

# **A Belfast Adventure: 3-Day Itinerary and Travel Tips with Tracy and Doug (Episode 124)**

## **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.

## **This is episode 124 of the UK travel Planning podcast**

Tracy: Hello and welcome to episode 124 of the UK travel Planning podcast. So this week, myself and Doug. Hello. Are here to chat about our, three day Belfast itinerary. Now, this itinerary builds on always part of actually our. I, think it was about 1617 days that we travelled around the UK. And if you want to have an overview of that itinerary, listen into episode 119, where we kind of talk about each of the different places that we went and we kind of. Not in a lot of detail, but gives you a kind of overview of everything that we did. Does that make sense? Yeah, it does make total sense, yeah. So what we thought we'd do is, because we've got a lot of interest in some of those particular destinations that you actually might be thinking. You know what, I quite fancy going to

Belfast. So you interest in that. You may want to go to Chester, you might want to go to Isle of Skye. So we decided what we would do is for destinations that we haven't already talked quite a lot about. So, for example, Edinburgh, which we have talked quite extensively about in the podcast and quite a few episodes, we thought those places that we haven't, we would do dedicated podcast episodes, and there will be far more of those style coming in 2025 because we have been asked for destination guides.

## **This week's episode is all about Belfast**

So this week's episode is all about Belfast.

Tracy: It is, yes.

Tracy: So it was my first time, in Belfast. It was not Doug's first time. You've been before?

Tracy: I have been before a few years back, but, yeah, I have been.

Tracy: so I was really excited to go. And, we spent three full days there. We arrived on the Thursday evening and we left on the m Monday morning. So we had all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday. So I wanted it to be a pretty full itinerary to do as much as we could and experience as much as we could of the city itself, but also get out and about to explore a, little bit more of Northern Ireland as well. Yeah.

## **How did we get from Dublin to Belfast via bus and train**

So do you want to talk a little bit about how we got there from Dublin? Because we actually. Yeah, that was the first part of us, actually, how we got from Dublin up to Belfast.

Tracy: Yeah. So we took the train from Dublin Connolly station. It should be a two hour train journey, but currently there's some engineering work going on north of Newry. So the first hour Washington train, and then we had to take a bus, which was part of the train ticket we purchased. So that arrived into Belfast. Lanyon station. Now, Lanyon station, is still taking trains at the moment because I mentioned before on last podcast, there's a new travel interchange for trains and buses called the Grand Central. It's open for buses, but not yet open for trains. So the bus arrived at the Lanyon station.

Tracy: So when does it open, though, the grand central station?

Tracy: It's still work in progress. I think it's early next year, by the end of this year, but I think certainly for next year.

Tracy: Okay.

## **So we arrived at Lanyon and there were no Ubers available**

So then we had a slight problem, though, in that we arrived at Lanyon, and then we're a bit stuck.

Tracy: We were a little bit stuck, and it was cold.

Tracy: Yes. So what happened?

Tracy: So we arrived, and we had planned to take an Uber to the hotel that we were staying in. But there was no ubers available.

Tracy: No, there wasn't. And we stood there going, oh, dear. and, yeah, there literally were no Ubers. I was on my app trying to get an Uber, and we couldn't. So we were actually really lucky that there happened to be a taxi, that happened to have pulled up at the station. So we hopped in there and we went over to our hotel. So we're staying at the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, which was about 25 minutes by taxi. 25 minutes, yeah. So it took us actually quite a while, but it was a fantastic hotel, I have to say. We really liked that hotel, didn't we?

Tracy: Yeah. Really. It was excellent situation as well.

Tracy: Yeah. Where it was located is that it was absolutely located. Perfectly. And it's located right next to the new Grand Central station.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: Literally five minutes, which was fantastic. And I'll tell you why. Because of what we did on Monday, but.

Tracy: And also subsequent days, which we'll go into more detail, it was perfectly located for those as well.

Tracy: Absolutely. So by the time we got in, honestly, it was. It was fairly late in the

evening, wasn't it? On that. On that. That Thursday evening. So we didn't do anything else. We literally got in the station, got the taxi, got to the hotel, checked in, and that was about it for that.

## **We booked a bed and breakfast in Belfast and the hotel breakfast was outstanding**

So that gave us kind of day one, which was the first day itinerary in, Belfast. So I have to say as well. The hotel breakfast was outstanding. So it really set us up. You know, one thing we do like to do is if we book a hotel and we must say we do love bed and breakfast and guest houses as well for this, is that, you know, if you get a breakfast included, it does set you up for the rest of the day, and it just can save you money as well.

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Anyway, so what we did was we decided that that first day we were going to take the hop on, hop off bus around Belfast to get orientated and familiarise ourselves with the city and also to go out to the, titanic. So that was our main, goal for that day. So do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Tracy: Yeah. So the stop one on the city sightseeing tour buses was just about ten minutes walk from our hotel. So we arrived there in good time before the first bus actually took off. So some photos, had a look around. Yeah. So we jumped on that and we planned pretty much what we're gonna do the rest of the day, didn't we, really?

Tracy: Yeah, we did basically looked at the stops and, the first stop they want, we decided that we want to get off at, was the Titanic. Belfast.

Tracy: Yeah. And that's at stop number five, to be honest with you. The bus pretty much emptied there. I think everybody came there to start with.

Tracy: It did. And I know, I've heard that actually the best thing to do is to go Titanic. Ah, Belfast when it opens because it can get really, really busy. It was even still busy. We arrived really early on when it just opened, but it was still actually quite, quite busy. so we did have a little bit of a queue. We just bought the tickets on the day when we arrived. Oh, actually, no, I didn't. I bought them through get your guide. I had to exchange a voucher. That's right. So I had actually booked the tickets. That's right, yeah.

Tracy: That's right. And so. But we're having good time. We had a good look around outside because there's a sign to take photos with and, you know, there's lots outside to take photos of as well.

Tracy: Absolutely. And then it took us about 2 hours to go through the whole titanic experience. It is what it is. I mean, I, you know, I enjoyed it. It was. It was definitely interesting. And we'd actually previously been at a Titanic exhibition in Brisbane.

Tracy: We had the Titanic experience.

Tracy: That's right. Yeah. So it was interesting. You know, it's. What else can you say about Titanic, honestly? I know it's probably one of the number one tourist attractions in Belfast. One reason that people will go to Belfast because they want to go and see the Titanic. So definitely include it into itinerary. And honestly using the hop on, hop off bus

is probably the best, easiest way to get there because then you come out and you can jump on the hop on, hop off bus to another destination to follow in the route round.

Tracy: Yeah. And that's exactly what we did, isn't it? We jumped back on and then we headed, Well we stayed on the bus for the next pause, didn't we?

Tracy: We did, yeah. So yeah, so we literally did basically a tour of Belfast to familiarise yourself. So we went down the Shankill road, saw some wall murals. The jail, Crumlin Road. Yeah, yeah. Falls Road. we saw the Titanic Memorial garden.

Tracy: That's where we got off near the.

Tracy: Civic hall when we got on. Yeah. So we got off while we got on basically this whole circuit that we did. Yeah. So we didn't get off there though, apart from we just got off at the end, didn't we? Didn't we just kind of went with listening to the commentary and. Yeah, yeah. Just kind of saying familiarise myself a.

Tracy: Bit with Belfast, a bit with the geography, the area.

Tracy: Yeah. So we did got. It was actually, we were very lucky in that it was beautiful day. So we did get off and have a wander around the Titanic Memorial garden.

Tracy: Yeah, I looked m some photos around the civic up. There's all shopping areas around there. Some shops.

Tracy: Yeah, definitely. Yeah. So lots of shops and things to do that. So that was basically our first day and it sounds like, doesn't sound like we did a lot, but actually we

did because, you know, the hop on half off bus can take you quite a few hours to get around and then go into Titanic. I mean we spent probably about 2 hours, but you could spend longer.

Tracy: Oh, yeah, easily.

Tracy: Oh, and when you go to Titanic, experience as well, not experience, the Titanic museum should say there's a couple of places that you can eat and there's a fantastic gift shop. so if you needed to get a drink or sandwich or something to eat afterwards before, there is some way you can do that. But yeah, I mean, and you can actually walk out to where the titanic launched from as well. So we did walk out there, didn't.

Tracy: We, onto the the waterfront there.

Tracy: Yeah.

## **We booked a tour through get your guide because again, you can cancel**

Yeah. So that was basically the Friday. So then. And bear in mind, I had booked this beforehand. So I booked the tickets for the titanic where I hadn't actually booked for the hop on hop off bus. We just purchased those when we arrived. So then the next day on the Saturday, I had booked a full day tour and I will link in the show notes to all of the different tours and companies that we booked through. Through, And I actually used get your guide because again, I find it useful if the last minute, sort of 24 hours before most, you can cancel. So it's useful to have. So we had a fabulous day out, didn't we?



Tracy: Oh, we really did. It was just. Yeah, all the boxes had ticked. Nice easy walk to the meeting point was from 08:00 in the morning,

Tracy: Which is close to the hotel again. So again, this hotel is just so well situated.

Tracy: It was the bus operators, McCombs, the driver was actually entertaining all day.

Tracy: Patrick, our driver. Honestly, Patrick, have you listened to this? You were fantastic. You're absolutely fantastic. But not only was Patrick fantastic, I have to say everybody we were on that bus with was brilliant.

Tracy: Yeah, that's true. It's one of those unusual days where every single stop, every single person was back on in good time and it was all smooth and easy.

Tracy: Yeah. And he

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Tracy: said that as well. He said, I've never had so many people managed to get back on a bus exactly at the time that I've requested you be back on the. It was really good.

### **We stopped off some places for a shorter period of time than others**

So a lot of the places that we, Well, we stopped off some places for a shorter period of time than others. So do you want to talk about some of the places we stopped?

Tracy: Yeah, well, one of the places we stopped off first off was, Carrickfergus, the, castle there. We didn't actually go in the castle, but we stopped off at the harbour area there to have a look and some photos and then we jumped back on. We did the andrum, coastline and we went to the Conlock, harbour. Yeah, that was more or less a comfort break. And shops and things like that.

Tracy: Yeah. And people had. A lot of people had lunch, though. You could book lunch because he did come through and ask if he wanted to have book, lunch and then he would have told this the place that we stopped at what people's order was. But we decided we weren't that bothered, were we? So we didn't. We just had a cup of tea.

Tracy: That's right, yeah.

## **So then obviously the highlight of the day is obviously the giants causeway**

Tracy: So then obviously the highlight of the day is obviously the giants causeway. So that's obviously where we're heading towards. But we stopped off. I, will actually talk about some of the shorter stops that you either stop at on the way or on the way back. So we stopped off at the karakareed rope bridge just to have a look at that. We did stop off at the dark Hedges. So if you're familiar with Game of Thrones, you probably will be able to recognise dark hedges. So we stopped there for enough time to walk up the whole lane and then back down again. We went to Bushmills distillery.

Tracy: That's right, yeah. The famous Bushmills.

Tracy: Yeah, yeah. I'm trying to think where else we'll stop. Don Luce Castle. We managed. These are all quick stops. So you managed to go and have. Yeah, have some really some lovely pictures of that. obviously the highlight of the day was the giants causeway and that's where.

Tracy: He spent most of the time as well.

Tracy: Yeah.

## **Make sure you have sensible footwear for walking the giants causeway**

Tracy: So we're at the giants causeway. You've got, red or blue walking routes. I mean there's yellow ones as well, but further away, take longer.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: The red route is the one that takes you sort of out and then back in the other side of the causeway there's lots of steps there, something called the shepherd steps, 162 steps down but you get some great views. The blue route is the direct road.

Tracy: That's the one I took. So I, I'm not a, ah, hiking fan at all. So I kind of cheated and I took the blue route, but I didn't even take the blue route because I took the boss. So, basically it's a, I think was a pound each way on the boss. Yeah. And I'd played with contactless so I went down on the boss and went back on the boss by this point. It was a bit rainy as well. So I'm just going to say that on my defence. And it was windy and I

know you said those steps were a bit slippery.

Tracy: They were a bit, yeah. Slippery underfoot. Yeah.

Tracy: So make sure if you got the giant's causeway seriously, you need to have a sensible footwear. You really do need to have sensible footwear. So basically Doug walked around the top of the cliffs and down these steps around to the giant's causeway. And I went on the bus and I met him down at the bottom, of the hill beside the. I was actually got down there and I thought how am I going to see Doug? Because there are so many people. But actually it was easy to find it. You seem to be walking towards me as I was walking down towards the giant's causeway itself. So we kind of met up and we took lots of pictures.

Tracy: Pictures and videos of all the columns. the basalt columns.

Tracy: Yeah, yeah. And I will share all these in the show notes. So do pop over and have a look at those because it is fascinating and it was a big bucket list thing for me. I always wanted to kind of go and see the giants causeway and clearly for quite a lot of the other people because there was a lot of people there that day. it's obviously a popular place to go. So, we decided that we'd get the bus back up. So Doug just had to pay for a pound to get busy bus back up and I'd bought a return ticket so you can walk it if you want to walk it, honestly, it's not that far. But saying that you were quite surprised when we took the bus up, just that it was further than you thought.

Tracy: It was further than I thought.

Tracy: Yeah. And it is up a hill.

Tracy: Bit of a waiting queue for the bus return.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: But it, went down pretty quickly.

Tracy: Yeah, yeah, it was fine. And, it's pretty, in terms of the bus for accessibility, though, wheelchairs can get onto the, onto the, bus and off the bus. So, you can get down there to see it if you have any accessibility concerns. But I thought it was good. I thought it was worth it. We did have. It's really funny because the entire trip we had beautiful weather, but about ten minutes at the giant schools where it went crazy, it went a bit warm, it was windy, really windy and a lot of rain and so had the rain jackets on. But the whole day was. It was lot of fun and I thought it wasn't expensive. I can't remember the exact price, but I remember it wasn't expensive. I, will put a link to this company because we thought they were outstanding and, McCombs coach, travel is what they're called. but do use our link, please, if you're going to book. We left at 08:00 a.m. m in the morning and we got back at 06:00 p.m. 06:00 p.m. yeah.

Tracy: There was three coaches doing the entire journey. We were coach number one and, we stayed ahead of everybody the whole day.

Tracy: We did, yeah, we did. So that was basically the Saturday. So by the time we got back, that was. That was basically the day, really. We'd had a good day. So we just sat and had, some drinks, and I think we had a meal in the hotel, didn't we? So we had something to eat in the hotel and some drinks and just kind of chilled out for the rest of the day. And then so that just left us with our, ah, third day. Third day itinerary. So

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Tracy: on the third day, we decided you can't go to Belfast and not learn about the, the troubles, in Belfast, in, northern Ireland. And so we'd heard that the best way to do this is to book a, political black cab tour. So that's exactly what we did, didn't we?

Tracy: We did. It takes about 40 minutes. Again, the meeting point was near the hotel, about five minutes walk from our hotel as well. Yes, it was, It's just us two, obviously, a private tour, and it takes about 40, 45 minutes. And it was well worth doing. It talked extensively from both sides, of the, history and particularly in detail about the Good Friday peace agreement and the modern day,

Tracy: Yeah, kind of, yeah, peace process and kind of just where things are in Belfast. And I guess in terms of, you know, recent events, I mean, in our lifetime, certainly seventies and eighties, and kind of living through that. And I think it was. It's the first time that I felt that I kind of had had it explained to me. So I have to say a huge thank you to Tony, who was our, taxi driver, who took us around. The tour is only an hour, but honestly, it was fabulous, wasn't it?

Tracy: Yeah, I think the actual tour was 40 minutes, but we're chatting afterwards.

Tracy: It took 50 minutes, but it was excellent, though.

Tracy: It is. And Tony shared his own, family's life experiences as well, which was.

Tracy: Yeah, no, it was really good.

## **So, honestly, and I had a friend who was in Belfast in August**

So, honestly, and I know I had a friend who was in Belfast in August and had really wanted to do, this church and could not get on because it was fully booked. So I highly recommend booking ahead if it's something that you want to do. And honestly, I really think if you go to Northern Ireland and you need to really learn a little bit more about the troubles and kind, of the recent events over the last, kind of my lifetime, last 50 years or so. I mean, it goes back into history as well. So you do learn a lot the background, don't you? You do to everything that happened. Yeah. So that was, that was a really interesting experience. and then we went back to the hotel and we booked, a Sunday roast. We wanted to have a good Sunday roast.

Tracy: It was recommended location.

Tracy: It was, And it was fabulous, wasn't it?

Tracy: It really was, yeah, it was good.

Tracy: Remember the name of it?

Tracy: It's called the bowery.

Tracy: Good job. Doug remembers these things. Yes. it was called the Bowery, and it was absolutely. It was very good. So it's a sharing platter.

Tracy: Yes. It's something slightly different to what you usually have your own plate. This was a shared.

Tracy: Yeah. So again, I'll put some pictures in the show notes so you can have a look at that. So if you're in Belfast we highly recommend that you book in again, you will need to book. Make sure that you book in at.

Tracy: The Bowery and go hungry because there was plenty for the two of us.

Tracy: There was. And actually we took the bus, I'm going to say as well, we just hopped on the bus, which was really easy.

Tracy: From local bus system.

Tracy: Local bus. Local bus system. We just found out the number of the bus that we needed, jumped on the local bus and you know, just used Google maps. I think I did. Knew where to get off and literally we're like two minutes walk from the bowery. So that was really easy and it wasn't expensive. Again, I can't remember off the top of my head, it was only a few pound and I played with contactless again, so really easy. So that was the Sunday evening. So that was kind of three days up. And then we had a lovely experience on the Sunday, didn't we, when we met that lovely american couple.

Tracy: That's right, yeah. We just. In passing we exchanged a few words and then long story short, we spent the next 2 hours chatting away while.

Tracy: You were drinking cocktails. Yeah, enjoying cocktails. so hi candy, if you're listening, it was lovely to meet you in Belfast. It was just, it was really lovely.

**Doug booked transportation from Belfast to Glasgow via Hannon**



## Coaches

And then I guess so the next day we knew we were going to be leaving very early but I'm going to let Doug talk a little bit more about the organisation because he organised our transportation, on the Monday morning because we were heading to Scotland.

Tracy: Okay. So when we do our itinerary consults, we get asked a lot how to the different means of transportation between Belfast and Glasgow. And one of the ones that's come up more than once is a company called Hannon Coaches and Hannah coaches we call it was a 630 early start in the following morning. I'm not the best coast traveller so I contacted them and they arranged for me to have front seats which was absolutely perfect.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: And it was so straightforward.

Tracy: It was really very easy.

Tracy: I'd already walked the route just to see how long it would take from the hotel. Hotel to the, as I mentioned before, the grand central, station, five minutes. So it was from the bus stop number 18. I'm not sure if that's permanently located for that. But it was on this occasion because the trains are not yet running into there. So we arrived in good time. The driver turned up and within a few minutes we were on. On the way.

Tracy: Yeah, we were. Till. What time was that in the morning? That was early.

Tracy: 630 was the departure time. I think there was two a day. the next one was from late morning departure, but we wanted the early one because we wanted to be in Glasgow as early as we possibly could. So, 630, we about ten minutes drive to the Belfast port. There was another collection pickup, for some more passengers, but

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Tracy: I don't think the bus was full. I think it's only probably about half full overall.

Tracy: It was.

Tracy: And then we boarded the boat very easily on the coach, drove straight on. So you just find exactly which side of the boat you get off the coach on. So you can actually.

Tracy: Starboard. We were starboard. I was going to say we're starboard.

Tracy: So, yeah, so includes your ferry ticket as well. So we left there at 07:30 the ferry, and we arrived at just 10:00, about two and a half hours. Very smooth.

Tracy: It was a smooth crossing, wasn't it?

Tracy: It was a quick customs cheque. and we're on the way and. Yeah, 2 hours drive to Glasgow.

Tracy: Yeah. Glasgow.

Tracy: Sweet bus station. One little tip, if you are taking this journey, you go from Belfast

to Glasgow, sit on the left hand side because you've got a great view of the Firth of Clyde and there's the Elsa Craig little island there as well, which is worth having a look at. But it was very straightforward, very, very easy.

Tracy: It was. It honestly was really from the morning, just walking across to catch the coach, getting on the coach, going the ferry, getting off at the ferry. They say we're on the ferry for a few hours. We just sat and actually in the kind of lounge, kind of restaurant a bit. And we had, we had cups of tea, I think we had bacon sandwiches. Again, it was very smooth. So you wonder. We both wandered off at different times, having a little bit of look around the ferry. it was quite busy. I'm not surprised because it's so cheap. What a fantastic and easy, easy way to get from Belfast to Glasgow. I had no idea, literally, I had no idea, honestly, blew my mind just how easy it was to do this. And, we were literally. And also when you get off and you're doing that coach trip to Glasgow from the ferry port, the views were amazing. It was stunning. Absolutely stunning.

Tracy: It was. And we were lucky with the weather as well.

Tracy: We were, again, we did have lovely weather and then we arrived in Glasgow itself, and then we had, again, a short walk to a hotel there.

Tracy: Yeah, we did.

Tracy: So that was basically our, three day itinerary from the. From leaving Dublin till arriving in Glasgow. We had those three days, the Friday, Saturday, Sunday in Belfast. I think we made the most of it. I'm very keen to go back and explore more than Northern Ireland, as my first visitor said. But it was fantastic.

Tracy: It was. And we kept it simple in a lot of ways, didn't we? We did, yes, we did a lot of things, but we weren't rushed off our feet. We weren't literally rushing here then, everywhere, were we?

Tracy: No, I think. I think that worked really well. So if you're listening and thinking, oh, actually, you know what I fancy doing going to Belfast? You know, you could really would do two or three days because having the hop on, hop off bus, the Titanic, the one day, the next day doing the full day trip. Because those that if you're going to go to, giants causeway and do that, it's a full day out. So that's going to be one whole day taken. And then the third day, having the opportunity to do the political black taxi tour and then just relax in the afternoon and having a lovely Sunday roast. I mean, if you wanted to shorten it, I guess you could have the hop on, hop off course, do the Titanic, or even just take, a taxi at the Titanic and then do the black taxi political tour the same day. So you could do it in two if you really wanted to. But I highly recommend not doing it less than that.

Tracy: No, I think. I think we have the right balance.

## **This is episode 124 of the UK travel Planning podcast**

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: I mean, the Sunday afternoon, we took it easy and just had a little stroll in the sunshine, didn't we?

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: Sunday lunch, we did. We took it neat.

Tracy: It was really good. So that summarises it. So, as usual, you can find all information about what we did in Belfast, the different tours, up on up off bus, the Titanic, the Belfast, taxi company. All that information that we just talked about will be in the show notes, which are [uktravelplanet.com](http://uktravelplanet.com), episode 124. So I think that'll be until next week, is that right?

Tracy: I think so.

Tracy: So, until next week, as always, happy UK travel planning. Thank you for tuning in to this week's episode of the UK travel Planning podcast. As always, show notes can be found [@uktravelplanning.com](mailto:uktravelplanning.com). if you've enjoyed the show, why not leave us feedback via text or a review on your favourite 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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