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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.

[00:00:37.910] - Tracy Collins

Hi, and welcome to Episode 70 of the UK Travel Planning and Podcast. It's great to have you here this week. I thought actually I would start tackling, again, one of the really popular topics that comes up in our Facebook group and via email is about what to pack when you're going to the UK. I know there's a perennial question that everybody gets stuck on. You know something? Even when we come to start thinking about what we're going to take, we have to think carefully because there are lots of different questions, really, and things to consider when you're starting to prepare your packing list.

[00:01:15.080] - Tracy Collins

That's what I'm going to talk about in this episode. I'm going to talk about those things to consider, those points to go through when you're starting to think about what you're going to put together and pack. I'll talk about some of the recommended items that you include when you travel to the UK. Lastly, I'll talk about clothing because I know that's going to be the big thing. It's like, so what should I actually wear? What should I pack in terms of clothing? How much do I need? What do I need?

[00:01:43.300] - Tracy Collins

Those are the three areas that I'm going to tackle in this podcast. We'll start with things to consider when packing for your trip. You need to think about what time of the year are you visiting the UK? Where are you going to be visiting? How long will you be in the UK for? What places are you visiting? Are you going to be just going to cities or are you going to be planning visits to the countryside? What types of activities are you tending to do? Will you be based in one place or are you going to be travelling around the UK and what transport will you be using to get around the UK?

[00:02:18.720] - Tracy Collins

Planning and preparation are really the best steps to ensure you pack exactly what you need for your trip. Take into consideration when you think about those questions, the answers, what you answered to those questions will actually help you when it comes to actually putting together what you need when you're visiting the UK. First thing I'm going to talk about, you really need to consider, is the weather. The time of year you're visiting the UK will obviously influence what you'll need to pack.

[00:02:47.580] - Tracy Collins

Broadly speaking, this is very, the UK is warm in summer and cold in the winter. But I'm going to say, caveat to that is that the climate is notoriously unreliable. For example, you could be there and have a beautiful, hot, sunny May, like we did this year, June. Then the year before it could be awful. Well, the next year it could be awful. You can't tell. I know last year I was in the UK in July and the weather was absolutely gorgeous, dry, sunny, hot. In fact, it was very hot. This year it rained.

[00:03:21.690] - Tracy Collins

Unfortunately, I haven't got a crystal ball, so I can't predict what the weather will be like. Really, I would recommend actually a big tip, I think about it, is check the weather for the week or two before you go just to get a general idea of what the weather pattern is doing. It is worth just checking on what the longer term forecast is for the time that you're going to be in the UK. But again, expect it to be variable. You can also expect rain. You might be very lucky. I know I was talking to a few people this year who were there and they had no rain at all.

[00:03:54.990] - Tracy Collins

But expect the weather patterns to change rapidly. It can be sunny one day and it can be rainy and chilly the next. Honestly, last in Edinburgh, last year, May last year, we arrived on a Sunday, I actually got a little bit of sunburn on the Sunday because it was so hot and sunny. The next day I am covered

head to toe with wet weather gear and my jumper and everything. It was cold. That was literally in a space about 12 hours. The weather just changed. Really, you can have really different weather on the same day. It can change dramatically. So obviously packing tip for this, if you're thinking about the UK weather is you need to pack layers so you can add or remove clothing depending on the temperature. You are going to hear me say that numerous times in this podcast, but really the key is layers. Expect the weather to be cooler the further north you go. That's at all times of year. Honestly, last May we were in Orkney and it was something like minus two million. Well, it felt like it. It was freezing, freezing cold. I think it was the coldest that I've ever had in the Orkney.

[00:05:02.150] - Tracy Collins

The wind chill was incredible. We had to go and buy woolly hats and everything. It was really, really cold. Bring a rain jacket all year round. I have a small pack thing that just packs up small, which I've had for years, which is fabulous and I take that everywhere with me because really rain is just about guaranteed. You'll be very lucky if you manage to skip it and it's the maritime climate in the UK. You can expect potentially some rain for some of your trip or as my daughter found last year when she was over for just about every single day of the month that she was there. We do have on the website a monthly and seasonal guide to visit in the UK. Actually, I'm also writing monthly guides to visit in London as well. So London in January, February, March, et cetera. In those guides, I also put suggestions for what to pack. I also have a visit in London in winter packing list as well, which I will link to.

[00:06:01.680] - Tracy Collins

The second thing to consider is footwear. You need to ensure that you pack comfortable footwear. I really can't stress this enough.

[00:06:08.150] - Tracy Collins

As somebody who really suffers with my feet, I have huge issues, really need to make sure that you have comfortable footwear. You are going to be walking a lot, a lot more than you even think you're going to be walking. You really will be. If you're planning to buy new shoes for your trip, make sure you wear them before you travel. Don't buy them and then just fly out and then start walking 25,000 steps a day because you're going to end up with blisters on your first day or so. In winter I recommend boots and show the waterproof to keep your feet warm and dry. In summer, I wear sandals. Sandals are fine, especially when it's warmer. Don't wear flip flops and they're not the best footwear in the UK at any time. Sneakers, trainers, whatever you call them, runners are a great option all year round. Practical for most activities just to ensure they're waterproof. If you're in London, the UK this year or anywhere in Europe, white sneakers have been the fashion item with a nice summer dress. I wear boots in winter absolutely, and I wear my Birkstok sandals in the summer and find that they are perfectly fine.

[00:07:14.450] - Tracy Collins

The key really is to make sure that they are comfortable for you.

[00:07:19.370] - Tracy Collins

Next thing to consider is luggage. You need to be thinking about deciding what luggage to take. If you're going to be travelling around the UK using different transport options, for example, if you're travelling by train, choose an easily portable and manoeurable luggage option. Seriously, you do not want to be dragging massive, great big suitcases, on and off trains, certainly I wouldn't want to be doing that. I certainly wouldn't want you to be doing that either. Really think about that. If you're going to be doing a lot of train travel, you really want to be travelling as light as possible. If you're travelling by car, also consider the size of the car that you are renting. The boot trunk may not fit several huge suitcases. Again, if there's four or five of you travelling and you're going to need a larger car and you're also going to have to think about are you going to be able to fit all the suitcases in. We highly recommend that you travel as light as you can, but do remember to leave a bit of room for all the souvenir and presents that you will no doubt be purchasing.

[00:08:27.150] - Tracy Collins

Definitely worth considering. I'm I use a medium size, really, suitcase when I'm in the UK, but you

obviously need to check with your airline to see what your allowance is. Do think about your weight as well, because obviously if you arrive in the UK with a full suitcase at the full limit, then what are you going to do with all the things that you buy? You're going to have to post them back or you're going to have to pay excess baggage, which I have had to do in the past. Think about not arriving with a full suitcase. Have an expandable suitcase, which is a good idea because then you can put more in it. Also, a really good solution for packing is packing cubes, which I really like. I have just recently discovered compression packing cubes. My goodness, they've changed my life. I'm actually travelling with a much smaller suitcase because I can fit a lot more in it. Obviously, if you've got a large suitcase and you use compression packing cubes, you're going to have to watch your weight allowance because you're probably going to carry a lot more in it. I just find they're very useful if you want to take a smaller suitcase because you can put a lot more in it with a compression, using the compression bags.

[00:09:37.250] - Tracy Collins

Well, I'm talking about weight allowances and things like that. I know that the amount of paperwork that you may have can also be excessive. Think about document organisers. We have a UK travel toolkit. If you're someone who likes paper, keeps things written down on paper. But obviously there are lots of apps as well that you can use in travel organisers so that you can keep all your paperwork in order and not necessarily physically with you if you don't want to carry paper versions. We tend to keep scan the important information and keep them in a email, but also in a Dropbox as well. So we have access to those when we're away. Another thing, and something that I have to deal with a lot because I carry a lot of tech with me, is to think about things that you can use to organise your tech. There's different little bags that you can get that can keep all your leads and things in. I tend to recommend that. It's just this staying organised, keeping your things in packing cubes, keeping things organised and together, which is far easier anyway when you're travelling around, when you know where everything is.

[00:10:42.650] - Tracy Collins

I use a toiletry as well, make-up organised. I keep everything in those. Again, you can use packing cubes for this. I do tend to, when I've gone on to a flight, actually put the different categories of things that I want into different packing cubes and then pack those into a bag that I can just whip out when I'm sitting at my seat and have easy access to rather than having a large carry-on bag with things everywhere. I just think it's better to stay organised. Obviously essential things that you're going to need to take with you, passport, visa if you need one. Don't leave home without those. Drive a licence if you're going to be driving in the UK, make sure you've got travel insurance. It's vital, really, really important to make sure that you've got travel insurance before you leave. So keep a record of that as well so you can access that. Don't forget that we have some really excellent products as well. So ebooks that you can use. Obviously, you can access those when you're away as well. We've got itinerary planners and our guide to UK train travel. Those both e-books and our London travel planner as well.

[00:11:49.510] - Tracy Collins

Obviously, they're ebooks, so you don't have to carry them around. I do love guidebooks. I have got an extensive collection. But the last thing you want to do when you go and travel is to carry all those books with you. If you've got our ebooks, you can have access to those. Again, Kindle is a really a good idea as well. You're not carrying heavy books. This is something I always have a slight argument with Doug about every time I travel because he always seems to find the largest, the most heaviest book to take with him when we travel. I've bought my Kindle and I'm trying again to use that a little bit more. But again, it just reduces that A, the weight, and B, the amount of stuff that you have with you. Okay, let's talk about clothes and what clothes. I'm wondering how to dress in the UK. Obviously keeping the UK weather in mind at all times and thinking about what to take. I would say if you're a visit in winter, darker colours are best. You will notice, especially from the southern hemisphere, that people in the UK wear a lot of black.

[00:12:50.080] - Tracy Collins

I've got a lot of black clothes that I wear in the UK. Brighten up the outfit with a nice scarf too. I've got a collection of far too many scarves, which I seem to add to every time I go to the UK. You'll find that

darker colours are the norm. Don't overpack. I'm going to keep saying that. Just thinking, take clothes that can be layered. Take maybe a few pairs of jeans, T-shirts, long sleeve tops, a winter jacket that'll keep you warm and dry, comfortable walking shoes, pair of waterproof boots, sneakers, a couple of scarves. But obviously think about where you're visiting.

[00:13:23.060] - Tracy Collins

If you're going to hike in in the Lake District, you don't want to be wearing the smart clothes that you might have had for London if you're going out and about. The main thing is really casual, comfortable, neutral colours, black, navy, add some colour with accessories. Say, I love my earrings, so earrings and scarf are my way to make an outfit pop a little bit more. Avoid wearing anything with a Union Jack on it, anything of a political nature and combat gear, really those to be avoided. Also, I'd just say that if you're visiting somewhere a little posh, for example, if you're going somewhere really nice in London for an afternoon tea, you will need to be dressed smartly.

[00:13:58.490] - Tracy Collins

No jeans and sneakers. So I pack one more dressier outfit if you're going to go for a really nice afternoon tea. Let's think about seasons now. In winter, I would recommend packing a decent waterproof coat, a pair of waterproof boots, warm socks, a scarf, and maybe a couple of sets of hats and gloves, so you've got a spare one if it gets wet. I'm going to say you will discover that many shops in the UK are really hot in winter, so it's useful to remove layers easily. You've got to think it might be freezing cold outside, but you're going to walk into a shop. Honestly, it can be like an oven. I remember shopping off Regent Street with my daughter a few years ago and was all wrapped up in my winter gear and she was trying to close on the different shops. I just had to take jacket off. I was taking everything off and actually realised that what would have been very useful was I had to a little bag to have put those in because I was carrying them around the shop. Then, of course, you've got to put all those back on when you go outside again.

[00:14:58.900] - Tracy Collins

Same with the London Underground, it can be stifling in the summer, certainly, and even in winter. It's best to dress in layers again to avoid overheating so that you can strip off a little bit if you need to. In summer, I would just swap the winter sweaters. I try to take, don't take your jumpers, but take a few more T-shirts. A couple of pairs of crop trousers, linen trousers. I actually took some shorts last summer. I optimistically put in one or two pairs of shorts. We were down in Cornwall and actually I wore them. It was really, really hot. Again, just like one or two pairs. Don't forget to take some hat and sunglasses, sun cream in the summer too. Spring and autumn, the temperatures can wildly vary. Again, warm one day, cool the next. Don't take the shorts, but maybe an extra pair of jeans or linen trousers if you're going to be visiting during the autumn, fall, spring seasons when the weather is changing. Then I would say really sneakers, trainers will be fine April, May, September, October. I must admit that I tend to November, December, January, February, and the UK. I tend to just wear boots, but that's just me.

[00:16:15.510] - Tracy Collins

You may be okay in your waterproof sneakers or shoes. Obviously, there are some really fantastic clothes shops in the UK and I must admit I would recommend really, if you're going to leave a little bit of room in your suitcase to go and do a little bit of shopping. I always invariably end up buying some clothes when I'm over in the UK. If there is something you've forgotten about don't worry about it. There are plenty of shops that you can go if necessary and purchase what you need. I just wanted to mention a couple of other things while I think about them. One, obviously you're going to need to think about an adapter if you're coming from an overseas country to the UK. Purchase a travel adapter so that you can use all your gear when you arrive and make sure that everything gets charged up. Another thing to think about is toiletries. Again, toiletries can weigh a lot, so you can purchase those. Pop them into your boots. You can purchase those, pop into boots, you can buy shampoo, soap, whatever you need in there. Obviously, if you stay in a hotel, you're going to probably get a lot of those.

[00:17:23.200] - Tracy Collins

You'll be able to get a lot of access to those sorts of things as well. If you don't want to carry heavy

bottles, don't worry, pop into something like a boot store and you can buy those. Another thing I'd recommend that you bring is a water bottle as well so that you're not constantly using plastic. Think about reusable water bottle, whatever time of year because is thirsty work walking around all these places, enjoying them. So that would be another recommended item to put in your packing. I have got quite a few articles on packing for the UK on [UK travel planning. Com](http://UKtravelplanning.com). I have got a packing list for all seasons. I have got an essentials list as well, which is to complement that. I also have a what to pack for London in winter packing list and guide. So if you'd want to get more information following this podcast, I would recommend that you pop over and have a look at those guides. You will find the links to those in this week's show notes, which are at uktravelplanning.com/episode70.

[00:18:32.430] - Tracy Collins

But until next week, should say happy UK travel packing, but I'm going to say happy UK travel planning.