

Unforgettable London Adventures with Discover Real London

Welcome to the UK Travel Planning podcast. In this podcast, Tracey shares destination guides

Tracy: Ever wondered what makes touring London in a black cab so Special? In episode 138 of the UK Travel Planner podcast, I chat with Ollie from Discover Real London about their unique tours, including the Touchdown and Layover tours, the London Detour, and their exciting new Ted Lasso tour. We also dive into the glowing reviews Oli and his team have received and why exploring London in a black cab offers an unforgettable experience. Welcome to the UK Travel Planning podcast.

UK Travel Planner podcast episode 138 features Discover Real London Black Cab Tours

Tracy: Hi, everybody, and welcome to episode 138 of, the UK Travel Planner podcast. Now, this week, I am very excited to catch up with Ollie from Discover Real London Black Cab Tours, who I last spoke to in episode 86, which is, I think around about 12 months ago, which is crazy. Now, in that time, Ollie and his company have taken loads of you guys from our Facebook group on tours of London, and the feedback we have had has been absolutely fabulous. So some examples had our Black Cab tour today with Discovery of London, recommended by Tracy. It was amazing. Recommend this company, review for a Touchdown tour, which I know Ollie's going to talk about in a

second. Amazing tour, Amazing Guide would highly recommend. And those are just a couple of them. we had an amazing review from Faye Duprees a few weeks ago in the Facebook group. basically just saying how amazing the tour was, how she was encouraging everybody to book, and she just had a fabulous, fabulous time. So I will actually put a copy of Faye's review in the show notes because it's quite a long one, but it is fabulous. So. Hello, Ollie. Welcome back to the podcast.

Ollie: Hello, Tracy. Thank you for having me again.

What have you got planned in terms of your tours this year

Tracy: It's great to catch up with you and I thought what we would do is have a chat about how things are, in terms of 20, 25. What have you got planned in terms of your tours and, what can visitors expect?

Ollie: Well, good question. We've got lots going on here in London. It's so lovely to hear some of the kind words that some of your group members and podcast listeners have left on our reviews. It's been lovely to welcome them all here. So, thanks so much for, helping us promote what we do and our lovely city in London. yeah, it was a great year and we're gonna, build on all, the success and the great things that we've got going on, into this year. And we've.

Touchdown Tour is a tour that gets you going as soon as you land

Apart aside from the, the usual big tours and stuff, I want to focus today actually on one of the first things that your members and your listeners are going to be doing when they get off the plane. They're going to be arriving at London Heathrow, most likely. and one of the tours that, ah, I wouldn't say it's completely unexpected that it's been so successful because I always saw the merit in it and thought it was a really great idea. But we've got a tour called the Touchdown Tour and that is a tour that gets you going as soon as you hit UK soil. So, jump off the plane, grab your luggage. We all know it can be a bit of a drama getting into, into London or any town from any big terminal, but, we take all the stress out of that way. So our driver will meet and greet you in the terminal and then you are whisked off into central London and you literally can start your tour in within, you know, minutes really of starting the uk. He's going to give you some great commentary, on the way in and things like that. But, you know, you're in the action normally in an hour you're up and running.

Touchdown Tours are great introductions to London for first time visitors

Tracy: So what sort of things can visitors expect to do their Touchdown Tour, Ollie?

Ollie: So we're obviously, as you know, Tracy, from coming on a little ride with us already, and from all the feedback that you've been getting, our tours are really flexible. So, we're always willing to tailor, make it to our guest needs. But if you just book a generic Touchdown Tour and it's your first visit to Lond, going to focus on all the big sites. So we're going to be coming in from West London down the M4. We're going to be hitting probably big. First big site is going to be Buckingham Palace. M. You're going to get a chance to jump out, get some great photos. Remember, you've probably got

been off a plane two hours maybe, and you're already literally in front of, one of the most famous palaces in the world. From there we'll normally probably head down to Westminster. We're going to see the House of Parliament, we're going to see Westminster Abbey. You're going to be stretching your legs, remember. So listeners that may not be too familiar with what our tours do, they're, all private, that all the city tours are all in panoramic back taxis with six seats, ah, six guests as standard. but they're very, engaging and we encourage the interaction with the city. So we'll be stopping on our specially designed, rest ranks and things like that in our parking spaces, having a little walk around. Our guides are always happy to take pictures of you, so I know what it's like being a family on holiday. I've got four young kids and if I go away for 10 days and I get three or four good photos with my wife and all my kids, I'm delighted. So, I know how important it is building those memories for some, what some people is going to be a trip of a lifetime. Might m never be coming back to London. So we'll be getting some, some nice photos and our guides are all. Our driver guys are all qualified. So they're going to give you the lowdown on why this location's really important, the history behind it and obviously some cool, fun, quirky facts as well. You're going to have some luggage on board. If you're coming from the airport, most likely. A lot of people generally are staying

00:05:00

Ollie: to the west side of the city because you've got Mayfair, you've got Pimlico, Bayswater, St James's and lots of other central locations. So on route quite often we'll do a bag drop, which that enables you. If you guys, let's say you do a red eye flight, transatlantic, overnight, you land at 7:00am, you know, you're in the cab at, let's say half eight. By the time you've got your luggage reclaimed, your room's not going to be ready till 2 in the afternoon. So you can drop off your luggage at the reception of the hotel. or

if you've got access to whatever accommodation you're staying in and you can continue the tour throughout the morning, finish, early afternoon, you can have lunch and then you can go and do whatever you want before you go back to the hotel. You don't have to finish back there. So it really, really opens the door to really, getting the most out of that first day in that introduction to the city.

Tracy: And how long can those tours be, Ollie?

Ollie: Well, we, if someone wanted to do whatever time, we'd obviously consider it. But our standard times are five hours and that in, that includes the transfer in. So normally your transfer in is going to be about an hour and then you're going to have the rest of the Tour with your guide. Sometimes things can go wrong when people are flying into London. as a company, we always absorb the first hour, so if you're delayed for just one hour landing, then you're still going to get your whole five hours after that. If you, if you're two or three hours, then it needs to be taken from the tour. The guide has his, has his, has his day set out and we need to obviously ensure that, he's covered. But, you know, we always do recommend travel insurance. If the worst happens, and your flight's cancelled, then obviously you've got the insurance to fall back on. But touchwood, it is rare that we get major delays, but obviously like anything with big transport, then it can happen, but all going well, like it normally does, then you get five hours with your guide, including the transfer. So, yeah, after this is the normal route we take, so we do Westminster, and then quite often, people might need a little caffeine injection or a snack. So we're always willing to stop somewhere that we'll recommend locally. The way they grab a pastry or a coffee or something like that, then off we go. We'll aim to cover, Tower of London, Tower Bridge, St. Paul's Cathedral, to cap off the rest of the big sites and all going well, you have a bit of spare time as well.

Every tour is a little bit different. Depends on, you know, traffic, time of day

That's when our guides will, will really leave their mark on this tour because, as you say, they're going to profile it to their guests on board. So if we've got youngsters, we might do chucking a couple of Harry Potter sites or do a bit of street art, something like that. If we've got someone that's got a certain profession, maybe, you know, you're a retired lawyer, you got another interest or, or a connection to, to the uk, we're going to start leaning it towards that. We might have a look at, you know, the Royal Courts of Justice or something like that. Every tour is a little bit different. Depends on, you know, traffic, time of day, the customer on board, and any special requests. So, so I suppose the message to take away is that if you, if you've looked at our site and you think that some of the tools are really interesting, but you've got a special request, then just, just drop us a message or your email's likely to be, open. By myself. Either way, there's no, there's no bots or, or AI and all that sort of stuff. We're all humans here. That's going to answer it. So we'll give you an accurate answer and you know, if it's something special, then we'll advise you on what you need to know about it before we send you a bespoke invoice.

Tracy: Perfect.

There's something special about travelling around London in a black cab

And there's something special about travelling around and exploring London in a black

cab. And you have advantages over other ways of getting around as well. The fact that you can kind of zip along the bus lanes and all sorts, it's, it's a fabulous way to travel and it just a wonderful introduction to London.

Ollie: Yeah, it's people are really, really enjoy that some, sometimes we get some inquiries that people are, you know, inquisitive about will we be sitting in traffic for, for hours and things like that. For my listeners or for listeners to your podcasts around the world, they may not know that the cab. All our drivers study for years to, to get their medallions. So it takes an average between three and four years. So they have a super in depth knowledge of all the little back streets and rat runs in the city anyway. But on top of that, you're right, Tracy. We have lots of privileges like bus lanes where we can be on one side of the road in our own dedicated lane just with buses and motorcycles and we can cruise past all of the traffic that maybe queue in for a red light. We even have our own lights sometimes as well. So we do like to say we're the fastest cars in London.

Tracy: Oh, I think you are definitely. So that's a great introduction to the touchdown tours.

Now let's talk about the layover tours. So another popular tour that's gained a lot of momentum

Now let's talk about the layover tours.

Ollie: Yeah. So, London being you know, one of the gateways into Europe, a lot of our clients are going on to do a European itinerary. So they maybe start with London, then they're going to Paris, Amsterdam, Milan, etc. And they might literally be stopping off in London for an eight hour layover, which everyone knows, airports aren't the most

exciting places to be for that length of time. So another popular tour that's really gained a lot of momentum throughout the last couple of years is our layover tours. So if you are stopped at Heathrow for maybe 7, 8, 9, 10 hours, then this could be a fantastic option for you. So we'll basically meet and greet you in the terminal when you come out into arrivals with layover tours, usually

00:10:00

Ollie: your luggage carries on in transit so you don't even have your bags and stuff. And then we will zip you into town and take you on a whirlwind adventure of the city in whatever time you have allocated, the tours are sold online, and they allocate, they allow up to six hours. but obviously you can make it mistake if you're there for like 12 hours and you want more. Maybe you want to go inside a museum but you want our driver to wait for you outside while you do something or have lunch. You know, everything is, we can customise everything but yeah, that is a fantastic way really of getting London for free because you've got that layover anyway. and we will get you up close and personal with all the sites, we'll get pictures of you there. It will look like you've been on a vacation. If you bring a change, a few changes of clothes, it'll look like you've been there for a whole weekend. because we will really, really make the most of of your time here and then straight back to the airport. another option that we've had as well because people are obviously building their own flights and itineraries to an extent as well. A lot of the time is you can fly into one airport and out of another. There may be a supplement to pay on the usual price because it's priced for London Heathrow, which is the nearest. But we've had lots of tours where a couple is coming in from USA. They're landing at Heathrow at 7 in the morning. They're flying out of Gatwick at 9pm that night. So they've enjoyed with their luggage in the cab the whole day in London and then been dropped at Gatwick. So it really, really can be very, very economical with

your time and make it all stress free.

Tracy: That's brilliant. I mean, why wouldn't you want to do that? I mean, I wish I could do that in other cities around the world when I've got, you know, layovers like that. It's a great option rather than just sitting around in the, in the airport all day wishing I could explore a city. It's, it's a fabulous do and what a wonderful way to explore London.

What about the other tours that you do? Just briefly touch on

So what about the other tours that you do? Just briefly touch on, on the other tours that you offer. And then, and then I want to just talk a little bit about your Ted Lasso tour as well.

Ollie: Yeah, so we've got all, all the classic tours that you'd expect. The big Sights tour, we do a four, a, six and an eight hour standard tours and as you can imagine as the time goes up and the duration increases, the more in depth you're going to learn about our city. So, the longer tours they're going to go off the beaten track a bit more. you're going to see bits of social history, you're going to see the hidden gems that only locals know. So you're really, really going to be on board our cab with a local, and he's going to show you London through his eyes. so that offers a really, really, you know, memorable and lasting impression of the city. The big sites are obviously super important, that's why a lot of people are booked to come to London. so you really want to be covering them. But when you get off the beaten track and you start to see the unexpected side of the city, whether it's the colourful streets of Notting Hill, the floating neighbourhood of Little Venice, and many other little quirky places that are unexpected, you didn't know you wanted to see them. But when you see him, you're very, very

grateful that you've had the opportunity to be whisked in and out of these areas with a really knowledgeable guide and learn about why the streets and the history of the way they are there. So they're really good. And the longer tours as well, we would certainly encourage. If the change in the guard for example, is going on that day, we would say, you know, this is going to really offer you a nice insight because we've got six or eight hours together on the four hour tours. If people request the changes of God, we can do that as well. But there's, you know, depending on pickup and stuff, there's a lot to get to. So our standard itinerary, we would probably just visit the palace because the issue with the change of the guard is because the palace is shut. It's really, really cool to see but there's quite a lot of walking involved and when you get out, because all the roads inside the palace, are closed, then sometimes, you know, it takes a bit of time, to get away from the area. But as I say, we are super flexible so anything you want, you just let us know. Perfect. And yeah, we've got another great tour called the London Detour that's becoming more and more popular. Where we see the rise of TikTok, Instagram and other platforms where people are shining a light on, you know, hidden and more intrepid things. People's appetite for travel I think is changing where yes, they, they understand the merit and the big stuff, but they actually, they're coming for the experience a lot of the time. Not to necessarily tick things Off. And the London Detour really does show you pure hidden gems. So, I won't spoil the surprises, the sort of things we get up to, but it'll be full of unexpected secret streets and, and little quirky places and people really sit back, they don't know what they're really going to see. They just say, you know, trust your. Trust your driver guide, and off you go on a little adventure.

Tracy: that's a lot of fun. And Ted Lasso. Come on, you've got to tell us about Ted Lasso.

Tracy says Ted Lasso is becoming increasingly popular in the UK

Ollie: Ted Lasso. We love a bit of Ted Lasso here. Tracy, you may or may not know, though, that actually if you walk around the streets of the UK and ask people, do you watch TED Lasso? It's not actually a super watch programme in the UK, which is probably surprising to a lot of your listeners.

Tracy: Oh, it's crazy. But in. I know in the States and certainly in Australia, we loved it and all my friends in Australia love it. And a lot of our listeners from Australia and America I can hear right now are just going, believe, believe, because they will be total fans.

Ollie: Yeah. So I. Ted Lasso came onto my radar, actually. I didn't catch the first couple of series when they came out, but it was requests from, you know, customers that, come in through your page and all over the place and they were saying, we see some Ted Lasso

00:15:00

Ollie: stuff. And I, I didn't know what it was at first because me, like everyone else, wasn't, didn't watch it from the start. But, I did a bit of research and I, of course, got into the series, which I absolutely loved. And, yeah, from then on, I started looking and finding out where the locations are and I thought, you know what, this could work as a tour. So, yeah, we have got a Ted, Lasso locations tour in the cab, which is wonderful. it takes you out of town, you stop at a few sites on the way, so the Taste of Athens restaurant and Ola's Restaurant. and then you head out to, Richmond, where you'll visit the pub, you'll see where Ted lives, you walk around the green, you'll see Rebecca's

house, you'll see where Nate's parents lives and so on. and it's really fun. It's only, four hours. So despite being in Richmond, because I say we've got the bus lanes and stuff, we can zip you out there and back, all in that time. so that's becoming really popular actually, with Ted Lasso. Fans. And that's not a surprise because I know the appetite for that, you know, overseas. And now people are watching Ted Lasso a lot in the UK and everyone's a fan that watches it. So I would urge, if anyone wants some homework after this podcast, get yourself on an Apple TV subscription and get on the Ted Lasso train because you won't regret it.

Tracy: Oh, no, it's amazing. It's an absolutely fantastic show. We were so sad when the last season ended. We were like, no, it has to come back. We love it so much. so glad that you are doing a Ted Lasso. Turner listeners, you're thinking, this is amazing. We want to book with Ollie and his, his team. So, Ollie, how can people get in touch with you?

Ollie: So you can book directly on our website. All the tours are live for 2025 and I think it probably goes to the end of 2026 actually. So if you're, you know, an early bird and you're planning, if you book now for next year, then you're going to get 2025 prices, which is always good. And then you've obviously got that, that confirmed and you know what you're doing on that day. Yeah, just click through it. Super simple. please give Tracy and UK Travel Planning a shout out. So I really, really appreciate all the, all the shout outs they've given me, so definitely give them some love on there if you listen and you book. But yeah, it's super easy. And if you've got, you know, a bespoke request which lots, lots of you do, you might want to go somewhere. I'll give you a good example, actually. Someone reached out to me last week and their surname is the same as a town in, in the middle of England and they want to go and visit it and that they actually have ancestors from that area. So we just building an itinerary and we're

going to see Stratford on Avon, while we're up there. So that's not a tour we usually sell because it's a little bit far from London, but, you know, this family's got a special request. It's going to be a really, really special trip for them. We're always happy to accommodate requests where we can. And normally we can always find a solution. Our core business is the taxi tours, but I've got a big network of really talented guides and services here, so sometimes we can, you know, collaborate with someone else and make, make something happen. So, yeah, always feel free if you don't see what you want exactly. On the website. Then get in touch and we'll build you something that ticks the box, I'm sure.

Tracy: Perfect. Well, I'll put a link to your website on the, on the show notes for this episode, but also if you're in our Facebook group, or if you're not in our Facebook group, do join it, because Ollie is a member of both our UK and our London travel plan and Facebook groups. So, do join there, but. And cheque out the show notes. But it's been great as always to catch up with you, Ollie, and I'm hoping I'm going to be seeing you soon in London, actually.

Ollie: Yeah, fingers crossed. We're, we'll have a little nice, another little adventure in the cab, show you some more fun stuff.

Tracy: Yeah, that'll be great. And I'll put those photos from our last trip into the show notes as well. And as I say, hopefully I'll catch up with you soon in London, but it's always great to catch up and having a chat with you. Ollie.

Ollie: Oh, thanks so much, Tracy. Great to catch up with you. And, to everyone listening, we look forward to welcoming you in you to London soon.

Tracy: 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 week, happy UK Travel Planning.

00:19:03