

# Exploring the Isle of Skye: Travel Tips and Highlights with Tracy Collins

## Welcome to episode 125 of the UK travel Planning podcast

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, and welcome to episode 125 of the UK travel Planning podcast. So this week we are here talking all about our trip to Skye. So if you listen to last week's episode where we talked about Belfast, and episode 119 where we went through our, entire two and a half week itinerary around the UK, then you'll know that Doug and I recently did a trip. Basically, we went all the way from Birmingham to Cardiff to Chester, over to Dublin, from Dublin to Belfast. Belfast, Glasgow, Glasgow, Edinburgh. And from Edinburgh went to Skye. So we're trying to cover certain parts of that trip, in a little bit more detail. And one of those is Skye, because you know that Isle of Skye is one of the most popular destinations for people to head to. So this week, Doug's here again.

Tracy: Hello.

Tracy: because we're going to talk a little bit, with you about what we did. as I said, we know that sky is extremely popular. So my intention, or our intention in this episode is to

talk kind of briefly over what we did, how we got over there, a little bit about what we did, and then to share some tips because I think that's probably really vitally important. So if you're planning to visit Skye, do hang on to the end of the episode. So you get those top tips, things you need to know before you go to Skye. Yep. Does that sound good?

Tracy: It sounds great.

## **You need to book ahead to enjoy Skye because it's so popular**

Tracy: Okay, so the first thing we did, let's just say that we stayed in Malaga overnight because we decided that we wanted to take the ferry over to Armadale.

Tracy: We did. And, we arrived on a beautiful sunny day.

Tracy: We did.

Tracy: We arrived in Armidale at about 12:15 we pre booked the ferry. obviously couldn't give them a car registration number, but there's a part on when other bookings are saying, we don't know the registration number just yet.

Tracy: But it's really easy, honestly, very easy. Know, I know people say that they can find it a bit nervous and we've done it before, but again, it's all very, very well organised, very easy. It's a really short it's not very long crossing. again, we were very lucky, actually. The weather was, it was very calm but you've got some beautiful views as well on the way over the sky. So we arrived at Armidale and then we had a couple of hours

drive to accommodation.

Tracy: We did. We kept stopping off here, there and everywhere.

Tracy: Yeah, the views are just there.

Tracy: We took a picture picnic as well. With us.

Tracy: Yeah, we did. We bought some food in Fort Williams so we were able to sit and have a picnic and just enjoy the views. And again, in the show notes you'll see some of the photos that we, we took and just how beautiful it was.

Tracy: Yeah, we did. We start off at the curling bridge. The pictures and, Photos of that?

Tracy: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, honestly, there's just so many places you'd just be blown away by just how gorgeous it is. But I will also say we had the most incredible weather that I think Skye's ever had. We just had, honestly, we were there for four days and we had three days of perfection, absolute perfection. Beautiful blue sky, sunshine. It was wonderful. so basically the first day, I guess if you want to consider it that the travelling day, catching the ferry over, driving to our accommodation. So we decided we'd stay in pods. Now, we stayed in pods before in Scotland, haven't we?

Tracy: We have once before and we thoroughly enjoyed it, didn't we?

Tracy: So that's what we decided to do. So if you've never stayed in a pod before, I would head over to the show notes and have a look. And also on our, Instagram you'll see pictures there of, the pod that we stayed at, the kilcam pod in Edinbane. So pods,

that's where we stayed. Loved it. Absolutely loved it.

Tracy: And we have an additional reason for staying there because last time we visited sky, we had several meals at the edding bay inn.

Tracy: We did. And we loved them.

Tracy: We did. So we decided we're gonna visit, there again. So we booked in for dinner. We pre booked that. So we booked in there, about 06:00.

Tracy: Yes, we did. So I think that was about 630 actually. And that is kind of one of the tips. So we're kind of giving that away a little bit early. But that's one of the things that you really need to do if you go to Skye because it's so popular that you need to book ahead. But I will kind of probably repeat that at the end. So I had booked ahead our dinner. So we arrived on Skye, went to accommodation, leisurely drive had taken a picnic with us, so we had some food with us. We arrived at accommodation. The pods are around about sort of 03:00, chilled out, got, you know, unpacked everything, enjoyed the weather, enjoyed the views, and then just had a leisurely stroll down to Edermaine Inn for dinner.

## **So basically, the first full day of our itinerary was Friday**

So basically, the first full day of our itinerary, I guess if you can take away that day that we're travelling over and getting settled, was, basically Friday. It was a Friday and

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we had, we had a full day. This was a kind of full, busy day, wasn't it?

Tracy: It was, yeah. But we planned the day out and when we left our, pod in the morning, it was lovely. Clear skies, sun was shining.

Tracy: It was actually. It's a Saturday morning. I'm getting the day wrong. Yeah, it was a Saturday morning, yeah. So the weather was absolutely beautiful. However, what was really interesting, what we hadn't counted on, is when we kind of got round the headline from where we were and drove a little bit that there was a lot of mist.

Tracy: We're heading to the quirang.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: And we hit thick mist. Thick fog.

Tracy: Well, we wanted to go to the fairy glen, which was on the way, but we had to basically give that a skip because it was far too misty. So we actually ended up sitting the car in a little side lane for about, what, 30, 40 minutes or so, waiting for the sun to burn the mist off. Because honestly, you didn't really want to be driving on those roads because honestly, you couldn't see anything for the start off because it was so foggy.

Tracy: It was. I should point out we were actually off the road. We were not parked up on a passing point.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: because these are single track roads. You do not park up in those.

Tracy: No, no, we weren't. It was a proper parking space. So we parked up there and then we kind of hung on until the mist, went. And then we went to the quarang, didn't we?

Tracy: We did the misclared about midday, which was pretty much exactly what it did.

Tracy: Say that. Yep.

Tracy: And then, yeah, we arrived there. And that's a paid car part down the quiring, which we played with contactless. And then my, the views, absolutely stunning.

Tracy: It is absolutely everything that you'll have seen if you've seen the pictures of it. And it is absolutely highly worth going. But I am gonna say parking was a nightmare. We were very lucky that we got parking. I mean, this is the kind of middle end of September. So it was, was still incredibly, incredibly busy. We spent what, about 40 minutes there? I would say, yeah. Again, parking were contactless. And then we headed from there down to staffing, because staffing beach, because the actual tide was out, which meant we could see the dinosaur footprint.

Tracy: And, I should point out we drove down there in sunshine again.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: So whilst we were on that beach at staffing, the mist started rolling again.

Tracy: It did. It was actually quite, quite eerie, actually. And also what was interesting is, even though it was pretty chilly, I mean, it was sunny, but it was still chilly. There were plenty of people, cold water, swimming. hats off to you guys, because that's not something I would want to do again. Lucky to get parking. and then from there, we went to kilt rock to see Milt Falls. Now, I would highly recommend that you look at the show notes for this picture because it was amazing. It was like the mist rolled in and kind of met the waterfall with a, rainbow, which was incredible. Absolutely incredible. So that was probably only a five minute stop. Now, by this point, I really needed the toilet.

Tracy: You really did.

Tracy: And there's not many toilets. So we were heading there and we're thinking, well, we're trying to find on Google, trying to find toilets, but we weren't. We're struggling a bit, weren't we?

Tracy: We were struggling. Yeah, that's right. We went somewhere because the map had told us they were open to the public, but they weren't, but they were not.

Tracy: So we're kind of looking at thinking, all right, where we're going to find toilets now, we're heading at this point to the old man of store and luckily there are toilets there.

Tracy: That's right. Yeah. The, car park was pretty full, but we managed to park pretty easily. And that's a paid car park there as well.

Tracy: Again, all contactless, paid car park, very, very busy. A lot of people walking up to the old manor store. We didn't walk all the way. So hands up again, I'm not a hiker. No.

Tracy: We walked about 20 minutes off an hour on a path. And that wasn't continuous walking. We're stopping off, taking photos and that's.

Tracy: Again, a pretty, pretty uphill. there's different routes you can take on that one as well.

Tracy: I think the blue route is the hardest one there.

Tracy: Yeah. So take water, you know, if you're there in summer, make sure you've got a hat, sun cream, all that. Sort of think about all those things in your footwear for doing these sort of hikes, to be honest, you really need to think about that.

## **Skye was incredibly busy. And you got to pay attention on busy roads**

And then after that, we headed to Portree.

Tracy: We did. And that road was incredibly busy.

Tracy: Yes, it was.

Tracy: It was really, really busy. And you got to pay attention.

Tracy: I think Skye was very busy. And I know we had seen a lot on social media in the weeks leading up to going to Skye. Just how busy it has become. It's become a bit of a victim of its own, success in that, you know, we'd seen pictures of the ferry pools. Now, we did not include the ferry pools this time in our itinerary, because we'd seen pictures



of the roads and there'd been a lot of rain in Skye up until, the time we were there. I mean, we're lucky that it didn't rain at all when we were there, but there had been months and months of rain, so they knew there was a lot of mud, so that we had kind of knocked it on the head. But we had been there on a previous visit, so that was a full day. And a lot of driving for you. A lot of concentration for you, wasn't it? Yeah.

Tracy: And we were driving back, we thought, we'll try the fairy glen again. But by this time, the mist was again rolling in. So we pulled the plug on that one.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: To leave it till the following day.

Tracy: Yeah. So I think we just grabbed a meal from the co op, didn't we, that night? Something really straightforward and easy. Back tab at the pod. So that's what we did.

## **So then the Sunday. Um, we had booked a roast dinner at Edinbane Inn**

So then the Sunday. So this is our second full day. we had booked a roast dinner. Again, you must book. And we booked it edinbaining, because we know they do a fabulous roast, Sunday roast, which we

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thoroughly enjoyed. So thank you very much to Edinbane Inn for just having fabulous

food.

Tracy: We took it easy for a couple of hours. We had a store around the village.

Tracy: Yeah, we did photos.

Tracy: Ederbane Inn and the Edenbain lodge, which is nearby and just generally took years. He sat outside. We were actually talking to the owners of the pods. Yeah, they can foster their dogs.

Tracy: Yeah. It was lovely. Really relaxing Sunday morning, which is what you want before, you know, going and having your roasted in our traditional Sunday roast dinner. Yeah. That afternoon, we decided we would go and try and see the fairy glen because we knew we weren't going to be able to fit it in the next day. So that's what we did, didn't we?

Tracy: We did. And that was actually turned out to be part of the best time because we got there, the car part was only about half full. Yeah, it's a paper again. And, Yeah, we had a nice little stroll around there, didn't we?

Tracy: We did, we did. Actually. That's quite steep, though. And I mean, it's steeper than you think. Getting up to that fairway glen. I was a bit surprised, actually, because the last time we'd been, I'd sat in the car because the weather was so bad. and I was quite amazed that way you had actually walked up to in that weather because it is quite steep. Yeah, I can imagine. I really can imagine. So you really need to take your time if you, It's, it's not. And I don't think it's easy. I don't think it's massively accessible. Yeah. Yes. There were times where I thought was a bit slippery and I would not say that

they're very accessible.

Tracy: No. but, there's an alternative way, which is the less steep. It's a little bit longer, but still.

Tracy: If it had been raining, it was muddy, I wouldn't recommend it at all because I think it would be too slippery.

Tracy: The views are worth it. The views are nice when you get there.

Tracy: Yeah. So we did that and then after that we went to dunvegan castle. Now, again, I'm going to say we wouldn't really not recommend doing this because we went from kind of one side of the island over to the other side of the island. Edinbane again.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: But it was the only way we could fit this in because of the day before not being able to do the fairy glen.

Tracy: So it was about 40 minutes drive from the fairy glen to Dunvegan Castle.

Tracy: We didn't actually go in the castle this time. We had last time. This time we just bought the ticket for the gardens. You can actually buy the castle iron gardens or just the gardens themselves. And we decided to have a stroll around. The walled garden is beautiful, isn't it? It's lovely. So that was really nice. Again. We actually got there very. I think it was shutting a 05:30 so we got there around four, I think.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: Which was actually enough time just to have a stroll around and kind of enjoy it, wasn't it?

Tracy: The gardens are probably slightly past the best, you know, sort of late season. It was still beautiful.

Tracy: So that, that was a nice, lovely day out, wasn't it?

Tracy: It was. We got back to the pod about 06:00 in the evening and we sat outside in the sun.

Tracy: Yeah. Just relax and enjoying it. So it was really good.

## **So the Monday was, uh, going to be our last full day in Scotland**

So the Monday was, going to be our last full day. So I'm saying, like, this is a kind of four day itinerary, but I guess it's maybe three and a half if you kind of consider the getting over onto skye itself. So on the Monday, we decided to go to, niest point.

Tracy: That's right, on the niest point. That's over on the west side. So you're going towards the Reagan castle, but then heading down towards the right on the coastal area there.

Tracy: Yeah. Beautiful. Again, stunning scenery.

Tracy: Total contrast to when we were there in June before.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: that time it was wet and.

Tracy: Rainy and so it wasn't sunny, but it was still. It was absolutely still. There was not a breath of wind that day. So that's an interesting drive, but Doug's going to talk a little bit more about driving a sky. but, yeah, that's, quite an interesting drive to get to. These.

Tracy: Give me some tips about that. But suffice to say, you know, it's a single track road, lots of bends, blind summit, people driving in the opposite direction, coming straight towards you. So, you know, you've got to take your time. Yeah, give me some tips on that later.

Tracy: Yeah. And then from there, we decided to go to. For lunch to the oyster shed, which had been highly recommended to us. My daughter in particular was like, have you been the oyster shed yet? I, So we did go. Had a. Had a lovely lunch there. And then after lunch, we headed down to the Talisker distillery.

Tracy: We did. And it's a whiskey. I used to enjoy drinking that one, but I no longer drink, so, yeah, we enjoyed being. That's what. I bought a hat instead.

Tracy: Yeah, you did.

Tracy: Yeah. So if you're not gonna drink, buy a hat.

Tracy: Buy it. Yeah. That's dogsy. But it was.

Tracy: It was a lovely drive down that coastline to the whole area.

Tracy: Yeah, yeah, it's lovely. And then we just headed back to Portree, I think we did.

Tracy: And we've got some, you know, filled with petrol and some supplies and that sort of thing. And then back to the pod.

Tracy: Yeah. And then, the next day. So the two Tuesday, we were driving over to Inverness. Now, this is when the weather broke, so we actually ended up pouring down rain. Now, guess one of the tips that I'm going to say is probably what we did. So we actually went back onto the mainland over the sky bridge. So I guess we could probably cover the tips. Now, what do you reckon we could do?

Tracy: Yeah, so we're heading to the car lecolstaff.

Tracy: Yeah.

Tracy: So, yeah, the tips I would start with, number one is be patient. You've got to be patient. You've got to know your own driving ability. You've got to drive the conditions of the changing conditions in the road. But importantly, driving on the left hand side of

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Tracy: something you're not familiar with. Trippie armour is, excellent, fascinating and really valuable tool.

Tracy: Yeah, it really is. And if you. To prepare yourself, even if you used to drive on the left, to be perfectly honest, it's different driving conditions than most people are, used to.

Tracy: And signage, even if you're familiar with driving on the left. In Australia, they have kilometres per hour. In the UK, it's miles per hour.

Tracy: And also, it's not for the faint heart, to be honest. I mean, I didn't drive, so I just put my hand up. I left that to Doug. But just navigating those single lanes, there's some quite interesting kind of drop drop offs as well, because you get quite kind of cliffs, I guess, is what you want to say, maybe. But also there's lots of, you know, animals that, can be on the road. So there were sheep around and the potholes.

Tracy: There's some very deep potholes that go all the way to Australia. But also, as I mentioned before, that it has some heavy rains and wet conditions before we got there. So some of the edges of the road very, very dangerous. You know, some deep roots where the mud's and it's muddy. So you've got to be very careful. We hired a sort of small suv, medium size, actually.

Tracy: Medium size.

Tracy: Medium size suv, which was absolutely perfect for the conditions.

**Being patient, being prepared, driving for the changing conditions is key**

One other mention about is we hired it and included the sat nav or the gps, which was

absolutely invaluable.

Tracy: Yeah, it was, absolutely.

Tracy: Because sometimes, you know, we can't get to that route, so we do this one. So we changed the routes a couple of times. But it's about being patient, being prepared, driving for the changing conditions. Like when we're on the quirang, we pulled over, it was thick.

Tracy: You couldn't see. I literally couldn't see.

Tracy: So, you know, you've got the time drive to the conditions, which is exactly, what we do. We pull away off to somewhere safe and waited out.

Tracy: So give yourself plenty of time to get from a to b as well. Don't assume that you're going to, you know, it might only be 10 miles. It's going to take me, you know, 20 minutes. No, it might take you an hour and a half, honestly. And there was actually a lot of cars, on the road, and when you're on those single tracks, you know, there's plenty of places to pull over, but you need to be aware all the time of, you know, what traffic is around you and what's coming over and, you know, who's going to pull in, so that all of that's.

Tracy: Going on and also what's behind you as well. So one thing I would say is, yes, I've already said it several times, be patient, but also be very courteous to the other drivers as well. You know, acknowledge somebody stopped and waited for you.

Tracy: So I think that's. That's really important.



## **Make sure that you book restaurants before you visit Skye**

So I'm just going to talk. A couple of things that also, I guess, to do with when you're driving a car is one is parking. So, all of the parking that we. Places that we stopped off were contactless, so you have to pay. It's not a huge amount, but I guess it adds up when you start stopping off all these places. But this contactless getting parked, we managed to get it parked in every single place that we went. But honestly, sometimes it was a little bit of a. We had to wait a little bit. I hate to think what it would be like. A peak season would, be incredibly, incredibly difficult. Another thing I would say is about petrol.

Tracy: Yes, we had a, hybrid car, so quite economical on the energy and fuel consumption. we filled up with petrol before.

Tracy: We in Fort William, because we've been told that Mallag, sometimes it runs out. So if you are going that route to Skye, don't wait until you're on sky to fill up, and don't wait until you're Mallag to fill up into Fort William.

Tracy: Fort William. And we know from previous visit that one particular petrol station just outside Portree on the road as we're heading out. So we knew where that one was. But also, keep your eye on your fuel consumption as well.

Tracy: Yeah, absolutely. another thing to do is if you had novice guys to take some supplies with you, there are a couple of co ops and some smaller shops to get supplies. But honestly, we were staying the pod, so we had access to a fridge and cooking facilities, but we took a couple of cool bags with food in, put those straight in the fridge, so we were sorted. So take things over with you.

Tracy: We did. We more or less planned the menu in the night. Some lunches we were eating out before we, visited. We had it all mapped out, didn't we?

Tracy: Yeah, we did. And I guess relating to kind of food as well. Like I've mentioned before, make sure that you book restaurants. You have to book. What are you going to eat now? Obviously not at the oyster shed, that is, you can't book that. You just turn up and it's a takeaway. But if you want to eat in a restaurant, you need to book because it can get incredibly busy. And we got caught up, that our first time there a few years ago in May when we were looking for a place to eat and we were told, oh, did you book anything? Oh, no. So that's something we have learned. so we're sharing that because that's really important. And I know when I got the email, when we had the pod organised, the guy was like, make sure you book your restaurants. And when we're chatting to them, he said, yeah, that's one of his tips that he absolutely says, people, make sure that you do.

### **Consider where the toilets are on Skye when planning your trip**

Another, thing I'm going to share as well is consider where the toilets are. Honestly, that was something that I hadn't realised just how far apart the toilets are. So there aren't a lot, put it that way.

Tracy: No. And, we've already said the

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Tracy: one on the toilet she expected to be there was no longer open to the.

Tracy: Public at the campsite. Yeah. So, yeah, so I just think, make sure that you've got neither. Like somewhere like, you know, a poor tree that be toilets. And there's toilets at old man, a store. I can't think where else. There was no toilets at quarang, no toilets at, kilt rock. that I saw. Nothing on Stafford beach that we saw. So, I mean, obviously you can stop off at a cafe if you need to, but just. Just be aware because that was something that kind of. I was like, oh, dear, where's the toilet then? I think the other thing as well as we're talking about this driving as well, is trying to stick to one area, one part of the island. So you're nothing unnecessarily driving miles. Now, we did mess up a little bit on the Sunday in that we went to the fairy glen and then all the way over Dunvegan Castle. And it was literally only because we couldn't get there on the Saturday when it actually naturally fell into that, going around that part of Skye. So it would have fitted into that if. If it hadn't been that. It was so misty. I'm trying to think if there any other things that we can think about. Oh, yes, I would say as well, if you're going to go over there, go two different routes, go over on the ferry and then come back over the bridge. So you get to see different scenery, because that's amazing to see. Another thing as well is think about clothing. We were lucky that the weather was really good. But, you know, think about your footwear, think about layers. Think about having the raincoats with you. It does rain over there quite a lot.

Tracy: I wore shorts every day that you did.

Tracy: You were very lucky. But, I mean, that was exceptional. And they did say, I think we'd had the best days of the year, just about. And then, I know you mentioned about cash.

Tracy: Yeah, we didn't take any.

Tracy: We didn't. And, we didn't need any. We used contactless the entire time. There was no. We had no issues whatsoever. I was a bit thinking, you never know, sometimes we're parking, but it was absolutely fine. All the shops took contactless and we never asked for cash at any point. So I think that gives a kind of pretty good overview of our itinerary. Now, on the website, I have got an article about how to get from Edinburgh to Skye. I've got some, information about where to stay on Skye. We've also got a Sky destination guide, and we've also got itinerary for sky. So there's quite a lot about sky on the website. So, you know, you'll. You'll be able to go into the show notes, [uktravelplan.com](http://uktravelplan.com), episode 125. And there you'll be able to find links to all those other articles. More about sky. Yeah, I mean, we enjoy Skye. We really do. I love Scotland, so it's always a pleasure to go around. And next year, I have to say, my aim would be to see some of the other islands, like Harrison, Lewis, and go back to Orkney, potentially Shetland islands. So don't. Yeah, so just be aware that sky is very busy becoming, as I say, it's a bit of a victim of its own success. And there are other beautiful places to visit in, Scotland, so you can listen to North coast explorer Sally Ann talk about the far north of Scotland, because that's another beautiful area to visit. North Coast 500 is fantastic, isn't it? But, yeah, I think those are our tips and kind of a little bit of a summary of what we do in Skye. So, that's it for this week. And as always, it's 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. M. You may receive a shout out in a future episode, but as always, that just leaves me to stay until next week. Happy UK travel planning.

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