

Family Adventures in the UK: Hannah Blalock's 15-Day Journey (Episode 113)

UK Travel Planning podcast helps you plan your perfect UK vacation

intro: 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: Hi, everybody, and welcome to episode 113 of the UK Travel Planning podcast. So this week is a trip report with the lovely Hannah Blalock, who, myself and Doug, did a trip, advisory, kind of, itinerary consult with you, I think just before you went on your trip, Hannah, to. To help you kind of fine tune it and, give you some pointers and some tips and some ideas of things to do. And we said at the time you would be perfect to come on the podcast. So I am so happy today to welcome you on to this episode to talk about your trip.

Hannah went on family trip to the UK with her husband and two children

So would you like to introduce yourself and, tell us where you're from?

Hannah Blalock: Yes, thank you so much. So, like you said, my name is Hannah. I live in the northeast Georgia mountains. So about an hour, or so north of Atlanta, in the southern part of the US. And I'm excited to be here and talk about it. I'm a teacher and we went on the trip with, my husband and my two children. My daughter's 13 and my son was eleven.

Tracy: Perfect. I was going to ask you that, who you went with, but I already knew that. No, it's all right. It's all right. I can already knew that. But if you're listening to this episode, you wouldn't have known that. So thanks, Hannah, for kind of filling in the blanks about who you went with. So, husband, your two children. So it was a great family trip to the UK. So that's fantastic. and, you know, I used to be a teacher as well, so that's always so much fun to talk to. Another teacher knows what it's like.

You went to the UK right at the very start of June

So how long did you go to the UK for and how long, and when did you go?

Hannah Blalock: We, we were there for 15 days and we went right at the very start of June. Our flight was out on June 1, and then we came home on June 15. And we kind of chose that time because, you know, we read a lot on your website that you recommended, you know, trying to go earlier kind of in May and not hit the off season or the peak season. Excuse me, but, you know, being a teacher, I had to wait till our school was out. But then we kind of locked ourselves into that beginning of June to get over there before their schools were out. So they're trying to thread that needle.

Tracy: That's a really good idea before the schools, because I know people have been

saying it's been quite quiet in London the moment, and they'll have to queue up or they're just managing to get tickets for the things. I'm like. That's a little bit more unusual than normal, to be perfectly honest. And once the schools break up in the UK, which is the third week of July, you've had it, because July and August are, incredibly busy and a lot of the European schools are off as well at the minute, so it just can get really, really busy. So June generally is a good time to go. It's a time that I enjoy traveling around the UK, that's for sure.

You went on a circular road trip through north Wales and Scotland

so do you want to give us a kind of brief overview of your itinerary and where you went?

Hannah Blalock: Sure. So we flew into London, and we really like, when we do trips here in the states, we like a road trip. We like to kind of do two or three days in a spot and then go to a new place a few states over two or three days and kind of work our way around. So we sort of did the same thing, over there. We started in London, stayed there for about four days, and then we went to Bath, and then stayed there for a few days and then went up to north Wales. Don't know the name. I could spell the name of the city for you, but I'm just gonna say North Wales. And then we went up to Edinburgh, for a few days, and then started working our way back south again and stopped in York before circling back to London.

Tracy: So that was a cool, really nice, little circular trip that you did there. And you also went through Northumberland, which we'll talk about in a little bit, because that was a. We enjoyed kind of planning that because we knew you wanted to go from North Wales to Edinburgh in the day and you wanted to stop off for lunch. And so we were sitting for

quite a while, trying to work out the route that you were gonna go on and where you could stop and have Sunday lunch. So I'm desperately dying to ask you about how that went, but, let's talk about it then.

You did the itinerary consult with myself and Doug

So when it came to creating that itinerary, obviously you did the itinerary consult with myself and Doug, and we kind of. We helped you a lot with it. But before you even came to us, what? We listen to the podcast looking at the website using oral resources.

Hannah Blalock: So I really my way normally of making. Cause like I said, I've planned several of these sort of weeks, long trips, with my family, but always in the United States. so normally what I do is kind of get a broad

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Hannah Blalock: stroke of what I want to do. And then, I think, I don't remember the name of the gentleman, but there was another teacher that you had on the podcast once that talked about these giant maps and putting all the pins and then finding his route. I do that, but digitally, I don't print out all the things. I can't. I can't go that far. but I started googling and pretty quickly stumbled upon y'all's website, which, thank all the heavens for that, because it was such a blessing.

Doug went through your ten step UK travel planner to help plan

family vacation

so I kind of went through your little ten step, UK travel planner. And my step one was easy because, like I said, I'm a teacher, and I said, I'm going at the very beginning. and then once I started the research, we had lots of different ideas. My husband really wanted to see castles. we knew we wanted to go to York because we're big fans of the tv show Vikings, and we wanted to hit that vikings aspect. both my husband and my son, their middle name is Wales. And so Isaac, my son, insisted that we go to Wales because he believes that he owns it or something, I don't know. And then we have family from Scotland, so we kind of wanted to hit, you know, a lot of it. And so I pretty quickly said, okay, this is going to be a circle, and we're gonna, we're gonna go around. but I really did kind of stick to your, your steps, maybe a little bit out of order, because, like, the budget, I sort of said, I'm gonna plantain our dream vacation, and then we'll see where we're at, and then, you know, trim as needed and cut things down.

Tracy: Good idea, good idea.

Hannah Blalock: That's sort of what we did. But, yeah, tons of podcasts, especially once I sort of settled on the city. Like, I know that we're going to bath. I know that we're going to Edinburgh. I know we're going to York. Then I went to the podcast and searched and filtered out episodes that were specifically about that and would just listen to them on repeat. The kids were losing their minds because I was like, I'll forget details when I'm riding in the car. So I probably listened to that York at that York episode. That number three I listened to probably four times because I wanted to make sure I got it all.

Tracy: I have said that to Sinead actually, who did that episode with me. It's just such a

popular episode. And I would really love other experts who live in cities to come on and give me, do the similar sort of thing because, you know, I mean, Doug and I know the UK really, really well, but we don't live in York. We don't live in Bath. So it's just fantastic to have people with that kind of insider, real insider knowledge on the kind of on the ground of what's going on. so that episode's really good. And I just had a recent episode not long ago with some family of mine who live in Portsmouth. It's my second cousins. And they came and talked about Portsmouth. And again, that's been a really popular episode. And I think there's just a key to having a. Having people on who, as I say, know the area really, really well. So we're gonna. We're gonna hopefully do a bit more spotlights on. I really would like to do a spotlight on Bath and Cambridge and Oxford and lots of other cities. So they are also. Just stay tuned if you're listening to the podcast right now because they will. They are on their way. They're on their way. so we will do this. So that was great to know that you did that. So I guess you got loads of inspiration and ideas from listening to those.

Hannah Blalock: Yes. Yeah. The podcast and then of course the website as well, you know, because like bath, there wasn't a really an episode about Bath. There was the Cotswolds teacup tours. But I couldn't use her. She was all booked up. So I had to, So I had to go to the website for that, which wasn't, you know, a problem. But I would read the different articles and kind of just make lists and then, like I said, trim down and fit what we could fit. So it was great.

Tracy: Perfect, right?

So who drove? Was that you or was that your husband

So let's get to the nitty gritty of the places because it'd be great to talk about every single thing that you did, but would be here for the like three weeks while we're talking about it all. So let's talk about, first of all, you drove. So who drove? Was that you or was that your husband?

Hannah Blalock: My husband. I was the navigator. he drove because I know a lot of people say that they want, to get an automatic to make sure that that's one less thing. But he was comfortable with the. With the stick shift. And we didn't really drive in any of the big cities, so we. We landed in London. We used the tube and underground, you know, all that stuff in London. and then on the day we left London is when we picked up our rental car and we took advantage of having that. So instead of just going straight to bath, we kind of went down and we visited, Winchester, because, you know, that shows up in our period pieces last kingdom and.

Tracy: Absolutely. Why would you not want to go to Winchester? Yes, of course.

Hannah Blalock: Beautiful. We swung by. After we left Winchester, we went up and swung by Stonehenge, which was also amazing. We did that. That was my birthday. So I said I went to the ancient places to make me feel young on my birthday.

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Tracy: Good idea. I'm gonna have to go. I'm gonna have to look for some very, very, very ancient places.

Hannah Blalock: Well, listen, Stonehenge, it's. You can't get much more, ain't you?

Tracy: True. I think if I go up to, Scarabrae, up in, the Orkneys, I think that that's even older. So that's where I need to go to.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah.

Tracy: So places like Stonehenge, definitely. Winchester Cathedral is pretty old as well, actually. It was, yeah, ten something. I should know the date.

Hannah Blalock: yeah. Oh, wait, it was built. Wasn't it built in 1066?

Tracy: Yeah, I think so. I was gonna say. I think it's ten. I was. I was kind of thinking, do I have to come up with the exact date? Because I know it was 1066 after the invasion, but it was like. Was it 1066? I think it was like, probably took a few years to build, but, yeah, so around about that.

Hannah Blalock: It was around that time. Listen, I'm a math teacher. I don't know how to know the exact dates. I just can give you a general idea. But anyway, so once we left Stonehenge, we went up to Bath and we just kind of parked the car and walked for our time in bath and then went up to Wales from there.

Were there any highlights in bath that you really stood out for

Tracy: I was going to say, were there any highlights in bath that you really kind of stood out for? You obviously a bit of a Jane Austen fan if you went to Winchester as well.

Hannah Blalock: So I'm guessing Bath was one of my daughter and I really loved bath.

My husband was kind of like, meh. we could have skipped bath and spent more time in castles in Wales, but I loved Bath. My son is really big into, mythology and things, so he really liked going into the roman baths and seeing the gorgons on the walls and things like that. we also. One of the highlights in Bath, there were two. One was, we went to a deli for lunch one day. That was the Abbey deli. And it's where some of the filming happens for, a really good Netflix show that we like. And so it's where the modiste, is filmed. So if you know, you know on that one. And then. Yeah, and then. But the kids, both of them, when I asked them what their favorite thing was, they said they're sham, castle, which is this place in bath that we did a little, like, hike up to. And it is just like the front of a castle that was built in. I want to say, like, 1772. I don't remember exactly, but I remember, saying, that's older than our country. It's literally just a play thing that some person built because they wanted a nice view from the backyard. But we stayed up there. I mean, we hiked up there and then just stayed for hours. And you had a beautiful view of bath from there. We made flower crowns with the wildflowers and the kids ran and played. It was. It was fantastic. So, that was definitely a highlighting bathe.

Tracy: And then from. So you stayed in bath for a few days and then you drove up through Wales to North Wales.

Hannah Blalock: We went. Yes, we went north up to north Wales. We stopped at, Raglan Castle, which was my husband, that was his favorite castle, because it was just so cool. It's kind of the one we went to that was the most in ruins. And it was neat to see, where the sieges happened and all of that kind of left more of it to your imagination than some of the ones that are more intact. and then we kind of. We really just spent that day driving through Wales and seeing Wales. We went over to the beach. I can't pronounce the name of the beach, but we went to the beach and the children got to swim, in the irish sea, it was very cold. I did not swim, but they can imagine.

Tracy: You can imagine. That was June, so I don't know.

Hannah Blalock: June here. I mean, it's 100 degrees outside right.

Tracy: Now, so not in Wales?

Hannah Blalock: Not in Wales. But they still can say that they've done that and they were very excited about it. And then, we stayed. Most of the time we were in Airbnb's, but in Wales, we stayed in a guest, ah, house. It's the only time we've ever done anything like that. And the only reason I was brave enough to do it is because you insist that it's the way to go. And it was amazing. It was beautiful. It was an old country house and so we felt like we were sleeping in a castle and it was called the farm country house. and it was wonderful.

Tracy: Yeah, fantastic. Well, the thing is about b and B's and guest houses that you get to meet local people because they're run by generally local people. And so, you know, and you get a cooked breakfast and it's just, they can give you loads of tips about the local area. We're not talking earlier about kind of, you know, the insider knowledge you get that when you're staying somewhere like that. And it's just always such a cool experience rather than, you know, Airbnb's are fine or hotels are fine. Obviously, I stay in both as well. But I just think it's something special about staying in a guest house or B and B when you're in the UK, for sure.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah, it absolutely was amazing. And it was kind of one of those. We were just in the middle of nowhere in Wales. My husband, one night we came in after we had a. Spent the day

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Hannah Blalock: at Conwy Castle and Carnarfin and all these castles, and the kids and I were ready to crash. My husband was like, there's a pub three minutes walk away. And so he. He was like, now. So he walked down there and just. It was literally just a tiny village pub. Everybody that was there was just, you know, within walking distance. And he made himself friends. He's got Facebook friends in whales now.

Tracy: Oh, that's so lovely.

Hannah Blalock: So that was an experience that he got to have. I was snoring at that point.

Tracy: I was, oh, that's just so good. But how cool is that? And that's, you know, that's. Those are the memories that you make, like, say your husband's now got Facebook friends from people they met in that. That local welsh pub. I mean.

Hannah Blalock: Right, exactly.

Tracy: It's priceless. Things like that are absolutely, honestly, totally priceless.

Hannah and Doug traveled from Wales to Scotland via Northumberland

Now, you know, I'm going to ask you about the next day because, Or the day, because this was the day that Doug and I had a bit of kind of, oh, right. How we're going to

organize this, how we're going to get you from North Wales up to Edinburgh, because you. You had a booking, for a meal in Edinburgh, I think, about 06:00 p.m. or something. And you. We wanted to go via Northumberland, so you want. Which is fantastic. My. My birth county is where I was born, where I come from. so I'm always encouraging as many people as possible. So if you listen to this podcast, Northumberland. Seriously. Northumberland. I'll say that again. Northumberland. It's really somewhere you need to be thinking about going. so talk to me about that day. Tell me what happened on that day, Hannah, because I want to know exactly what it worked out as.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah, so that day was, our last day with the rental car. We left Wales, and the goal was to get to Edinburgh and then give the car back there. So we, we left, we woke up. We decided not to try. There were a couple castles we wanted to kind of hit on the way, but we had to just. It just didn't fit. And that kind of happened every day. There was at least one thing that I was like, this is if I can. And the answer was always no. But it's okay. There's always next time. so we, we left the farmhouse and headed north. And the goal was to get to Hadrian's wall because we really, really wanted to see that kind of for the same reasons that we want to see Stonehenge and everything. You know, it's one of those just ancient things. And my husband's not, but the kids and I are very avid hikers, and we're like, we really want to do this walk. And we would have done a lot more of it if we could, but, so we also. That was a Sunday, and we were trying to find a way to do a, ah, Sunday roast. But we knew it was a travel day, and so you and your sister recommended a place called twice brewed. And it was delicious. It was very good. And it was right on the wall. Like, you could kind of look out the window and just see the countryside. It was beautiful. and then we left there and went and parked at the steel rig. Steel rig car park.

Tracy: Yep.

Hannah Blalock: Which my husband was like, I mean, this is really pretty. We can see it from here. Can we just. Is this it? I was like, no, sir.

intro: No, it is not.

Hannah Blalock: So we walked. We didn't walk. All I was hoping that we would walk all the way to, the fort. The sycamore gap.

Tracy: What was it called? Yeah, sycamore gap. Yeah, the tree.

Hannah Blalock: And, well, we did make it to sycamore Gap. We did go there.

Tracy: Well done. That's because I haven't. Because I have to say, I'm kind of in the same camp as your husband. As in, it's like, can I just see it from here? So my sister and Doug, last time we went in the steel rig, I have photos of them kind of walking up that escarpment and me kind of waving hello. I'm not coming up there, I told.

Hannah Blalock: Him, because one of the things that we did to prepare the kids for the trip is we made them watch, just sort of british television. We watched Merlin, the BBC show Merlin. We watched, And then, of course, we watched the Robin Hood, the Kevin Costner Robin Hood. And so it's like, y'all, we are gonna walk on this wall. The tree's not there anymore, which is devastating, but we are gonna walk on that spot like, there are no. You have no choice on that one.

Tracy: So I bet they enjoyed it. I bet they loved it.

Hannah Blalock: And they did. Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah. My daughter, the 13 year old. I think

normally when we hike in north Georgia, there's a lot of trees and forests and stuff. So there's a hard rule. You have to stay where I can see you. You can walk ahead, but if the trees are really thick or if it's too curvy, like, you have to slow down. Well, that rule. She took that rule to heart, except I could see her forever. So she. She was just like, I am going to have a solitary hike. I am walking the moors. And it wasn't Moore's, but, you know, in her head, she was on just a, romantic walk through the countryside. so it was. It was wonderful. We made it to sycamore Gap, and then that's where we turned around. I had wanted to go all the way to the fort, but I, was told no. So.

Tracy: Well,

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Tracy: you'd squeeze the lot in that day, actually, honestly, it was one of those days where we were like, oh, they're going to do it. How's it going to go?

You made it to Edinburgh safely, no problems, Tracy

So then you. Then you got in your car and made it to Edinburgh. No problems. All good?

Hannah Blalock: Oh, yeah, it was fine, Edinburgh. we were a little bit worried about the traffic and things, but because we were returning our car to the airport, it was kind of on the outskirts, and we just went there, returned the car, and then got a cab over to our, Airbnb. And it was easy. And we had the reservation for dinner, but because we were able to do the roast for lunch, we just canceled that reservation. And our cab driver recommended. We really love indian food, and so he recommended a place to eat. and

it was. It was amazing. It was. Yeah. yeah, it was very good. I don't think I can pronounce it. Oh, no, I can't pronounce it.

Tracy: Okay, we'll put it in the show notes. We'll make sure we put them in the show notes for sure. So that'd be good.

Hannah Blalock: I could try, but it would probably be offensive.

Tracy: Don't worry. Don't worry. you should say Edinburgh, because we get a lot of people saying Edinburgh, and I do still want at this point to say it's Edinburgh. In fact, I probably don't see it right. So I can probably hear people in Scotland going like, that's nothing. Right either, Tracy. but since I'm from the north of England, on the border of Scotland, I'm going to stick with Edinburgh because that's what I was called. But it's definitely not Edinburgh, which I hear quite a lot, so. But it's good. You said Edinburgh, so that's absolutely fine.

So what did you enjoy in Edinburgh? The Edinburgh castle was amazing

So what did you enjoy in Edinburgh?

Hannah Blalock: Edinburgh. The Edinburgh castle was amazing, mostly. I mean, the inside was amazing, but just the, like, sheer sort of dominance of it from the outside was really cool. Edinburgh was also the city where my family finally said, enough is enough. I need a nap, because I was kind of task mastery through the whole thing. Like, we. I have so many things I want to see, and y'all are not going to hold me back.

We've got to go, go, go. so after we did the castle, they went back to the Airbnb and took a nap, and I was like, sweet. And so I went and went down, Princess Street. I watched the royal miles some more. I just. I just wondered. Got myself some butter beer at the elephant cafe so I could get my Harry Potter in. It was. It was a lovely day, if I do say so myself.

Tracy: sometimes it's nice to have that. To have that little bit of a break, especially when you're traveling with your family. And it's quite intense when you're on holiday as well, isn't it? Because it's on the go all the time and, you know, so it's nice to have that bit of time. And, you know, Edinburgh is a lovely city to wander around on your own as well. And tiny. Just, it's such an atmospheric city. It's one of my favorites. I think it's pretty amazing.

Hannah Blalock: Great city to shop. a great city to shop in when no one is there to tell you no.

Tracy: Yes, that's true. That's absolutely true.

Every time we go to the UK, I have to go to Edinburgh

Well, every time we go to the UK, I, have to go to Edinburgh. We're planning, because we're over, back in September. I'm probably going to be back for probably nearly three months. But, Doug's over for probably three or four weeks and we're already planning it and it's all right. So we have to include Edinburgh. So it's already. It's like. It's like an. Like we have to go to Edinburgh. yeah. So, then how long did you spend in Edinburgh? A couple of days.

Hannah Blalock: We were only there a couple days. And really, that one day was the only day we truly had Edinburgh because we, like, after their naps, I woke them up and we did the makers, mash m that you recommend was delicious. That's where we had our haggis. and it was very, very good. I had the vegetarian haggis, which was amazing. and then the next day we did a bus tour and we went up to Glencoe and into the highlands a bit. And then, loch Ness and the castle. I just lost the name of that castle, but the. It starts with the u and it's Castle aand. that was a must do for my daughter. She really wanted to see Loch Ness. And so we decided, you know, I know a decent amount of, the english history, but I don't really know much about scottish history or welsh history. But, because we were going up into the Highlands, I kind of wanted some of that history knowledge that a tour guide would give us. So that's why we decided to do a tour bus. And that's the first time we've ever done a tour bus like that.

Tracy: So I think, to be honest, I think it's, if you can do longer in the Highlands, I mean, it's a beautiful part of the world to visit, but, you know, if you can't. And, fitting it in for a day means you do the coach trip and you go up and do it. I'd do it personally, I do it, and it's a long, long day, but at least you do it. because I always feel really sad when people go to Scotland and they don't actually go up there, because it's just such a wonderful area of the world. And it's like, even if you just do a whistle stop tour, you get a taste of it, which I reckon, me personally think that once you've done that, you'll go, oh, I need to come back here and spend a lot longer exploring this part of the world.

Hannah Blalock: Next time, if we get to go again, I think we'll want to spend more time farther north, like up above Inverness, because the part of the

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Hannah Blalock: Highlands we were in. It was beautiful. It started to make us feel a little bit homesick because of all the things we saw. It was especially, like, the Glencoe area that looked the most like home. And so that was the point which, you know, we were on sort of the second half of the trip, and that was the point where the kids were like, this looks like. This looks like home, mom. This looks like something we would do, so. Wow.

Tracy: Oh, that's me that you're inspiring me to visit. Whereabouts again? Was it in the states you're from?

Hannah Blalock: We're in the appalachian mountains, which is like. Yeah, yeah, right. Beautiful.

Tracy: Bill Bryson. Didn't Bill Bryson walk them? I'm sure I read walk the appalachian trail.

Hannah Blalock: A walk in the woods is one of my favorite. yeah. Non fiction books to read.

Tracy: Ah, yeah, no, it's a great book, actually. See, you're showing up. My lack of geographical knowledge of the states, and I was actually. I have to say, we're hoping to spend three weeks visiting and exploring the United States, but it seems to become extremely expensive. So I was like, ah, I think we'll put that off for another day. But, hopefully at some point I'll get to explain, explore some of these, because it sounds beautiful. And Glencoe to me is just so stunning. So if it's like, where you live, I definitely need to come and visit. Absolutely. Come and explore that area, Hannah.

Hannah Blalock: Yes, absolutely. Highly recommend. We, we went on a trip out west

and we saw the Rockies. And I was like, these are cool and everything, but, I'll take mine, thanks. They're. Personally, I feel that the appalachian mountains are where it's at and there.

Tracy: Wow. Okay, well, that's a great recommendation. So definitely adding that onto my. Onto my bucket list for the states, for sure.

York was one of the highlights for the kids, because that was the one

So, they went down to York, which I know you were particularly excited about after Edinburgh, weren't you? Yes.

Hannah Blalock: Yes, we were. York, ah, was kind of one of the highlights for the kids, because that was the one. And they really enjoyed walking the city walls. We did, we went to St. Mary's Abbey was really pretty, and we kind of hid it right at sunset. And everything was, It was just. It was something out of a fairy tale. It was beautiful. in York, they really, really loved the market. the shambles, the street, but also there was just a little market there right out. And that was, My daughter really loved that a lot. That was kind of where she got a lot of her souvenirs and things. And then we went to the Jorvik Viking center, because that was part of the reason we were there. And we did the castle museum also.

Tracy: It was really good. Yeah, both really good, actually. I did the Jorvik last year, and thought it was amazing. It was really blown away with it. And the Castle museum is excellent as well. Really, really good. It's really excellently done. So both really good to get Canada. History of York.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah, absolutely. The castle museum was. I've just never, like, having that whole victorian little village there was so amazing. And. Yeah. and the Jorvik center, you know, it was, It was cheesy, but if you just kind of met it where it was at, we learned so much about sort of, you know, how they. How they did a lot of the archaeology and everything, and so the kids. It was neat. It was cheesy, but it was neat. And we learned a lot. And we left with smiles on our faces and, you know.

Tracy: Yeah. And, you know, I agree. And because I used to be a history teacher, even though, you know, I can't give you the exact date that Winchester Cathedral was built, embarrassingly. Yeah. So. But, you know, the way I used to teach history was that was the way that it's done at the Jorvik Sen. It's that immersive, you know, you get to see it and you get to. Because that's what you'll remember, that you remember what you saw, the sights and the smells and going around on that little kind of train thing as you go around. And it's like. It's just that, I think, is such a great way as well, for kids to learn, because otherwise it's always, you know, death by book and death by PowerPoint or death by worksheet. And I didn't teach like that. I was very much into art and drama and doing it that way. And I think, you know, getting involved and seeing it like that is. It's a really cool way to do it. So, yeah, we thought it was. Just thought it was a really good way to. For kids to kind of experience it and to just see what it was like, how they've recreated it. But also saying at the castle museum how they've got their victorian street, that, again, is fantastic. It's just so cool how they've done that. And you can. You wander through and it's like you can really feel like you're back in victorian England. You want to kind of dress up a bit, don't you? And do the whole kind of.

Hannah Blalock: I know. Well, and they had the little. Yeah. They had the little baskets with all the clothes. And I was like, those don't fit me. I want to dress up.

Tracy: This is not fair. It's so cool. It's really good.

Hannah wanted to go to Hampton Court palace, but it was closed

So then after York, you headed down to London?

Hannah Blalock: We headed down to London. Yep. And we had, that one day. It was. It was good. So one of my things that I really, really wanted to see was Hampton Court palace. And we had wanted to do it when we were in London the first time. But thanks to y'all's consultation, I realized that it was going to be closed the days

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Hannah Blalock: we were in London, which for just a few minutes was devastating until we found a way to get it fit in there at the very last minute. so we got on the train in York and we rode down. We used, a stasher there, which, again, I would not have known existed without you guys. So, thank you. we left our luggage in Kingston upon Thames, which was also cool because there's some good history with, you know, early crownings of kings there. So that was fun. And then we walked from Kingston upon Thames to Hampton court Palace. And we got there at about 233 o'clock. And all the people were like, why are you just showing up? But it ended up being amazing because there was barely anybody there. And so we, like, we were walking through these baroque stairwells by ourselves. Like we were in control of this castle. It was. It was so cool. so we got to spend a lot of time talking to, you know, the people that were there, in the various rooms, because there was nobody else there. They were just kind of telling us the history of some of the furniture. The. We talked to a lady, in one of the. William

was William the third, William the fourth, whichever I. King. Yeah, it was. One of the William and Mary rooms is where a fire happened in the eighties, and a chandelier that was there fell. And so she was showing us where they, like, put the chandelier back together, shard by shard, and you could see all the little shards. And it was. And then she was pointing out, you know, you can see where there's some charred marks in the ceilings here. And we never would have even noticed any of that. So it was very, very fantastic.

Tracy: Well, I have to say I was so. Because I know when we did the consult and you really wanted to go to Hampton court, and you were devastated when we initially looked at your itinerary, it was not going to fit in. So I was so excited that I managed to get it in. It that last day, I know you were so. You were like, yay, I can do it. so between that, honestly, that Sunday that you had that drive up to Edinburgh was the one, and then the day, knowing that I could get you fitted it in, that you could go to Hampton court, it was so, so good. It was a very satisfying itinerary consult to do with you, Hannah, at the end, because I just was like, yay, we've got everything that you want. Tick all the boxes. We managed to get it all fitted in, and it's all gonna be really good. So it's so cool to talk to you and hear how your trip went. Honestly, brilliant. And so good that you managed to have, like, that experience at Hampton court. That's priceless.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah. Yeah, it was. It was the perfect Hampton. I mean, the only thing that could have made it better is if I was wearing, like, a ball gown or something. That would have been great. But otherwise, it was. It was magical. It was wonderful. We had time. we kind of. We talked to someone when we first got there. They were like, you're gonna be cutting it close to see all the things, but they kinda said, if you wanna do the hedge maze, which the kids really wanted to do the hedge maze, go do that first, and then hit, the tutor rooms and then go straight to baroque. And then, you know, they

kinda told us the big ones to hit, and it was great. Everybody through the whole trip was so very helpful, and I was kind of nervous about, you know, like, I cannot hide my american accent if they're not, you know, I don't want to be judged, but I. But everybody was so, so kind and helpful, and, you know, all you had to do is ask, and they would tell you they were happy to tell you all the crazy things they know.

Tracy: So it was very brilliant. Oh, it's so good. You've done such a good job of talking through your trip. It's been really, really good. You've covered everything, where you went, you've talked about where you stayed, where you ate, your highlights of it. Your enthusiasm for it is just infectious, hannah, honestly, it's brilliant.

Finding a clothes dryer in the UK was a real issue for us

so I'm just going to say, because I'm going to end the podcast, because I think we're on 35 minutes. We've had a really good chat today. So, I want to ask the question that I always ask everybody at the end of the podcast. So what would be your tip for anyone visiting the UK for the first time?

Hannah Blalock: So I knew that this was coming because you always ask and I narrowed it down to two things, so. I'm sorry, I can't. It's all right. The first thing is, however long you think you're gonna take eating, if you're an american, I don't know about other people, but if you're an american, however long you think it takes at a restaurant, triple that. Because if you don't, eating will literally eat away your day. And we lost, like, kind of that thing where we had to throw out my. My hopefuls. a lot of times it was because lunch took longer than expected or dinner took longer than expected, and we just. I mean, it was amazing. The meals were wonderful, and we enjoyed our

time in these various super cool restaurants because we didn't eat anywhere lame. They were all amazing. But, it did kind of take away from daylight hours. So that's something Americans specifically should be aware of. And then the number two is, I don't know if this is all of the UK,

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Hannah Blalock: but finding a clothes dryer was a real issue for us. We, we packed very light. We did only carry ons. We had, I kind of said, well, we never went more than three days without an airbnb that said they had a washer and dryer. So, like, okay, we just need three days worth of clothes. We'll be fine. The, airbnb we stayed at in bath just didn't have a dryer. They had a washer and then they had, like, a clothesline. But it was a little bit rainy that day. I'm like, how do you deal with it? I don't know how they do it. Everybody's always so well dressed. How do they wash their clothes? I don't understand.

Tracy: You know what? The washings. Washing's not the problem. It's getting them dry. Getting them dry. I used to have. Honestly. Yeah. I used to have all my radiators in the UK. I'd have clothes on the radiators. It take days to get stuff. Dryden. Look, I'm not. I have to say our hands up here. I don't. I'm not a big fan of dryers. So. In the UK, I had one in the garage that occasionally used for towels and that was it. in Australia, we actually did have one. We've just. In the six years, seven years we've been here, I've used it once. So I've just got rid of it because m. It's pretty hot where I live, so I don't really need it. but, yeah, this is a. I know, I know this is an issue in the UK, getting stuff dry. But even.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah, even when we found one, like the place in York, the Airbnb,

which the Airbnb we stayed in in York was a Harry potter themed and it was the most magical thing. Like, there was a wand that you used to turn on the lights. It was amazing. so very cool. But their dryer could have used a bit more magic because they had a dryer, but it took multiple. It just didn't want to dry. I don't. I don't know how y'all do it. I really. Radiators, I guess. But it was summer, the radiator wasn't going.

Tracy: Yeah, that's the problem. In summer, you kind of hope that you're gonna be able to hang out on the line outside. but I know it's been pretty rainy in the UK recently, so. And I have to say in the winter and when I'm. When. If I stay at my mum's in the. When I go back in the winter, she ends up with a kitchen full of clothes hanging off on triers and then she'll tolerate things.

Hannah Blalock: Yeah, we had socks hanging from every knob we had. Yeah, it was, it was a bit insane.

Tracy: That's pretty much, Yeah. So I guess. I guess, yeah. Just. Just be prepared for that. That, you may have to take one or two extra outfits because it may take you. Or try and take things that dry quickly because you're not guaranteed that you're going to get them dry, particularly, as rapid as you would like. I think that's a good point to make.

Hannah, it's been absolutely fantastic chatting to you today

Anyway, Hannah, it's been amazing chatting to you today. So much fun. Lovely to catch up with you. And, if you go back to the UK at any point, you know where we are. We'll happy to help you out with your itinerary.

Hannah Blalock: Absolutely.

Tracy: so, yeah, so thanks so much for coming on. It's been, as I say, absolutely fantastic to chat with you.

Hannah Blalock: Thank you so much. It's been great. I appreciate the invitation. I'll come back and talk to you whenever you want.

Tracy: Oh, brilliant. Well, okay, well, I might take up on that invitation.

This is the final episode of the UK travel Planning podcast

Hannah, thank you for tuning into this week's episode of the UK travel Planning podcast. As always, show notes can be found at UK. If you've enjoyed the show, why not leave us feedback via text or a review on your favorite podcast app? We love to hear from you. and you never know. You may receive a shout out in a future episode. But as always, that just leaves me to say, until next week. Happy UK travel planning.

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