

# **Episode 152 – Trip Report: London and Cotswolds Highlights with Kristen Gonzalez**

**This week's episode 152 of the UK travel planning podcast features Kristen Gonzalez**

Tracy: In

Tracy: In this week's episode 152 of the UK travel planning podcast, I chat with Kristen Gonzalez about her April trip to England with her husband and parents. We talk about their time in London and the Cotswolds, including two Go Cotswolds tours, a London day trip, and some fantastic experiences in the capital. And of course, don't miss Kristin's top tip for visitors at the end of the episode. Welcome to the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracy Collins. In this, Tracey 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.

**Kristen welcomes you onto the podcast to do a trip report**

Kristen, it's fantastic to welcome you onto the podcast this week to do a trip report. They're always my favorite things to find. I'm just so nosy. I want to find out all about

YouTube, how it went, what were the great things were that you did. And I know, I know, I can hear, I can hear so many voices from our listeners. Good.

Kristen Gonzalez: Yeah, Trip report.

Tracy: We love trip reports. So this is going to be episode 152. I can't believe it. We are, I mean, incredible. We are heading towards our half a million downloads. So that's also, amazing. so, so I'm going to say a big thank you to all our listeners. We really appreciate you kind of tuning in every week to, to listen to me chat to people all about their trips, like Kristen.

### **Kristen Gonzalez went to the UK with her husband and her parents**

So Kristen, would you like to introduce yourself, Tell us a little bit about, about you, where you live, how long you went to the UK for and who you went with. So a few questions. Start with.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, I'm Kristen Gonzalez and I live in Alexandria, Virginia, which is right outside of Washington D.C. and we we just got back last month from our trip and we were there for eight days, not including travel. and I went with my husband and my parents who are in their late 70s. So. Yeah.

Tracy: And was that a first time visit for any of you or has it, was it a repeat trip?

Kristin Gonzalez: My parents, my parents have never been, they're huge travelers. They travel all over the place. but they had never been. My husband and I were in the UK

three years ago. We went to Liverpool, and we spent a few days there. We're big Liverpool supporters so we spent a few days there. I Know, try not to judge.

Tracy: No, no, no, I certainly won't judge. And I can tell you, I can hear Doug will be like, oh, yes, fantastic. The best. Because, you know, he's also Liverpool supporter, so. So he loved that. So, I mean, the first thing that came in my head was like, did he. Are you Beatles fans or are you football fans? But fantastic. So obviously.

## **You planned a trip to the Cotswolds and then London**

So this trip, you just went to London?

Kristin Gonzalez: No, so actually we spent, we went. We flew overnight Easter Sunday. So we landed easter Monday at 6:30 in the morning, I think, and, local time, and we went right to the Coal. So we went, for the Cotswolds. Three days there, and then the four days in London.

Tracy: Ah, perfect. I have to ask, why did you. Why that split? Why did you choose the Cotswolds?

Kristin Gonzalez: So it's funny. I got literally no help from my traveling companions what they wanted to do. I asked my dad and he said, I want to go to a publisher. That's what I got. And I said, okay. And then he said. He said, I don't think I need to see London. And I said, well, you're wrong. So just so you know, that's incorrect. So, and then I asked my mom, what do you want to see? And she said, I just want to be there.

Tracy: Oh, that's so cool.

Kristin Gonzalez: Okay. Okay. And then I asked my husband. and of course we tried to look at some football, but it's just too much. And my parents aren't big supporters, so we were like, we're gonna skip that for this trip. And it's, you know, it's a big chunk of time out of your day for not being supporters. So I was like, we won't do that to my parents. So, but I asked him, and he wanted to go. There's, a famous cigar store in London, David, off of London. And that was. That's it. That's what I got. So I. I said, well, I'm on my own. and I've wanted to go to the Cotswolds for a very long time. And I actually saw on the Facebook page, I kept seeing people that had booked the Go Cotswolds tours. And so the more photos I saw of the Cotswolds and of those tours, I said, okay, I need to figure out how to put that in this trip. I wanted to also see the coast. So I was trying. I

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Kristin Gonzalez: stared blankly at a map of the UK for, like, three months. And I was like, I don't even know where to start. Also Because I was all, I had no help, so. So I said, I really want to go to the Cotswolds. I really want my parents to see London. And that just seemed like the most logical kind of combination.

Tracy: Yep.

Kristin Gonzalez: When I realized how close the Cotswolds actually are to London, I was like, okay, this is kind of a no brainer. And then we were only going to spend two days in the Cotswolds. And then I started looking into the tours and they had the secret Cotswolds too. And I was like, okay, so we're going to add a day. So I did that first. I kind

of planned the Cotswolds first, and then added the London. And so we really only stayed in two places. We only stayed in one hotel in the Cotswolds and one hotel in London. But I was able to kind of maximize our week there. So.

Tracy: Well, Lisa will be so excited. I'm sure she'll know that. you booked, because you heard about them through the Facebook group. Have you listened to the podcast with Lisa as well?

Kristin Gonzalez: I haven't yet, no.

Tracy: So Lisa's done a couple of, a few podcasts as well. She's a great guest. I think she's been on three times now.

Kristin Gonzalez: Nice.

Tracy: So, so. And we've had a lot of people going, oh, I'd love listening to Lisa. So Lisa, obviously with her husband, owns Go Cotswold. So, they're fantastic. So that's really exciting to hear that.

## **How did you get to the Cotswolds and then back to London**

So, so let's, let's ask first of all, how you got around. So how did you get to the Cotswolds and then back to London and then, you know, back to the airport? How did you do that?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, so that was one of the other things that was kind of a sticking

point. When my husband and I were in Liverpool a few years ago, there was a train strike. And so I think I was a little, I was really nervous about using the trains because of that. And I know they're so polite in Britain that they announce it ahead of time. but it was still, like, just really stressful for me. And then also, even though my parents are well traveled, I was reading some of the posts on the train Facebook group specifically about having, you know, seven, eight minutes between trains. And my dad just doesn't walk that quickly. And I was like, you know what, I don't want to change trains. So I was looking at different options. We definitely didn't want to drive. Being on the opposite of everything, we were, opposite side of the car, opposite side of the road. And I've heard driving in the Cotswolds can be harrowing. So, we didn't want to do that. And, so I actually. I booked with Riz.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, I booked with xfa. I'm telling you, your group made our entire trip. Our entire trip.

Tracy: I love to hear it. Because that's kind of what we're trying. We're trying to kind of provide, like, everything that you could possibly want. and because we honestly, we seek out the best. The best people for you to work with, the best CH companies, the best readers and that. So we. We kind of have full faith in everybody that we work with. And to be honest, I've got to the point where I kind of feel sorry for people who do not have the Riz experience, because he is so.

Kristin Gonzalez: He's amazing. So we. We didn't. I was, I was sad because I didn't actually get to meet him. We had another one of his drivers who was incredible. But the communication was like nothing I've ever experienced, honestly. I mean, from the moment we landed, I had a welcome to. You know, I welcome to the UK text. And he was so incredibly thoughtful with all of his communication that we actually decided to

book him to get back to London. So, yeah, I booked him to get. Because it was also. I mean, we've been up all night. I think one of the mistakes people might make is, you know, flying all night and then jumping in a car in a country you've never been in, or. We just didn't want to do that. So, I wanted to be smart about it.

Tracy: And we recommend that people don't do that, honestly. Because, you know, even to be honest, I mean, I'm used to driving on the left, but if I'm on a long flight, you know, I don't want to drive. I mean, I have. Riz picks us up. Riz picks my parents up. Pigs. I know. I love it. Put her off later on the air. Like, we. We use the people we work with. We work with ourselves. and we use them. So doesn't that just reduce the stress?

Kristin Gonzalez: You knew you were going to be met enormously.

Tracy: Exactly. So that's fantastic.

## **So tell me about the Go Cotswold and the SecretCotswolds tours**

So tell me about the Go Cotswold. So that's fantastic. That's brilliant. Riz is going to love this. So tell me about schools and your Go Cotswolds tours.

Kristin Gonzalez: Okay, so we stayed in Morton and Marsh. based on one of the posts that I had seen, I, decided to stay There because it had the train station. And I booked our accommodations first. I didn't know how we were traveling yet, but I knew that they had the train station. And I saw that the Go Cotswolds tours picked up there and I was like, well, this seems like an easy choice then. So we stayed in Morton and Marsh and then we had that full day there. The first day we got there, you know. Cause you're

trudging through and fighting jet lag. So we walked around, and it was lovely. I instantly fell in love and I kind of started to think maybe we should have spent more time in the Cotswolds. But I don't think there's

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Kristin Gonzalez: enough time for the Cotswolds ever. So. and then the next morning we did the Go Cotswolds or Cotswolds in a day the next morning. and that's, you know, it's a full day. It's like an eight hour day. and then we had dinner in Morton and Marsh. And then the next day we did the Secret Cotswolds.

Tracy: Yeah.

Kristin Gonzalez: Which is another full day. But it's just, it is the perfect way to get a really good sense of that area. And the two tours are very different from each other. which I was really pleasantly surprised. There's a little bit more bus time and driving through the countryside in the Secret Cotswolds tour. but it was, it was perfect. It was absolutely the highlight to me, the highlight of the trip because I've wanted to see the Cotswolds for so long. You have a really good amount of time in, in all the little places. And it was, it was perfect. I'm literally ready to move.

Tracy: I've taken my mum on both of those tours as well. And my Mom's in her 80s and she, she, she loved them. She just, and I mean she, she doesn't live that far out of the Cotswolds, but she just like she could sit and, and, and she, I mean we both learned quite a lot as well because the, that we had. so that was all really good fun. you know, I like it because you've got local guides that know the place and know the area. They can answer all your questions. you know, and I think that is, it's just a great way to explore

because the Cotswolds are not an easy region to get around unless you've got a cop or taking a tour with like Go Cotswolds is, is a perfect way to do is.

Kristin Gonzalez: And I loved the Size of it because it's a very intimate group and it's not. You're not on a bus with 40 people, you're 16 people. I. And, both guides that we had were from there. They, you know, one of them grew up there and the other one had lived there for 30 plus years. So they genuinely love talking about the Cotswolds. Like, they just really love talking to people about it and, you know, teaching people history and, you know, I just, I. Absolutely. I'm so glad that we did those tours. It was. I would never have seen that much on my own. There's no way I would have been able to see all of that if I tried to do it on my own.

Tracy: I know it's incredibly well organized and you, get to see a lot of the best bits. and what about your parents? Did they enjoy the Cotswolds? Was it kind of.

Kristin Gonzalez: They loved it. I don't think. I think that was the. I think my dad loved it. That was his favorite part of the trip, I think also because of the, you know, the rolling hills and the sheep and the. It's all that quintessential England, you know, in the. What you picture, and what you see in the movies. And so he loved it. He loved the small town feel of it and he liked the pubs. Yeah, that's what he wanted to do and that's what we did. So, Yeah, he really liked it a lot. and I think my mom just the thatched roofs and, you know, what's not to love about it? But it is, it's kind of what you picture. I think when you picture outside of London, it's kind of what you picture when you picture England. So.

Tracy: Yeah, I definitely, I definitely agree on that.

## **You had incredible weather during your trip to the UK**

So what was the weather like? Because I have. I left the UK in February, so I haven't. I haven't been back for a few months. So what was it like when you were there? Was it all right?

Kristin Gonzalez: So we had the most incredible weather the entire time, and I was blown away. Here I am, I'm. I'm carrying an umbrella and I have a rain jacket. We had rain our very first day. And I don't even. It was like really drizzle, not rain. We literally did not see a drop of rain for the next seven days. It was absolutely perfect.

Tracy: That's brilliant. And the thing is, with the UK weather as well, I said everybody is like, expect the unexpected because you never, you never. Honestly, you never know what you're going to get. You really? Really?

Kristin Gonzalez: Absolutely. Absolutely. So we were prepared. But, yeah, actually got sunburned on part of our trip. I was like, what? I was not expecting that. Not at all.

## **So you had four days in London. What were your kind of highlights**

Tracy: So let's talk about, London. So you had four days in London.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: So what did you do when you were in London? What were your kind of

highlights?

Kristin Gonzalez: So we did a ton of tours. it's basically how we kind of tackled it. my dad sprung on me right before we left that he would like to do tea. He doesn't drink tea, so I wasn't expecting that. so rather. I mean, this was literally a couple weeks before we left. So, rather than try to figure that out. And my husband doesn't do tea either, so I did. I found this, bus tour that does tea on a bus. It goes around London. So it's not your. Not your most authentic way to do tea. But, it was pretty cool because we got to. So we did that the day that we arrived.

Tracy: Yeah, I think, yeah, we had a great time. Yeah. I've got a whole article, about the different,

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Tracy: afternoon teas and the different afternoon tea houses because, there's quite a few different themed ones as well. And they're also kind of a great way to kind of see a bit of London.

Kristin Gonzalez: And that's kind of what I figured. So I, I added it. I didn't plan a whole lot for the day we arrived in London because I didn't know how long it would take us to get in with traffic and things like that. So. So I planned it for that afternoon so that we could just kind of go around London. And, it was really fun. So that's what we did the first day, and then the next day. So we ended up. We ended up being there during the London marathon.

Tracy: Yep.

Kristin Gonzalez: Which does change things a little bit. We were supposed to do the Changing of the Guard tour, the Friday before the marathon, but it got canceled because of the road closures. So we did the Changing of the Horse Guard, which was really. Was really cool. I'm so glad that we saw that. And, a walking tour of Westminster City. So we had an amazing, amazing guide. again, I booked through, I booked through your. Through your link through, Viator. I don't know how you say it, but, Yeah, so we had an amazing tour guide. She was incredible. She was a local young lady from London and she was hysterical and she was awesome. She walked us through, St. James park and over to, the palace, and it was. It was Very, very cool. And then from there, we did. We did another tour. we walked around that part of London for a little bit, and then we did, a historic Royal Pub tour, which was. I just wanted to do something that was a little bit unique. So we did that, and it was awesome. We went to four different pubs and we had a guy who's, actually an aspiring actor. So it was very full of life. And, it was. It was fun. It was. Young man, he was hysterical. He told us a lot of really cool stories about, you know, the royals and, some of the, like, the early, you know, head military people. And it was really cool. So that was. That was pretty fun.

Tracy: I always recommend, doing a pub tour. That's one of my favorite things.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: It's just so much. Yeah.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah. And honestly, I mean, you could. You could do it on your own, but it's not as much fun and you don't learn anything. So, you know, So, yeah, I was really glad that we did that. It was really fun. So that was Friday, and then I didn't, I didn't book anything for the rest of the day, because it was already a ton of walking. We

walked like. We walked like, seven, eight miles a day. And my parents are almost 80, so, you know, they were troopers. But, Yeah.

## **I booked a tour to Seven Sisters that included the train ticket**

So then the next day, on Saturday, we act. So I don't know if you remember, but I said I wanted to see the coast. Yeah. So what I decided to do was I booked a tour to Seven Sisters, so. Because it's an easy day trip from London, so. And it included the train ticket. they even had a guide that met us at the train station and he rode the train with us all the way to Brighton to make sure that we, like, I don't know, didn't get lost or. I don't know. It was great. it was amazing, but it's, you know, like, in just over an hour from London to Brighton. So, he traveled with us and then we met our tour guide in Brighton and we went to Devil's Dyke National Trust and, Beachy Head. And we saw a farm, a working farm in Sussex, that's been in the same family for hundreds of years. And that was a pretty cool thing to see. So it was a really cool way to see. We saw the cliffs and it was a really cool way to kind of see the coast and go down onto the, you know, onto the Beachy Head. And it was awesome. I'm so glad that we did it. It was A long day. It's like a nine hour tour. and then they give you the option to stay in Brighton if you don't want to, you know, go back right away, they give you train tickets back and they kind of tell you how to get there. But. So we stayed in Brighton for another couple of hours just to check it out, which is a totally different part than what we had been seeing. So that was. Yeah, so that was cool. It was neat to see that. We just kind of. We went into a pub and sat and people watched and walked around some of the shops and stuff. So that was really cool. And that, like I said, that was like a full day. That was, it was like. I think we were, we were gone for, I don't know, maybe 11 hours that day total.

Tracy: It does sound like a really good tour and I will actually put a link to it in the show notes as well. So if you listen, I want to do that tour and I wouldn't mind trying. I mean I go on loads of tours but, it sounded really good and I like the fact that included the train tickets took me down there, which is really good. So I think it sounds like a really good day.

## **You went down and saw some of the beautiful south coast as well**

get asked Dover. The White cliffs of Dover are such a popular destination and. But the Seven Sisters, it's so, it's so lovely down there. Brighton's gorgeous city. Brighton and Hove. Yeah. A, really lovely place to go. So I'm glad that you,

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that you actually got a contrast because you're in the Cotswolds for that kind of quintessential countryside. And then you went down and saw some of the beautiful south coast as well. So really, really, yeah. Great to do it.

Kristin Gonzalez: I really, I wanted to maximize our week because I learned very quickly that you need a lifetime to see it all. So I just wanted to try to maximize our trip as much as possible. And I don't know if my parents are going to be able to go back, so I just wanted to kind of tackle as much as possible and just see all the different parts and it just seemed like the best way to do it. So.

Tracy: Yeah, no, I think that was really good.

## **We did Covent Garden market on Saturday before marathon day**

so was that the Saturday?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yep, that was Saturday and then Marathon day. I didn't plan much of anything because I didn't. I really just didn't know what to expect. And it, it was definitely, we were staying in Covent Garden, so we just kind of stayed over there, because it's away from everything. So we did the Covent Garden market in the Morning. which was amazing. I loved it. I. That's the other place I was like, okay, well, I could definitely live in this part of London. I loved it so much. So my mom and I kind of walked around the shops and we did that in the morning. And then I. The only thing I had booked that day was I did the Tower Bridge tour. so I booked the last one of the day so that the marathon would be mostly over with and cleared out.

Tracy: It runs over Tower Bridge, so that's a good idea.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, exactly. So I did. So we did that, and that was really, really cool. because you get to walk over the terrifying glass floors and, see the engine room.

Tracy: London buses. That's what you got to walk across. There's a London bus below.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: So it's really. Yeah, I do like it. It's a really good thing to do.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah. And so, that's what we did. And then I, made reservations for, The name just went out of my head, but it's like a famous fish and chip spot that's

under. Right under the Tower Bridge, right underneath it. And it's like in a cave.

Tracy: I feel like I should know that. But I've got. I've m. Got a blanket as well.

Kristin Gonzalez: Well, I know I can think about.

Tracy: It, find out what it is, and we'll put it in the show notes. Because I've drawn.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, yeah. I should have written it down, but I did.

Tracy: Was it good?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, it was.

Tracy: Because there's lots of amazing places to eat in London, which kind of,

## **You stayed in Covent Garden. Whereabouts did you stay?**

It kind of brings me back to the fact that you mentioned that you. You stayed in. You stayed in Covent Garden. Now that. Because we get asked all the time about where to stay in London and we kind of go, well, Westminster area is really good. Covent Garden area is really good. Around Tower. Tower Bridge, depending on what you're doing is really good. But I have to have a garden, for me is just such a special area to stay in. the history of Covent Garden is extremely interesting. I'm actually going to do a podcast, hopefully this month about Covent Garden and what to do and see, because it used to be a very seedy part of London. Covent Garden was. Yeah, it was not a place

you want to go to. Yeah.

Kristin Gonzalez: Oh, that's so interesting. I can't even picture that now, can you?

Tracy: Because it's such an amazing area. But yes, it was. It was a great area as a lot of, Yeah, a lot of things went on in Covent Garden, so. But I'm gonna talk 100 years ago. We're not talking now because it now is.

Kristin Gonzalez: Right.

Tracy: Very popular, tourist destination. and there's so much to do and see around Covent. Many amazing places to eat. So we stayed in Common Garden. Whereabouts did you stay?

Kristin Gonzalez: Which we, we stayed at the residence.

Tracy: Yep.

Kristin Gonzalez: the resident Covent Garden, which was really, really lovely. And it's in, it sits in such a good spot because you're in walking distance to a couple of tube stations if you want to get around that way. But there's also the, the black cabs were so accessible right there also because it's such a busy little spot. and you're in walking distance to a million cafes and restaurants. And so you can just kind of, you can be done for the day and drop off all your stuff and then just walk a few minutes and be. I mean you could have your choice of little pub or you know, high end restaurant if you want, cocktail bar, whatever you want. It's right there. which was perfect. It was, it ended up being like the perfect little spot for us.

Tracy: Yeah, we really are. Spot for choice when you're there. That's my favorite place to go is the, the cheese bar. It's like a sushi bar for cheese.

Kristin Gonzalez: Oh, that's fun.

Tracy: Oh, honestly, it's my absolute favorite, Absolute favorite. Pair the cheese up with just the most amazing, or just the most amazing parents. I don't know how to do it so I usually get myself a passport and then, have the cheeses as they come round and yeah, that is absolutely worth doing if you're. But, but it's a great area and also there's a lot of really quirky, cool shops as well. The market. Yeah, the market. This is a few markets there. so it's really, it's a lovely, lovely area. So yeah, I'm, I'm looking forward to actually doing a podcast all about the area.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, I'll have to check that

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Kristin Gonzalez: out. That'll be interesting because I really, really fell in love with that part of London. I, I really liked it. It was, it's busy but quiet at the same time. I don't know how they. I don't know how that combination works, but, but it does. It, it's. We never heard a sound outside and we're in, you know, right in the middle of everything. And I really liked it there.

Tracy: A lot of theaters. I was gonna say. It's just, it is a fantastic area.

Kristin Gonzalez: Everything is there.

Tracy: Absolutely. And there's a lot. Actually there's A wide range of, accommodation in that area as well. I mean, I've stayed in Holborn, which is kind of, you know, it's the, I've stayed in the Z Hotel in Holborn, which is. It is really reasonable when I've stayed there on my own. So you've got kind of a wide range of, you know, because I know everybody goes, oh, it's so expensive to stay in London. It is, but it is expensive. Yeah. You can find, you know, reasonable places.

### **You mentioned the fish and chips. There's one that's literally right under Tower Bridge**

so, were there any kind of. You mentioned the fish and chips. Obviously you went on the. The bus. Afternoon tea bus tour, and you went.

Kristin Gonzalez: Any of the.

Tracy: Some of the pubs. Are there any kind of, meals that you had or anything stand out that you kind of go, I'd love to eat that again.

Kristin Gonzalez: So I, I'm not usually super adventurous with food, but when we were in the Cotswolds, I tried a game pie, and it was venison, pheasant. And what was the other one?

Tracy: Partridge. Pheasant.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yes. Yep. And I was so terrified. I was like, this is not something that we would eat here at all. but it was so good. I loved it. It was so good. And then I kind of

became slightly obsessed with sausage rolls also. They're so good. I don't understand what it's. They're so good. we also went to. There's a place called, Mr. Fogg's Society of Exploration. So there's like 12 of them, I think, in London. But we went. There's one that's literally right. The resident. And so we went down there, and they have. It's basically just, like, appetizers and small plates. But everything was so good, and the cocktails are really, really fun. We had such a good time in there. I'm so glad that we got to do that. and you can. You don't even know it's there. It's. Because it's downstairs, and so it's like, in the basement. So you. Just this little door, and you wouldn't ever even know to go down there. I know.

Tracy: I like the. I know you shared a photo in the, in the Facebook group. So we'll have to put that in the show notes as. Because I know a few people said, oh, where is that? Where is that?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, yeah, they have a train car right in the. In the middle of it, where you can. And that's where we ended up sitting, which was lovely.

Tracy: But, yeah, Doug doesn't drink, but I Will still see the fact that he said, there's a train car there. I'll get him down there for the train car, and then I can just sit and have a few cocktails. So it works for me and it works for him.

Kristin Gonzalez: And if you're. And if you love cheese, they have, like, the best cheese down there. I don't know what that is. Oh, it's called the vault. My husband just stepped in. It was called the vault. London Tower Bridge. That's the fish and chips restaurant that's under the bridge.

Tracy: Okay, well, I don't know about that one. There's so many places to eat. if I ate in

all the places in London, I wouldn't be able to get through the door. That's why there's no.

Kristin Gonzalez: I know that. Yeah, no kidding. I know. Between the. Between the beers and the. And the food. Yeah.

### **Did you buy any souvenirs when you were over there**

Tracy: so what about.

Kristin Gonzalez: Did you.

Tracy: Did you buy any souvenirs when you were over there? Was there anything that you. Oh, I love the way you said that.

Kristin Gonzalez: I took an empty carry on with me, because I know myself. So I did. I bought, I bought a beautiful cashmere sweater in the Cotswolds. and I also went into an antique store in Morton and Marsh, and I, I got a porcelain jar, an antique porcelain jar, that toothpaste used to be. and it has, like, the most beautiful design on the top. It's gorgeous. I'll send you a picture of it so you can see it. And then, actually, one of the more fun things that I did, my daughter asked for. I said, is there anything you want me to bring back? She's, in her second year of college, and she said, fun earrings. She was like, maybe like, phone booth. Oh, yeah, earrings. And I thought, oh, this will be super easy to find. They don't exist. I didn't find them anywhere. I must have gone in 20 shops in London, and I never saw them. So I actually bought a keychain and I made her earrings when I got home.

Tracy: You know what? I've done something similar with, I think London buses on. I think I bought, I don't know, something like that, and then I just put them on. I got them actually, somewhere. I need to find those because, Yeah, it's true. Actually, I was thinking you should be able to find,

Kristin Gonzalez: I couldn't find them anywhere. It's like I said, guys, this is an untapped market. Somebody needs to be making phone booth earrings, because, well, you know, they're not anywhere.

Tracy: You know, I used to. I used to make jewelry. That's something I used to do. Maybe I should be making boom booth earrings. You should.

Kristin Gonzalez: You would make a. You make a fortune.

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Kristin Gonzalez: Because they don't exist. So. Yeah, for anybody that wants them, they're hard to find. So I made my own.

Tracy: That's a great idea. What about your. Your parents? Did they. Did they buy any souvenirs when they were over there? Was anything?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: I've got to take those back.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah, it was, Mostly, Mostly my mom, M. Obviously. But, she was

looking for Christmas ornaments mostly. That's something that we've. My whole family does that, so I brought some back also. she was a lot more reserved than I was with the shopping. We also. We went into, the store in Covent Garden. Molten Brown.

Tracy: Yes.

Kristin Gonzalez: So we both did that. And then, she bought some things at the Covent Garden Garden market. We went into the tea shop that's there, which was gorgeous. So we brought back quite a bit of tea and some artwork. She actually. And she bought a T shirt, which she never does. So. Yeah.

Tracy: so you had enough. You had enough luggage space to bring it all back.

Kristin Gonzalez: So that's barely. Barely.

Tracy: And then.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: So was it the Monday that you flew back?

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: Yeah. And Riz took it to the airport or, XFA cars? One of Riz's airport.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: That's brilliant.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah. Yeah.

Tracy: So a brilliant trip, by the sounds. That sounds like you just had a fantastic time, which is.

Kristin Gonzalez: I loved it.

Tracy: I love to hear that. That is so good.

Kristin Gonzalez: I was not ready to come home at all. I love it there so much.

Tracy: You have to plan another trip.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: But I, always end the podcast with the same question.

## **What would be your one tip for anybody planning a trip to the UK**

So I'm going to ask you the usual question that I ask is what would. What would be your one tip, that you would share with anybody planning a trip to the UK for the first time?

Kristin Gonzalez: I, I think. And I think it's probably a common one, but it. It bears repeating because I've been thinking about this a lot. I booked everything ahead of

time. All of it, all the pub reservations, the everything. All of it. I had it all done and I had it all organized, and it just made everything so much easier. there was one night that we didn't. I didn't make reservations and I regretted it because reservations work very differently in London. Sometimes you have to request them and they don't. They have to, like, get back to you. And sometimes it could be an hour. So if you're trying to find a place to go, you know, so the reservations are a little bit different than I'm used to here. So that would be my. My one takeaway is. I'm so glad that I booked. I booked all the pubs, all the dinners, Everything was ahead of time. And it just made it really easy. And I just made a spreadsheet so that I knew where I had to be at what time.

Tracy: I think that it's such a. It's such a good piece of advice, honestly. It really is, Kristen, because, I mean, I know when Doug and I travel and we haven't done that bit of research or booked somewhere, the amount of times, we waste walking around trying to find somewhere to eat.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yes. Yeah. And you're tired, you know, at the end of the day, and you're looking for a place to just stop and have dinner or. Or whatever it is. it's just nice to know exactly where you have to be and what time you have to be there. And you can always change it if you need to, but that way, if you don't have the bandwidth to try to figure it out, it's just so much easier. And, I was really glad that I did that because it just made it so much easier. And I didn't fill up every single minute of every single day. We knocked out a lot. We saw so much, and I still. We had time to just meander through shops and walk around, and if we want to stop and get a pint, we did. And so it was really nice. And I think that people try to do too much, which is easy to do. And we did a lot. don't get me wrong, we crammed a lot in there, but I think it was nice. Like the first day in the Cotswolds, we didn't. We had no plans. We just walked around and if we were hungry, we ate, and if we wanted to get a pint, we did. And if we wanted to go in

the shop, we did. And so it was nice to not have, like, a constant kind of feeling like I had to fill every single minute. and I think the booking things ahead of time help you to factor in that time also.

Tracy: Yeah, that's what you knew. You could have, that bit of kind of downtime relaxation because you had stuff planned so that you knew what you were going to be doing, so.

Kristin Gonzalez: Exactly.

Tracy: I think it makes absolute perfect sense.

## **Christine, thank you so much for sharing your trip with us**

Well, it's been fantastic to talk to you, Christine, catch up about your honesty about your trip. It's just. I love it. It's Always great to hear. And, I mean, I'm grinning from here. You're grinning from here because. Yeah, yeah.

Kristin Gonzalez: Ah, I can talk about this trip for days.

Tracy: It's so much fun. So I will ask you to send me some photos so we can share them in the show notes. And I will share links to the different tours that you took as well, because you very kindly, booked through our affiliate links, which. Which support just all the work that we do. So I just say from the bottom of mine and Doug's heart, thank you so much for doing that.

Kristin Gonzalez: Absolutely.

Tracy: It really helps, honestly. so, yeah, so it'll be

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Tracy: on the show notes. UKTravelPlanner.com forward/, episode 152. Can you believe it?

### **Thank you for listening to this week's UK Travel Planning podcast**

but that leaves me, and I'm gonna save Kristen to say, until next week, Happy UK Travel Planning for both of us.

Kristin Gonzalez: Yeah.

Tracy: So thanks so much, Kristen

Kristin Gonzalez: Absolutely. It was so nice to talk to you.

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 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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