Johnson [00:16:58]:

I you know, it's what we're always so used to is we write the month and then we write the date and then we write the year, whether the month is written out in word form or numeric form, but it's always the month So, you know, June 1st is 61. Yeah. But you would read that as January 6th. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:17:24]:

Yeah. That it confuses me. I have to fig well, it confused me the time. The time confused me so much when we're running, like, oh my work. It it it yeah. It's so it's so what you used to because our look in there, you know, when we do itinerary consults, I have to look and go, okay. if I look for the bigger number, that's that's bigger than 12. Yes. And then I know. Right. Okay. We're we're looking at -- Yes. -- that's gonna be the days. That the date, but I can figure out which way round it is because that's the only way I can do it because I go, oh, is that the is that the 4th or the 5th or is it the 5th or the 4th? You know, and it's Americans really need to know that because when you're making reservations

Kathryn Johnson [00:18:01]:

months in advance, you have to know what you're getting. You have to know what date you're getting. I also had a difficult time with the time. It was just a roadblock in my brain. There's no other reason for it. I I just was making reservations at St. Paul's Cathedral and our entrance. They give you a window, an entrance window. Yeah. And I quickly read it and I saw 4 to 6 PM. Great. No problem. You know, 4 to 6 PM. And then I realized it closes at 5. I'm like, how is my entrance 4 to it it was something like that where the time didn't work out. And I went back and I looked, and it said 14 to 16 was my entrance time. That meant 2 to 4 PM in American time. I had to email them and say, I am so sorry. I Cannot tell time, apparently. They were very gracious and very wonderful, but

Tracy Collins [00:18:57]:

I just I had such a hard time with that. Yeah. It's just a difference. It's just a difference. but it's, again, slow down and pay attention. Otherwise -- Yeah. -- you are gonna lose out on tickets and reservations. And it's because it just not what you do and not what you expect. So you actually will find the 24 hour clock is very much used in -- Yes. -- dog uses it all the time. That's what he will you know, if we talk about train times, he will say it's 1605 or what it gets in. Yes. So that's what I'm used to. I'm used to that as well, but I know that that can be a bit of a if you're not used to that, Correct. You know, then use the AM PM use it to to differentiate rather than using the 24 o'clock. Yeah. That can be a bit of a a tricky one.

Kathryn Johnson [00:19:38]:

It was it was for me, and my family teased me about it. You know what? It's just one of the things we laugh about now. Exactly. It's it's just one of the things we laugh about But, again, it's another reason to slow down. Uh-huh. And pay attention to time and don't rush because as soon as you rush, you can start making a mistakes because it's Yeah. Slow down. That's it. Slow down and don't make the mistake. There's another one that I want to bring up because it's another fun one for me. It's the difference between the ground floor on the first floor? Oh, my word. Yes. Yes. We had, a first floor unit when we rented. And I thought, oh, okay. I don't love First Floor, but I'm I'm fine with that. And then we got our keys. And she said, okay. Take the elevator up. And I said, well, you said we're on the First Floor. And she said, yeah. You are. And I'm like, then why am I taking an elevator? I don't understand. And she looked at me. Like, I had 3 heads. I looked at her like she had 3 heads. And she said, you're on the ground floor. I said, right. The first oh, no. No. No.

Tracy Collins [00:20:41]:

Ground floor, then 1. Yeah. Then 2, then yeah. Yep. And that we learned. Yeah. That we learned. That's one of those ones that it's, yeah, if you can catch you out, because as you say, you think first four second floor, 3rd floor, you're you're standing on the first floor when you know that's a ground floor. So it's got -- And honestly, that does matter for people that maybe are traveling with children or you have a stroller

Kathryn Johnson [00:21:05]:

or someone who's disabled, you need to know that in advance. That is true. Also, we learn to ask and to read the fine print everywhere. Find out if there's an elevator. There are so many old accommodations. that that are historic buildings, and they can't put a or a lift. They can't put a lift in. so it's just good to know. Just -- Yeah. slow down and read the fine print because that matters for some people. Yeah. I think that that's absolutely true. Be absolutely sure when you are

Tracy Collins [00:21:33]:

are booking a hotel if you want the ground floor or what you consider the 1st floor -- Yes. -- that you inquire to make sure. And if you specifically want to be on the ground floor, then you, you know, request that. Yes. You know, if you've got a reason. Yeah. And I I will say we found that the UK was very, very, aware and accommodating

Kathryn Johnson [00:21:53]:

for disabilities. Yep. So it's tell the people upfront here's here's the issue. you don't have to go into detail. Just I have a walker. I have a wheelchair. I have, you know, crutches when I walk. They're very accommodating. We also found that in restaurants. They always ask, are there any allergies? Are there any they -- gluten free options everywhere. my daughter does have a tree nut allergy -- Yeah. -- which is different than a Peanut allergy. people in America don't get it. people in England did. Okay. They totally knew. Yeah. They were great. I would say that London was great. Yeah. Yeah. A little less the further out you got in the more country. Yeah. Very accommodating, just not as proactive with having a separate menu for

somebody with allergies. But if you're gluten free, there are so many options for you in the UK.

Tracy Collins [00:22:45]:

so many options. I know that's been mentioned, yeah, by quite a few people, and just how hot they are and asking in the UK about their so good about it. Yeah. Do you have? And for example, you know, we talk a lot about afternoon teas, and I've got an article in that in our list kind of, you know, what the different afternoon is, if they're gluten free, what they offer. And you can, you know, say a lot of them, if you let them know -- Yep. -- they will then make up that option for you. They'll do the best. I will say

Kathryn Johnson [00:23:13]:

one of the highlights of our trip when we went in May was my daughter had never had, a macaron. Oh, yes. The the French is like a yeah. Macron. Because it's usually made with almonds. Yeah. There's almonds in there, and she can't have them. But we had told them in advance when we made the reservation that she could not have tree nuts. they made some without. So she was able to have her first one ever. She was so excited. As a matter of fact, she asked them, are you sure this doesn't have any any tree nuts. They said, no. No tree nuts. You have an allergy. These are tree nut free. Oh my goodness. Oh, that's no biggie. That's one of the highlights of our trip. was that she got to have one of those. Oh, that's so nice. She's then we got she's never had one before. I'm gonna focus. We'll put that into them. Of course, I have a of course, I have a picture of her holding them. She was so excited about that. Exactly. She was so excited. We'll get that in the show notes. Yes. We have that. Definitely.

Tracy Collins [00:24:10]:

So what what are the things kinda struck you? Is that would be really good to it. Top sheets. Ah, yes. The bedding.

Kathryn Johnson [00:24:19]:

we may have spoken with this before, but, we decided to travel with our own Tap sheet, and I'm glad we did. I know that the UK typically doesn't have one and they have a duvet instead, and there will be a lighter weight duvet in the summer. But, I'm a middle aged woman. I don't wanna duvet. I don't care how lightweight it is. I just want a tiny, little, thin sheet. So we we chose to travel with 1. I'm glad we did. just know in advance.

Tracy Collins [00:24:48]:

consider that in your packing if you don't wanna hold Duvet on you. And it's it's easy to put in your packing, isn't it? It's easy to take It's very easy. And then, you know, I just -- Especially in those compression.

Kathryn Johnson [00:25:01]:

Oh my goodness. Those compression cube packers those were lifesavers. Those are my new best friends, Catherine. Oh, I love them. I loved them. Yes. That in our air tag. We left an air tag in our, suitcases, which I don't did it help? It gave us peace of mind. That's what it helped with, and we did take the train up to Scotland for a few days, but we did not bring all of our luggage. And it was very, cool for us to realize that there are so many luggage drop off places that you can utilize.

Tracy Collins [00:25:37]:

for relatively inexpensive. There are there are actually. And, I've actually got it on my list to write an article about the different like, the different companies in London that you can because obviously, the train station didn't leave it, but there are a few companies as well that cover London. That's actually the UK, in fact, the world. that you can leave your luggage out, and it makes such a difference, isn't it,

Kathryn Johnson [00:25:56]:

to do that? It was we did that. We loaded it with tons of stuff Nothing obviously irreplaceable. We're not gonna we didn't leave anything like personal identification in there or money, but we left an air tag It was affordable. we Google searched it. That's how we found it. I think it had 50,005 star reviews. So we felt pretty good about that. It was right outside King's Cross Station, and it was so worth it. It's so worth it. That something that I've ever utilized before. I had no problems with it. I would do it again in a heartbeat. Oh, yeah. It's great. Well -- -- our travel you were going up to everyone come back down again. So why not? Just take what you needed up there. Absolutely. Absolutely. No. I was in our travels. The other thing that I was thinking about was shopping, stuff closes earlier in the UK stores, specifically. Then they do in America. and even restaurants close earlier and pubs will be open, but often the kitchen closes earlier. Yeah. so

Tracy Collins [00:26:59]:

You're you'll be hard pressed to go into a restaurant at 10:30 at night and think you can order a full meal. it's not, common that we found. No. You won't be able to do that. Yeah. No. I mean, you could go into a fast food place, absolutely, like, anywhere in the world. And that's what we ended up doing food. But, like, are the pubs that, yeah, the kitchen will be open between certain hours. So if you wanna go and eat, then, you know, the unless you go into like, there are some weather open all the time, but but generally, they'll be open between certain hours. Yes. And they're quite often as well. I am saying as well to people just to to book ahead quite often if there's someone specific you wanna go to, like, don't, like, book it. and I said, I can go to borough market, or you can go to Canada market and get food there. Like, if you got the markets in here that you could you don't have to book anything there. You can obviously just buy a street food 1. Right. But -- But you can't go there at 7 o'clock at night? No. No. They're closed. That's true. That is true. But during the day, yes. But exactly, when it gets to later on, no. You're gonna have to either book something,

Kathryn Johnson [00:27:56]:

or or go to a, like, find a Yeah. Possibly. So I think that's just something good to take into consideration. We did a lot of day trips out to the country, and we would come back on a train that would get us into a station at like 7:15 PM. I'm gonna try to pretend I know what time that is in in in 20 hour, 24 hour clock. and we would we would have to take that into into consideration. We can't go to dinner right now at a place. We're gonna have to do something fast. So, honestly, we've frequently would take a later train and we would just eat dinner where we were -- Yeah. Good idea. -- during our day trip. Good idea. because otherwise, I there's only so much pizza hut McDonald's. You can't can't do that stuff. I don't wanna do that. I'm in England. I don't wanna do that. Yeah. No. I'd rather eat it a pub before I leave bath or where they were. You're not. And a perfect great idea. Absolutely. And also we we chose to stay at, locations that had little refrigerators. so we got food that we would keep at our place. and in London specifically, I was surprised when, we didn't get a bag when we purchased our our food, our a few groceries. So I'm one thing that we do just because this is how we travel is I always have a foldable bag with me. So glad I did. Yep. So if that's something, if you're going to UK for the first time,

Tracy Collins [00:29:23]:

Just I recommend always having one with you. Yeah. I've got I've got one actually that clips on. I've got ones on each of my bags. Just clips on. I've got it same Australia. You have to take your own bags. You have to pack your own bags in the UK, which you don't in Australia because which always gets me by surprise when I first go back to the UK because I kinda I've got my bag about stand there. Right. Right. And I, I forgot. I actually have to pack this thing myself. Yes. It's packing yourself? Yes. Take your own bags. Yeah.

Kathryn Johnson [00:29:50]:

And a lot of places would ask us, so would you like a bag? I would say, sure. And then you realized you're paying for it. It's not necessarily a lot of money, but it's unnecessary if just bring it back. Yeah. Just bring just bring it a small -- I don't need to pay for something for my, you know, for my loaf of bread and my cheese, the wonderful, wonderful cheese that you guys have in England. Oh my goodness.

Tracy Collins [00:30:15]:

We we could have eaten cheese sandwiches all day and been happy. was so good there. Well, I I I'm happy to go into Marks and Spencer's food hall every day when I'm back and just buy the gorgeous sandwiches and the lovely food and the lovely meals.

Kathryn Johnson [00:30:27]:

Yes. And I I, again, when we travel, we like to eat where we are and eat what would be not considered American because we can do that every day of our life here. I'd rather experience it experience it there. I will also say, okay. Were you gonna say something? I was gonna say about coffee. I was gonna mention, oh gosh, coffee. Yeah. I know you're not a coffee drinker.

Tracy Collins [00:30:51]:

It's really difficult for me to talk about coffee, and this comes up with a lot of And also for drugs, neither of us drink coffee, neither of us like coffee. Okay. So we can't get into this whole kinda coffee debate about who has the coffee in the world. I I don't know. I don't know. Australia, they have, but, I don't know. I just so so tell me about their coffee.

Kathryn Johnson [00:31:12]:

Okay. I will because I tried a lot. I I felt the coffee again, what I experienced was very different than America. I felt like it was a little weaker, than American coffee than what I'm used to. I will say I had done my research in advance. There is no half and half in, what what we as Americans call half and half. it doesn't exist or it's not what you guys call it. you can I think the closest thing I was told was single cream. It's called single cream. but you don't get that at an average coffee shop. That's more at your high end,

Tracy Collins [00:31:50]:

posher -- Restaurant. I think. Yeah. Yeah. Either one could be cream, I don't think so with coffee. They have milk. Yeah. They'll just say milk. It wouldn't be cream.

Kathryn Johnson [00:32:01]:

Right. So I I learned that. I mean, there's there are Starbucks. I did try a lot of the chains that you guys have because I wanted to try them. I some I loved, some I didn't, and I did also find that it It didn't seem super common to just drink brewed coffee, which is what I drink. I just drink plain old coffee, with a little bit of half and half. everyone seems to drink like lattes and Americanos. Those are really big. The Americanos are a big thing. So when I was there, I just thought, I'm gonna do it. People in London do. I'm drinking an Americano every day. So I definitely I tried everything. I found my favorites. I returned to my favorites. So which was your favorite? Can I ask? I really loved, place called F c b. Okay. It's a chain. I saw it in some train train station. Oh, okay. They were excellent for Americanos. Oh, good. On Cannon Street, there was a place called Rosslyn. They had excellent, excellent coffee. They were really good. cafe neuro and not my favorite. what's the other one? It's called Pretta.

Tracy Collins [00:33:13]:

Richelmonte?

Kathryn Johnson [00:33:14]:

Yes. That one. Yeah. It it was it was okay. In a pinch, I just I'd go to Starbucks and I'd get a cold brew -- Yeah. -- in a pinch and that always works. But you managed to kinda you managed to get, boy. I did. Totally. Totally. And honestly, that wasn't the goal or the focus or the purpose of our vacation. So I just knew in my head, and for 2 weeks, we're gonna do an experiment.

Tracy Collins [00:33:37]:

And I think a lot of this is setting your brain expectations. But you know what? I I'm gonna confess here. So Doug and I are exactly the same when it comes to tea. Really? So to the point that we take our own tea bags with us on holidays. Oh gosh. So, you know, we all have are things that we really love. We all have our things. And, you know, we love our tea and doesn't matter where we go, we end up we like our tea. We just like our tea. And I like, you know, I like the tea the way I make it. So I never ever actually buy tea when I go out. Never. Because I never do how I want it. But you're also talking hot tea. Yes. Correct? Yes. Because I don't think iced tea is a thing in England at all? Well, iced tea, it is. It is, but it's different to what the American iced tea. So iced tea, you can buy it in there. If you got the supermarket or to to, like, corner shop, you'll get iced tea, and you can get peach. You can get mango, you get lemon, you get raspberry. So, like, the tea drinks, the flavor tea drinks. It's more no. It's like a cold drink with and it's mangrove, but it's juice. It's more like a mango Yeah. iced tea juice. It's not. I wouldn't say tea. It's not. It's called iced tea, but it's not what I believe you guys call it

Kathryn Johnson [00:34:49]:

Correct. Ours is literally brewed tea that is just chilled and then served over ice. So it's exact stuff that you drink as hot is what Americans drink. I personally don't drink it, but it's what a lot of people in America

Tracy Collins [00:35:02]:

drink. Okay. Okay. No. No. That's not It's not. It's the same. If you go to a, to a cafe, they might have iced tea on the menu, it will be fruit. It will be like a lemon. You probably want that. Right. You won't get the same thing. No. It won't be made of tea leaves or tea bags. t. No. Yes. No. No. No. No. Yeah. So just know what you're getting in advance. Know what you're getting Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. There are some definite differences. Yeah. For sure. It's really good. Well, it's been so good to chat to. We've we've gone through quite a lot of stuff, and I know we've got We've got quite a few, more we could have talked about, but I think what we're gonna what I'm gonna do is use your article, put some of these things in the show notes, but definitely write and post an entire article using, your, reflections and and the things that kinda struck you, Catherine, when you were in the I think this will be very useful, as I say, to prepare people for those differences. So so, you know, we know you're gonna go to a different culture. It's gonna be different, but it's just good sometimes just just have that little bit of knowledge. So, like I say, that if those things comfort things that you need, just take them with you.

Kathryn Johnson [00:36:09]:

Know what matters to you, do your research, Yeah. Google exists for a reason, and I think that reason is to enlighten us about where we are going. And I I made a list of what was important to me -- Yeah. -- and to our family, and that's what I researched. The rest of it, we agreed. We're gonna go with the flow. Yeah. and we weren't gonna make a big deal out of it. Perfect. No. So thank you so much, Catherine, for coming on the, podcast again. So it's always a pleasure to talk to you. We could talk powers too much. I love talking to you. Yes. Yes. We could. And we do. We generally do. Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:36:41]:

So I'm gonna yeah. So everything we're talking about today will be in the this episode show notes. This is gonna be uktravelplanet.comforward/episode

Intro [00:36:49]:

66.

Tracy Collins [00:36:51]:

again, check out episode 55 for some more information about that kind of UK versus US info. an episode 56 to hear catherine again talk about her she can find out what she did when she was over in the UK. But for this week, this just leaves me to say as usual, happy UK travel planning from me.