

TRANSCRIPT UK TRAVEL PLANNING PODCAST EPISODE 67

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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 [00:00:38]:

Hello, and welcome to episode

Intro [00:00:40]:

67

Tracy Collins [00:00:41]:

of the UK travel plan podcast.

Tracy Collins [00:00:43]:

I'm your host, Tracy Collins. And this week, I thought I would chat about 15 things you need

Tracy Collins [00:00:48]:

to know to make the most of your trip to London. So, obviously, this is based on a whole lot of experience and, as well as, living in the city, visited numerous times, including a recent time spent there in April and in June this year. so, basically, I thought this would be a good opportunity to have a chat. about the 15 things I really think will make a difference and help you get the best out of your visit to London. So first of all, the first tip that I'm gonna say is, use our resources. So we have a ton of resources Obviously, you've listened to the podcast now. So we have the UK travel plan and podcast, and we do have numerous episodes about London. We have got more in the pipeline. recent episode 54, I shared my top 10 experiences, in the city. I had an absolutely wonderful few weeks exploring London. and I took the opportunity to share with you what those ten things that made a difference to me, those experiences that are absolutely thoroughly enjoyed when I was in London. So I recommend that you have a listen to episode, 54. We've got plenty of other episodes as well, So 2431 where we talk about how to get around London and public transport. We have some trip reports from, some of our group members and listeners, Cheryl Ridley, and her

family trip to London in episode 13, and, another episode, with Rob Bruns, episode 28. We do have one with him. He talks about his, his entire trip around the UK, but we did one specifically about London.

Tracy Collins [00:02:30]:

And we have episode 19. We'll talk about day

Tracy Collins [00:02:32]:

trips from London. And we also have episode 4 where I do share some tips for first time visitors. So do pop over and listen to those podcast episodes. Obviously, you listen to the podcast, so you're a podcast,

Tracy Collins [00:02:43]:

you enjoy your podcast, so do take a listen. We also have the UK travel plan and website, and we have a sister site to that called London travel planning. So londontravelplanet.com, which were, obviously, we have a

Tracy Collins [00:02:57]:

lot of, a London content on there. we have quite a bit on UK travel planning as well, but we had decided that there was opportunity to start luncheontravelplanning.com. So pop over there, check out that. We're building up more

Tracy Collins [00:03:09]:

and more resources on that all the time.

Tracy Collins [00:03:12]:

we also have some, essential guides, that we sell. We have written some ebooks. We've got a London travel guide and itinerary Vana ebook, which is available.

Tracy Collins [00:03:24]:

And that, I I kinda wrote that it took me a few weeks to put that together. I have to say a good few weeks. and it includes a step by step guide to planning your ship to London,

Tracy Collins [00:03:33]:

a guide to the different seasons on what you can expect, top 10 attractions, how to get around, information about food and drink, best day trips, tips, and facts. And we've also included example itineraries with maps and an area and accommodation guide.

Tracy Collins [00:03:48]:

so it I'm gonna give a kind of special announcement for podcast listeners. So you

Tracy Collins [00:03:54]:

guys out there if you would like to, purchase our essential guide to London, and itinerary plan out ebooks, you can get an exclusive US\$10 off using the code UKTPpodcast at essentials.uktravelplanning.com

Tracy Collins [00:04:13]:

I will put a link in the show notes. Normally, that retails,

Tracy Collins [00:04:16]:

oh, we sell that for 39 US dollars with, obviously, the

Intro [00:04:19]:

\$10

Tracy Collins [00:04:20]:

off. You will get that for 29 US dollars. So, do pop over and, and purchase that because it's got all of my collective wisdom and dog's wisdom in that ebook. and we've had some excellent reviews of that. So that's the first thing that I would say. User resources that we provide. next thing I wanna say is don't over plan. It's so easy. I don't have so hard, maybe not easy, but it is really easy to over plan, because it's hard to not want to see everything. Obviously, everybody wants to

Tracy Collins [00:04:53]:

see it. And I always want

Tracy Collins [00:04:54]:

to see everything. You know what? And it's just so easy to actually over plan so you

Tracy Collins [00:05:00]:

can get stressed planning it planning it because you're I wanna do this.

Tracy Collins [00:05:03]:

I wanna do this. I wanna do this. I wanna do this. I wanna do this. And you you list just as huge. So, recommend number

Intro [00:05:08]:

2,

Tracy Collins [00:05:08]:

so look at your interests.

Tracy Collins [00:05:11]:

Write down what are the things that you really wanna see? And then you're gonna have to choose. So the best way to do this is to look at things that you really, really, really want to do. So those are your musts that I've got to run down. I really, really want to go to the tower of London. I really, really wanna go to borough market. really wanna go to sky garden. Those things that you kinda have at the top of your list going, I really wanna do those things. Then start grouping those places together. group those places together. So if you get a map, figure out where they are. And that was something that Rob Bruns actually talked about in in, episode 28. That's how he planned his trip. you looked at where the different places were located.

Tracy Collins [00:05:44]:

So, ideally, what you wanna do is you wanna try and group those things together into one day when you're not a one day itinerary. As you can do that. For example, Westminster Abbey has a parliament. London I, they're all close together. So that they are. You can group those together. tower of London, tower bridge, borough market close together. So again, you can have a morning, tower of London. You can pop over to borough market and have some some for launch and

Tracy Collins [00:06:11]:

then pop back to the tower bridge if you want and do

Tracy Collins [00:06:13]:

the power bridge experience. Obviously, if you don't want

Tracy Collins [00:06:15]:

to do it, you can walk across the tower bridge to borough markets. You get the fantastic views. yeah. So, you know, group those things together. Look at the themes that you're interested in, you know, your Harry Potter fan, you know, do you wanna go

Tracy Collins [00:06:26]:

to museums, or you're interested in art galleries, that sort thing. And so a piece

Tracy Collins [00:06:30]:

of those together. So, obviously, again, we have a lot of articles on the website and, obviously, ebook will help with that. We've grouped those things together. Also, I know London can be quite expensive. So if you're budget conscious and you're con thinking, oh, it's gonna cost me a lot of money to go to all the different places I wanna go to. Just bear in mind that There are lots of free things

Tracy Collins [00:06:48]:

to do in London too. So, for example, the sky garden, art galleries, museums go to the chart changing of the guard. Those those are free things that can do in London. So once you've got your idea of the places you want to go and you've got those grouped together and you go right away, so that's day 1, day 2, day 3, day 4, whatever you're working on. Then think about booking your tickets and tours, because things do get booked up. So, you know, we have an article on this on the London travel planning. Again, I'll put a link to it. So you need to be kinda things like the sky garden that opens up 3 weeks before, to make sure that you book that if you want a particular time specifically the later on in the day, it becomes it gets very, booked up.

Tracy Collins [00:07:28]:

you don't wanna miss out on it. We've been so many times to sky garden, and the queue for people who are trying to

Tracy Collins [00:07:33]:

get in that day is always long. And generally, I mean, most of

Tracy Collins [00:07:36]:

the time, yeah, they're waiting in the queue for a

Tracy Collins [00:07:38]:

long time. Who you don't get in, whereas it's a really easy thing to pop on the website and and book your book your slot for the sky garden.

Tracy Collins [00:07:45]:

So, again, I guess it's it's kinda been conscious of those things that you wanna do. Also add up to see if one of the the,

Tracy Collins [00:07:52]:

tourist passes, for example, London Pass, is that gonna be worthwhile using for you. So, you know, add it up and think, okay, if I buy the London Pass, it's gonna cost me this much. If I do it, you know, if I know I'm definitely wanting to see those things, but if I do that, it can pay each individual cost, how much will that add up to? so in some ways, obviously, you need to do that. The maths on that. I do have an article on that so you can see if it works out for you.

do also look at chores beforehand. You know, they get booked up. There's nothing worse than arriving somewhere, and you really wanna do something, and you found out that it's booked up. For example, Harry Potter Studios, very, very busy, booked up a long time in advance often, you know, where visiting at Christmas, I'm already getting that booked. so, you know, a few months out, you need to be looking at those things and saying, okay. Which are the definite things we wanna do that

Tracy Collins [00:08:45]:

I'll be really upset if

Tracy Collins [00:08:46]:

I missed out on and get those booked? Another thing to think about, is obviously getting around London, which we'll talk about, but it's, you know, don't underestimate the amount of walking that you will do there's, you know, it's a very walkable city. there is excellent public transport, which I will talk about a second, but, make sure that you really have comfortable shoes on. It's, you know, there's nothing worse than After day 1 and you've got this as all of your feet. Tell me about it because that was me in April because I unfortunately had to have new shoes, but when I arrived

Tracy Collins [00:09:16]:

in London, And, yeah, so it was it was pretty painful. so do make sure

Tracy Collins [00:09:21]:

that you have comfortable shoes, boots, trainers, whatever you call them. to make sure that, you know, you can enjoy walking around the city. I will just say as well, just a little kind of tips or pay attention -- in the road. I actually nearly got knocked over by a bicycle myself. It wasn't for Tommy from Scale And Studio who were having a photo shoot, who actually saw the cyclists come in and pulled me back. I would have been knocked over, wiped out. The guy was going so fast.

Tracy Collins [00:09:47]:

So not only, obviously, if you're not used to driving on the

Tracy Collins [00:09:50]:

left and you're you're gonna look the wrong way for a start off, You know,

Tracy Collins [00:09:53]:

you have to go both ways. You just have to because there's bicycles seems to

Tracy Collins [00:09:57]:

be everywhere, and they are fast. So that's just a little tip.

Tracy Collins [00:10:02]:

so when you're thinking about visit, obviously, consider when you're visiting because it's busy and expensive during certain times

Tracy Collins [00:10:07]:

of the year. So Obviously, Christmas. Christmas is very popular. New Year is very popular.

Tracy Collins [00:10:12]:

summer season, so July August, it can also be very hot.

Tracy Collins [00:10:16]:

I know they've had a lot of rain. this last month, but when I was in June, it was incredibly hot. it's also very busy. it was in fact, it was busy in April.

Tracy Collins [00:10:26]:

I was a bit surprised, but then guess, with the run up

Tracy Collins [00:10:28]:

to the coronation. But I think, you know, consider that when you're booking, if you can avoid the sort of July, August time of year, then I highly would recommend that you do. It is getting very hot in Europe. I know London has not been particularly, hot in the last month, but, it can get very, very hot in London and sticky and really uncomfortable. And, you know, museums don't have aircon and things like that. So, you know, underground doesn't have aircon. A lot of hotels don't have, aircon. So that's something to consider.

Tracy Collins [00:10:59]:

So I guess that brings us

Tracy Collins [00:11:00]:

up to the weather. You have to be flexible. So, you know, as I say that I've I've heard it's been raining a lot in the last month. So you just have to have some flexibility. Obviously, when you pack in, think about what you're gonna pack,

Tracy Collins [00:11:12]:

I would check the weather,

Tracy Collins [00:11:14]:

you know, a week before you arrive and then sort of look at your packing list then potentially and change and add things in. Because, you know, if it's if it could rain, it could rain sometime. It could be red the entire time that you're there. So you kinda have to have that flexibility. if it's raining, go to a museum. You know, they're perfect places to go. If it's if it's raining in London and you're like, oh, Can we can we swap things around? That's what I'm saying. Give yourself some flexibility. Then go to one of the museums, South Kensington. You've got the V&A. You've got the Science Museum. You've got the Natural History Museum. got plenty of museums and they're free.

Tracy Collins [00:11:45]:

Next thing to think about is to consider

Tracy Collins [00:11:48]:

where you are gonna stay in London, and I cannot stress this enough. it's really, really important to consider where you're staying. Now I get I totally understand how expensive it is to stay in London. It is. It's really pricey. And so to save money, you think, okay. You know what? I'm gonna stay outside London. I'm gonna transfer. I'm gonna get the train in and out. Don't. Seriously, don't. It's gonna cost you for a start off. It's gonna cost you in time. It's gonna cost you your money. It's gonna cost you in patience because, seriously, it's rush hour.

Tracy Collins [00:12:18]:

You don't wanna be going in and out of London anyway. And also, you know, at the end of the day, when you've been walking,

Tracy Collins [00:12:23]:

you could do 25 thousand steps. Do you really wanna get into a tube or then get yourself out of London and then have to walk to accommodation. Some of that, even if you're staying in London and, you know, in zone 1 or 2, especially zone 2, you've gotta think about how I'm gonna get backwards and forwards to the place I wanna

Tracy Collins [00:12:39]:

go because most of their attractions are not doing

Tracy Collins [00:12:41]:

our zone 1. So Are you gonna have to do a walk to a train station, or you're gonna have to, catch a bus, which is fine. If you're near a bus stop, that's absolutely getting Buster's on London is a really great way to get around. But just kind of think where I am,

Tracy Collins [00:12:56]:

how I'm gonna get there from

Tracy Collins [00:12:57]:

the airport, another great thing

Tracy Collins [00:12:59]:

to think about. How I'm gonna get to where our next wanna go to

Tracy Collins [00:13:02]:

if you're gonna travel around the UK. So think about the

Tracy Collins [00:13:05]:

train stations that you near, think about being near a tube, Think about that you've gotta get your if you don't wanna get a a private transfer, that you're gonna have to

Tracy Collins [00:13:12]:

get your luggage onto the tube system. Do you wanna do that? So really think about where you wanna stay. So, you know, I've got I I'm gonna do a podcast episode about that, and my favorite area is at Southbank around the tower of London.

Tracy Collins [00:13:25]:

I really like covent garden

Tracy Collins [00:13:26]:

is an excellent area. There's definitely some brilliant areas to stay in London. Yes. It is pricey. I can't I can't do anything about that. If I could, I would. But I can't. So really the London part of your trip, unless you just spend the time in London, it's probably gonna be splurgy time when it comes to accommodation. do check for air conditioner, do check for lift, elevator if you need one because not all hotels will have either air condition or have lifts. there's a lot of old buildings, so either possibly not allowed to have

Tracy Collins [00:13:57]:

air condition and they haven't got room for a lift. So if that's really important, do you

Tracy Collins [00:14:00]:

need to consider that when you do the book I book all my, hotels through Bookin.com always have, you know, that's who I check, and you can actually filter to make sure you have those things.

Tracy Collins [00:14:10]:

The but the key absolute key, key, key important thing you need to consider

Tracy Collins [00:14:15]:

is where you are going to stay when you're in London. And just remember, you gotta get from that accommodation to the main sites. And then after a long day, sightseeing, you gotta get yourself back to accommodation. And also, you

Tracy Collins [00:14:29]:

know what? Stay somewhere where there's lots of things going on and and enjoy the actual the whole atmosphere. Think about restaurants because you, obviously, some areas is gonna be more places

Tracy Collins [00:14:37]:

to eat than others. So If you're the further out you go, it might be a little bit more difficult to kind of fit that in, find

Tracy Collins [00:14:44]:

a corner shop, find somewhere

Tracy Collins [00:14:45]:

to eat. and, you know, after a long day, do you really want that hassle? So that's just an important thing to think about. Again, when you're flying into whichever airport, if you're flying that you throw a Gatwick, or one of the other London airports. Think about how you're getting to get into the city. This is something that I plan meticulously. Because after a flight, I am stressed. I'm tired. I don't want to have to think about how I'm gonna get to my accommodation. So Really, again, this is an important thing when you think about where your accommodation is when you know which airport you're flying into, how are you gonna get from an airport to accommodations to plan that. For me, there's nothing better than walking out of the arrivals and having somebody with my name on it. because then I know I can relax, and I'm gonna get taken to my accommodation. Yes. It may be a little bit more pricey, but you know what? The order I've got, the less I wanna be hassle, to be honest.

Tracy Collins [00:15:37]:

when I talk about actually public transport,

Tracy Collins [00:15:39]:

I did mention that earlier. use public transport do not drive in London. Please do not drive in London. It's just not worth it. It's really stressful.

Tracy Collins [00:15:48]:

If you're not used to driving on

Tracy Collins [00:15:50]:

the left hand side, it's add that to to the mix as well.

Tracy Collins [00:15:54]:

But, you know, I don't drive

Tracy Collins [00:15:55]:

in London. I used to drive in London.

Intro [00:15:57]:

25, 30

Tracy Collins [00:15:57]:

years ago, I drove in London. Would I drive in London now? No. We couldn't pay me enough. Could not pay me enough

Tracy Collins [00:16:02]:

to drive in London.

Tracy Collins [00:16:03]:

You're hiring a car, get yourself outside London and pick it

Tracy Collins [00:16:06]:

up from an airport or or a nearest town or city. Seriously, best way to do it. Don't drive in London. the rules,

Tracy Collins [00:16:13]:

the fact that there's congestion charge, it's so slow. You don't need to. Public transport is

Tracy Collins [00:16:19]:

the way to get around. So obviously you've got

Tracy Collins [00:16:21]:

the tube. You've got the bus. You've got Uber boat boats to get yourself down the temps. So you've got options. I'm not gonna talk in this podcast

Tracy Collins [00:16:28]:

about the oyster. card versus contactless, which is the way that you pay to get around by public transport.

Tracy Collins [00:16:34]:

I'm gonna talk about that because

Tracy Collins [00:16:35]:

I have talked about that in previous episode and episode 24. And also, there's plenty

Tracy Collins [00:16:40]:

of articles on the website about using public transport and whether oyster card versus list. It's a hugely emotive subject. Honestly, it in our Facebook group, it's it's there's people have strong strong feelings about one way or the and I'll just say to you read our article and make your own mind up for what works for you.

Tracy Collins [00:17:00]:

Next thing I would suggest is to download apps. So we use CityMapper, TFL Go, London Buspow, there are all excellent apps to help you get around the city. I have got, an an article about best, apps, and I'm gonna put one together for apps for London as well, which I will link to in the show show notes. But seriously, download the apps before you get there, and that they

Tracy Collins [00:17:20]:

will help you get around the city without any problems. And to be honest, when, you know, most people will say they were a bit nervous about traveling around London using proper transport, but once you use the tube a few times,

Tracy Collins [00:17:30]:

You know what? It's really easy. It's not hard. It really isn't. It's just the you're not used to it. It's obviously that kinda Yeah. Oh, bit of nervousness about it.

Tracy Collins [00:17:39]:

But once you've done it a

Tracy Collins [00:17:40]:

few times, seriously, it'd be absolutely absolutely fine. So I did more, room say earlier, about, booking things like tickets and tours before you go, but also think about, if you're interested in afternoon tea, or particular restaurants, if you go in and if, you know, the popular, just make sure that you do book in advance because They will get booked up. restaurants, obviously, there's so many in London.

Tracy Collins [00:18:05]:

I can't even I can't even imagine

Tracy Collins [00:18:07]:

how many they're on London, actually, but You do need to if there's a particular one that you wanna go to, do book ahead.

Tracy Collins [00:18:13]:

If there's even for me,

Tracy Collins [00:18:14]:

I mean, I love going to the, pick and cheese at

Tracy Collins [00:18:16]:

the \$7 a common garden. That's one

Tracy Collins [00:18:18]:

of my but you have to book book it. So then you, you know, you're not gonna get then. Be honest. Sorry. We're fully booked. so do some research.

Tracy Collins [00:18:25]:

I am putting together an article about we're at different places in London, which also goes into some

Tracy Collins [00:18:30]:

of the different some of the, independent and chain restaurants and cafes that you can find. because I know it's something that we get asked about all the time, you know, best place of efficient shifts, best place for a Sunday roast, that sort of thing. So that's all gonna be in that article. We all

Tracy Collins [00:18:45]:

I also have just published

Tracy Collins [00:18:47]:

an article about London Food, which goes into

Tracy Collins [00:18:49]:

the different types of food that

Tracy Collins [00:18:50]:

I recommend that you try when you're in London.

Tracy Collins [00:18:53]:

The other thing I'd say as well is, there are lots of, independent and, chain restaurants and, cafes, So, you can, you know, pop in and try some of those. Again, I'll

Tracy Collins [00:19:05]:

be I'll list in those, but something like Caffeineera, print and manage, Margie, those are very popular for, like, things like, coffee and cakes and sandwiches, that sort of thing.

Tracy Collins [00:19:14]:

Obviously, as well, you can go to places like Tesco Express and Marks and Spencers simply food where you can get fantastic food Marks and

Tracy Collins [00:19:21]:

Spencers is I absolutely love Marks and Penses. You get fantastic sandwiches. You can get, well, I've talked about them in previous episode, meal deals where

Tracy Collins [00:19:30]:

you can get a sandwich, piece

Tracy Collins [00:19:31]:

of fruit, pipe of crisp, drink, whatever it is, put together and they're on it

Tracy Collins [00:19:34]:

as for a certain price.

Tracy Collins [00:19:36]:

So you select those items, take those to till, and you get those for 4, 5, 6, 7, or however much it is. what they put together. So that's a really good way to do lunch. And Marks and

Spence as well, also has some fantastic ones for for evening meals as well. If you're staying in a, in a in a apartment or similar accommodation, and you're gonna make your own food.

Tracy Collins [00:19:57]:

market's also a great place

Tracy Collins [00:19:58]:

for food, borough market, gambling, fantastic food there. Believe me, I hear quite often, people weren't expecting the food in London to be great.

Tracy Collins [00:20:06]:

I don't know why because it's absolutely fantastic. food is brilliant. You will get food from all around the world, excellent food. and people often say I was so surprised. I don't know, as I say, I don't know why food is amazing. So Do book an afternoon tea. If you want 1, I have got a guide to afternoon teas, fantastic afternoon teas, whether you want a classic afternoon tea or a themed afternoon tea, I'm waiting now for the Christmas afternoon teas to come

Tracy Collins [00:20:29]:

out to see which ones I'm gonna do at Christmas. so

Tracy Collins [00:20:32]:

you got plenty of choice. Just do book ahead. The thing I'm gonna say, I guess number 14, I've been labeling them, but anyway, this number 14, do get out of the city.

Tracy Collins [00:20:41]:

If you're in London for long enough, you know, Do book a day out at least a day trip out if you're, you

Tracy Collins [00:20:47]:

know, if you're there for a

Tracy Collins [00:20:48]:

week, take a take a day trip trip out. So you can go out by train, there's bath, Canterbury, Oxford, Cambridge,

Tracy Collins [00:20:53]:

You can even get to your Liverpool and, yes, Paris are actually possible in a day. You could do all those places in a day. So you can do it by train, or you can do a tour. So, obviously, you know, we partner. We have got some preferred partners, who who kind of specialize in

in London and surrounds. So John England for south east of England, Victoria, Victoria from Cotswortteicopters does, obviously, Cotswalls, as it says. And ours from my Taylor Tours, who does, London areas. If you wanna go out to Bathstone Hinge, you know, they can take you

Tracy Collins [00:21:25]:

out on private day data Us will pick you

Tracy Collins [00:21:27]:

up in London, but Victoria and and John, if you you just need to get out to them,

Tracy Collins [00:21:31]:

but they will give you directions, to get to them so they can take you out on a private tour. Again, book ahead, I will put links in to their, different companies in the show notes as well.

Tracy Collins [00:21:44]:

So that's basically that's a quick rundown in 20 odd minutes of my fifteen things you need to know to make the most of your trip to London as a We've got a special offer at the moment on our, ebook. So, you know, pop over to our, website, and I'll put

Tracy Collins [00:22:01]:

a link into that and use could UKTP podcast for that \$10 reduction in the cost of the ebook.

Tracy Collins [00:22:09]:

Anyway, I just wanna say Thank you for listening. We appreciate it. We absolutely love all the fantastic reviews we receive from everybody, and we and we're just happy that we are helping you make the most of your trip to the UK, whether it's London or wherever you're gonna visit in the UK. So do listen to it. We've got loads of other podcasts to listen to. Do pop over to our our websites, and take a look. UKtravelplanet.com and londontravelplanet.com,

Tracy Collins [00:22:32]:

pop over and join our Facebook group. Again, UK UK travel planning in Facebook. So you have to it's

Tracy Collins [00:22:39]:

a private group, so you just have to apply it join. otherwise, really. That's all I have to say for this week. so all I wanna say until next week is happy UK travel planning.