

# **UKTP Podcast Episode #68 transcript**

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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 picturesque countryside to seaside towns.

Tracy Collins [00:00:37]:

Hi and welcome to episode 68 of the UK Travel Planning podcast. In this podcast, I thought I would chat about how to find the best place in London for your stay. Now I know that is a quite a kind of topical question. It's something that we are asked constantly in the Facebook group and I often receive emails asking us basically the question where is the best place to stay in London? Obviously that is going to vary depending on quite a few different things that are relevant to you personally. But really I thought in this episode it would be a good idea to give you some easy steps to help you select the best area to stay in London for you and also just give a kind of brief overview of the main areas that we recommend. I will say that on our website, [uktravelplanning.com](http://uktravelplanning.com) and [Londontravelplanning.com](http://Londontravelplanning.com), we have got detailed area guides and options of accommodation for each of those areas dependent on your budget. So do pop over, I will put a link in the show notes to those guides. They're very detailed and once you've basically got an idea of which area you would like to stay in, pop over, look at the relevant guide and you say, we've got lots of different accommodation options for you to have a look at.

Tracy Collins [00:01:53]:

Okay, so the thing that I will say, which is really my top tip for this, is you don't want to stay outside of London. Really you don't. It's just too much hassle getting in and out of the city. Every know if you think about this, you're paying a lot for your trip to know. And I know I totally get this, that the accommodation in London will probably be the most expensive part of your trip. It certainly is. It always makes me gulp a bit. I'm quite lucky in that we do have friends in London that we occasionally stay with as well, but we also do stay in the city itself.

Tracy Collins [00:02:26]:

So I guess what I want to say is consider this. It's like do you want to spend your days traveling in and out of London on public transport? Probably not. When you've been out and about all day sightseeing, what do you want to do? I know I want to get back to my hotel, my accommodation and just relax. I do not want to get myself on a tube, on a train and outside of London or have a lot of walking to do or jump on three different buses or know I want to get back to my accommodation. So really think about that. Also, to be honest, it will add to your experience. If you're staying in London and like the central I'm talking about really zone

one here, if you're staying in the central area of London, because you walk in distance to lots and lots of different places, depend on the area that you stay, you know, soak up the atmosphere, go to the restaurants, walk around, enjoy it. So choose an area that obviously will fit your budget.

Tracy Collins [00:03:22]:

But in central London, that's really what I highly recommend. So what are the four easy steps that I recommend help you select the best area to stay in London? So first thing, obviously is you need to think about your, you know, are you looking for a luxury hotel, a boutique hotel, or you're going to be more budget conscious? Obviously, I will say you need to budget more for your accommodation in London than anywhere else. Edinburgh is also pretty pricey at certain times of year, but you can find options, whether you're looking for a luxury stay, family friendly accommodation or best value budget as well, there are different options. So what I would say, though, is you've got to consider as or when you are going to be arriving in London. So prices obviously are going to vary due to the demand. So you're going to expect the highest rates during sort of May, June, July, late September, October during the Christmas period. Those are when school holidays on in the, you know, Easter time. I should have mentioned Easter.

Tracy Collins [00:04:23]:

Easter time, end of May is a school holiday. June, July, August. Those are the times where lots and lots and lots of tourists are arriving in London. So if you are planning to know over the summer months, you know, you're going to pay higher prices. And also school holidays are on in Europe and in the UK, so it's extremely busy. September is also becoming really more popular now as a time to visit October. There's again, school holidays, the last week and obviously the Christmas period and over the new year, those are really expensive times, so prices will go up. There's more demand during those times a year.

Tracy Collins [00:05:00]:

So really kind of, I suppose from spring through to kind of early fall, autumn and then the Christmas period. So it is expect to pay more. If you're traveling those time, it's going to cost you more. So really you can budget around, I guess, 75 pound for budget accommodation outside of the peak terms. That's what I'll say. It's kind of a ballpark figure. 150 pound plus, really, per night for a three star hotel in zone one, that would be mid range accommodation. And obviously for luxury accommodation, you can just the sky's the limit, you can pay a lot.

Tracy Collins [00:05:38]:

Yes, there's some beautiful hotels in London very expensive hotels in London. So really, again, it's when you are putting together the budget for, your know, consider the accommodation in London so that you give yourself a reasonable amount of wriggle room, I guess. And then I guess the next thing is really consider which area of London best suits your needs. And I totally get this. If you don't know London, if this is your first trip to London, how do you choose an area? So I will be talking about that in a think, consider, you know, where are you going to be arriving into and departing from in London? So you've got

obviously there's five major airports surrounding London, so which airport will you be arriving in? Because obviously you want to get from the airport to, your know, are you going to be traveling onwards via train? So are you going to France? Are you going to catch the Eurostar over to Paris or are you going to go to Amsterdam? Are you going to be traveling up to Scotland? Are you going to go to York and Edinburgh? Are you going to know what other trips are you planning to take from London or are you just going to be based in London and want to take day trips? So consider that you want to be near a transport hub. I would always, always recommend that you stay near a Tube station, really within walking distance, five minutes of a Tube station because as I say again, once you've been traipsing around London all day, you do not want to spend half an hour walking back to your accommodation. I mean, you might want to I know I don't after a long day walking. So get yourself near a Tube station.

Tracy Collins [00:07:05]:

It will get you quicker around the city. Yeah, obviously things like are you looking for a family friendly area or do you want something with a bit more lively nightlife or do you want to be near like certain attractions or sport and events or within walking distance of theaters. So again, it's kind of which area is going to be best for you, what will suit your needs. So once you've decided on the area and as I say, I will talk about each of the different areas that we kind of recommend and who the best suit and some of the attractions in each of those areas in a bit. But once you've decided which area you like, then start looking at the accommodation options. So again, consider how close it is to the Tube for transport links. You don't want to be having to get a Tube and then onto a mainland train and then onto a bus and then onto have to walk. And I've seen this.

Tracy Collins [00:07:57]:

Honestly, I have. It adds to costs anyway because it takes away time from your trip and it adds to costs because you've got to get the transport there and back. Again, I will just recommend that if something like air conditioning is important to you, a lift elevator is important. Make sure that you do check that those are available. Also, I guess another thing to consider is what time can you drop your luggage off? Because if you're arriving at Heathrow at 06:30 a.m. In the morning and you can't drop your luggage off until three in the afternoon, you need to consider what are you going to do with your luggage. Obviously a hotel 99.9% of the time you can just drop it off with them, but it is worth considering. Think about what is it that you want from a hotel.

Tracy Collins [00:08:47]:

And obviously we use booking.com, and we have done for years to book our accommodation, and obviously you can check those things off so that's the accommodation options which meet your criteria come up when you do a search. So obviously the next thing to do is book it. Once you've chosen, there's a wide range of accommodation options in London. You've got hotels, you've got apartments, there's guest houses you could look at, obviously booking.com, there's VRBO, there's Plum Guide, there's lots of different accommodation providers that you can go through to find the relevant accommodation for you. I tend to book with free cancellation. I use booking.com for that. I like free cancellation

because you just never know what might happen and you pay and that's know you've paid your money and no cancellation and something you know, if it's your first time visit to London and you're unfamiliar or unsure of the location of the various areas, I do have an actual map that goes with the guide on the website. So I would suggest you have a look at that just to familiarize yourself anyway with the different areas.

Tracy Collins [00:09:57]:

But so the next part of the podcast, I'm actually going to go through our favorite areas that we stay in. I've got kind of three areas that we generally choose when we go to stay in London, so I'll talk about those three. I'm not actually going to recommend various accommodations and hotels in this podcast because honestly, I don't know what your budget is, I don't know what your travel style is. You might be traveling solo, you might be traveling as a family of ten, I don't know. I do have articles for those, but I think the best thing to do as I say is to take a listen and see which area kind of resonates with you and then pop over to the website and have a look through, maybe give yourself a couple of ideas, and then choose one of those areas that you go. Right, okay. That's where we're going to stay. That's the one that appeals to us.

Tracy Collins [00:10:49]:

Okay, so the first area that I'm going to talk about basically around Covent Garden. So looking at Covent Garden, Charring Cross and Trafalgar Square area. So now this area really, if it's your first time in London, this is a perfect area to stay in. It's great if you've got older children, you're a theatre lover, you love shops. It's one of my favorite areas in London. It's one I always recommend people visit. Anyway, definitely go to have a look around Covent Garden if you're not staying in that area. But like Covent Garden, it really is an area that's got everything there's beautiful market there, you've got theaters, restaurants, shopping, shopping, shopping, shopping and much more.

Tracy Collins [00:11:29]:

So it's a really lovely, pleasant neighborhood feel. Yes, it is a popular area, I'm not going to deny that it is, but it's just lovely. And Christmas is amazing at Covent Garden. In fact, any time of year is lovely at Covent Garden. So there's a tube station there that will connect you to locations all over the capital. I will just say about Covent Garden tube Station is that if it's got a lift or a lot of steps, but you can walk to Leicester Square Station, which isn't very far away either, or Holbourne, which we use quite often, but really you're close to Leicester Square and Bank, Metropolga Square. They're very easy to get to from Covent Garden. Got the Royal Opera House, London Transport Museum.

Tracy Collins [00:12:13]:

So lots of things on your doorstep. So it really is a lovely area. I guess the cons staying in Covent Garden is that it is busy. It is a busy area to stay in and accommodation can be more costly in the Covent Garden area because you've got hotels like Savoy, Waldorf Hilton in that area, but gorgeous place to stay. So I highly recommend that. So if it's your first time to London and you want to kind of know you're into theater, you like shops, you like

restaurants, you want to be in a great place that's walking distance, a lot of attractions then look at that Covent Garden area. I stayed in the Covent Holbourne last year and this year actually stayed in that area and found it really easy to get around London and I just love the restaurants around that area as Covent Garden, Sharon Cross, that kind of area. My first recommendation, the second area that I recommend is South Bank bankside around there.

Tracy Collins [00:13:16]:

So you've got Waterloo Station. It's a lovely area to stay in. I actually stayed in South Bank in April this year, very close to the London Eye. It's a great area for art and culture booties. It's a great place to stay in London at Christmas because you've got markets near, you know, it's a lovely, lovely place to stay. You've got Shakespeare's Globe and obviously I've mentioned a few times that the London Eye, which I always go on when I'm in London, I absolutely love the views from the London Eye over Westminster, Big Ben, so it's really good you're near to Waterloo Station. So again, really easy to get around London. It's more mean, you are slightly a little bit more removed from the city center, but to be honest, it's really easy to get.

Tracy Collins [00:14:05]:

Know, you can walk over Westminster Bridge, you've got Big Ben, Houses of Parliament there, as you know. Walk down South Bank. That South Bank Walk is lovely. Again, some really good hotels in that area. So that would probably be my second choice. And I know that's a popular area because we're often asked about staying there. So, yeah, great views. As I say, you're going to get great views of Westminster, London Eye if you kind of stay in that South Bank area.

Tracy Collins [00:14:34]:

So my third choice of area would be Tower Bridge and the City of London. Now, this area really is dominated by history and yes, it is a main business district, but it's a great area if you love history. And for sightseeing, we stayed just beside the Tower of London last year, fantastic hotel there and great. So we had an early tour with walks, the opening ceremony of the Tower of London. So it was fantastic to just literally be on the doorstep of the Tower. So got up and went straight to the tour. And of course, we had a Tube station on our Tower Hill Tube station, literally on the doorstep of the hotel so we could get around London without any issues whatsoever and very close to the river. So, again, if we wanted to jump on the Uber boat, very easy.

Tracy Collins [00:15:22]:

And you've got the Tower of London next to you, you've got the Shard opposite. You can walk across Tower Bridge, go to Borough Market. So it's a really nice place to stay. It is quieter at the weekend because obviously City of London people aren't working at the weekends, so it will be not as they say, it's not kind of like Covent Garden where you've got that real kind of neighborhood feel, but it's an area that I would still definitely choose to stay at. So I think probably those are my three favorite areas. And I'm sure that if you're listening and you've stayed in London, you may have your own favorite area that you've stayed in.

But for us, I think kind of Covent Garden, South Bank and around the Tower of London are the three areas that we love to stay in. But obviously there are other areas.

Tracy Collins [00:16:11]:

So let's have a chat about some of those. Another area to consider is that of South Kensington, Knightsbridge, Belgravia and Chelsea. So those are perfect areas, really, for families because you've got access to wonderful museums, great for culture lovers and shoppers. So, I mean, main things in that area you've got the Natural History Museum, science Museum, B. E. Museums in South Kensington or South Ken, as it's known to locals. Obviously, you've got Kensington Palace as well, if you want to head there. You've got Hyde Park.

Tracy Collins [00:16:46]:

If you enjoy walks and you want to have a walk around Hyde Park. Knights Bridge is obviously the home of one of the most famous department stores in the world. Harrods, which is worth a visit if you like shops. I mean, I go because I love the food halls in Harrods. So, yeah, it's a good area to stay in. A little bit more tricky, I guess, for transport connections to some areas, but it depends where you stay. I mean, you have got the Tube, so you've got Tube links from South Kensington Knightsbridge, so, to be honest, pretty good area to stay. As I say, there are some pretty good and very expensive hotels in that area, but also you will find some more affordable accommodation too.

Tracy Collins [00:17:28]:

A fourth area to consider is the Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury areas. They're brilliant. Really great areas for stay if you're traveling with a family, because you've got a lot of spacious squares and leafy streets. It's really nice. It's just actually north of Covent Garden area, so it's within easy reach of central areas in the theatres and shops of the West End. It was seen as a literate intellectual capital of this city, so you've got various university buildings and lots of treeline squares. So Fitzroy is an interesting district. You've got family homes, apartment blocks, lots of cafes and pubs, and it's a good area to stay in London if you like exploring museums, because there's lots of different interesting museums in that area.

Tracy Collins [00:18:09]:

And obviously Bloomsbury, you've got the British Museum, so it's a historic literary district within easy reach of central London areas, so it's quite a quiet, more sedate area to stay in. So perfect, I suppose, if you've got younger children or if you want to stay a little bit out of the action. But again, lovely area to stay in. Now, if you love shopping, then probably the Mayfair, Mary Labone and Oxford Street area would be a really good area to stay in for you. Very popular with celebrities, shoppers and lovers of fine know. I'm sure most people have heard of Mayfair because it's the most exclusive district in the City of London, in London, and the most sought after area, often the monopoly. So this part of the capital borders Hyde Park's eastern edge and is filled with very smart hotels, market eateries and elegant townhouses. So obviously, this is a very popular place for celebrities to stay, but it is a little bit more pricey.

Tracy Collins [00:19:13]:

It is the smartest part of London, so you're going to get luxury hotels and Michelin style restaurants all over the place. But if you on a budget, this is not the area to choose. You're going to get limited budget accommodation, if any, in that area. But there are options if you wanted to stay in there. I know there are a couple of one or two b b's that we do list for that area. Next area I want to talk about is Westminster and St James, which is an excellent option for those of you who want to see all the sites, enjoy walking and relaxing in beautiful parks and have a little bit of luxury. It's actually a perfect location if you're taking a weekend break into London. So obviously you're near Victoria Rail and Coach stations, which this makes it ideal location really.

Tracy Collins [00:19:55]:

If you're going to ride by public transport, you've got Big Ben, House of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Green Park, so lots and lots to see in that area. I know actually the area around Victoria comes up quite often because it's a little bit more budget friendly. Not a great area to museums, but know you can just jump on the Tube and go down to South Kensington to the museums and obviously most hotels aren't, you're not close to the Thames, so if you want to be close to the river, that's probably not the best place to stay. Now if you're into shopping and you want light nightlife, so if you want to go out and about at night, then Soho and Leicester Square is probably the best place to stay. You've got all the shops of central London. Conimy Street, Bond Street, Oxford Street, Regent Street. Leicester Square is the cinema central of London's where all the big London film premieres take place. And also that area borders on theatreland, so obviously if you want to see the theatre, fantastic shopping, amazing liberty Hamleys, designer boutiques.

Tracy Collins [00:21:00]:

You've got Chinatown, fantastic area is there for nightlife. You've got shops, cinemas, dining, theaters, lots of nightlife going on. You've got Chinatown's restaurants, so you've got some yummy affordable food con for this area is that it's very, very busy and again, not very many budget options in that area, but those are kind of the main areas that I would kind of suggest. On top of that, I will talk about I'm just going to have a look at my notes because there are quite a lot of areas. I mean we cover twelve in our article and as I say, I've got articles about each of those. I guess one of the other areas that I would mention, I am going to mention is around Camden in Kings Cross. So Kings Cross had a bad rep for a long time and I know that people kind of go, oh no, it's not a great area of London to stay in. But actually there's been a lot of regeneration in the Kings Cross area.

Tracy Collins [00:21:57]:

It's a good area if you're on a budget, you've got excellent links for the Eurostar and if you're traveling up to Scotland from obviously Kings Cross and from St Pancras International, obviously you've got Camden in that area as well, which is amazing. Camden Market. Fantastic food options. It's a really eclectic area around Regents Canal. You've got the shops, you've got the stores, you've got Cold RoPS Yard, which is fairly new, which has got

shops and lots of different eateries. It's lovely. It's not an area though, if you want five star luxury, I will say that if you really want to stay in the Kings Cross area, not really going to find that kind of high end hotel, but saying that there are some really good and not cheap hotels actually in the area, but yeah, so I would say it's a good area, really. Again, if you're looking at transport links to outside of London, it's a great area to stay in and it is a little bit more budget friendly, certainly going up towards yeah, so you've got loads of different options there.

Tracy Collins [00:23:09]:

I think I've probably gone through about six or seven now, so those are probably our most favorite areas to stay in in London. Obviously you could go out a little bit further and go out towards Greenwich. Greenwich is another nice area to stay in and London a little bit further out. You could stay in Nottinghill area, which is, I mean, nottinghill fantastic if you in Instagram. I want to take loads of pictures of the beautiful homes because it is gorgeous and obviously you've got the market and obviously it's featured in many movies, so it's pretty famous, but obviously you've got lots of different options. I think the best thing to do is after this podcast is to go and have a look at our articles, choose which area, I mean, which area did I talk about that you kind of went, oh, that sounds just perfect for me or for my family. Have a look, have a look on the website, look at the general article that I've got and then choose the area as I say that goes, that sounds like that's for me, and then read our more detailed article on the area. They say we've got lots of different options for each area in terms of accommodation.

Tracy Collins [00:24:22]:

We also have articles on the website. So we've got Best Hotels in London for families, we've got Best Hotels in London for larger groups as well. We've got budget London accommodation options mid range. I don't think I've put a luxury one together yet. Maybe I should. Yeah, so have a look through those and use those to choose your best place to stay in London. If you still have any questions, pop over and join our Facebook group, UK Travel Planning on Facebook's private group. We do vet all applications for that group.

Tracy Collins [00:24:57]:

So come over, it's a safe environment. Come and ask. There's something you're thinking about. It's like have a chat or just look at actually what we've already talked about in the group because there's lots and lots of posts about there and people are kind of going, oh, is this a good area? Is that a good area? And obviously I do point them towards the podcast and the website. Anyway, thanks for listening this week, it's been great to chat to you. And I want to say, as always, the show notes will be on the website. [uktravelplanning.com](http://uktravelplanning.com) episode 68. That just leads me into say, until next week, happy UK Travel Planning.