

Episode 159 – Bath Travel Guide: Top Sights, Where to Stay, and Planning Your Perfect Visit

Planning a trip to Bath in this episode, I'm sharing practical tips and answering common questions. How to get there, what to do, where to stay, and whether to visit for the day or spend a few nights. Based on my own many visits, I'll walk you through what to expect and how to make the most of your time. Welcome to the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracey Collins. In this podcast, Tracy shares destination guides, travel tips and itinerary ideas as well as interviews with the 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. Hi and welcome to this week's edition of the UK Travel Planning Podcast.

Tracy Collins [00:01:01]:

In this episode, we're going to be talking all about Bath. Doug is here. Hello there. One of the most popular cities in England, of course, Bath is, and the only entire city in the UK to be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In fact, Bath holds two UNESCO designations for its Roman and Georgian architecture and is one of the great spa towns of Europe. Now, before we dive in and start talking all about Bath, I would like to or we would like to say a huge thank to listener Lisa Webster who supports the podcast with their monthly subscription. We really appreciate it. Thank you so much Lisa.

Tracy Collins [00:01:37]:

If you'd like a shout out on the podcast and want to support what we do from as little as US\$3 a month, we've included a link in the show notes. And thank you as well to everyone who sent us messages via Speak Pipe. We love hearing from you. If you leave your name and email when you record your message, we'll always do our best to get back to you. Now back to today's episode. Doug and I have visited Bath numerous times.

Doug [00:02:01]:

Oh, many times over many years.

Tracy Collins [00:02:03]:

And so we thought in this chat today we would share our favorite places, helpful tips and personal experiences to help you plan your own trip. So we're going to cover how to get there, what to see and do, where to stay, when to go, and even a few great day trip ideas.

Doug [00:02:21]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:02:21]:

Yep. So Doug's going to take over host and Judy's in this one, so he's going to be asking the questions we often hear from you guys and chiming in with his own thoughts from previous visits too. So whether it's your first time visiting Bath or you're planning to return, this episode will help you feel more confident about how to make the most of your time there?

Doug [00:02:43]:

Let's start with a simple question to start with for anyone who hasn't been. Where is Bath and how would you describe it? And I suppose an extension is what makes it such a special place to visit.

Tracy Collins [00:02:54]:

Well, Bath is located in the county of Somerset, which is in the southwest of England. It's an elegant and historic city, full of beautiful Georgian architecture, Roman history. It's compact and walkable, which makes it easy to explore and just enjoy being there. What makes it so special? Well, it's that mixture of history, architecture, spa culture and literary connections because you've got the Roman Bath, stunning buildings like the Royal Crescent and of course, Jane Austen everywhere. It's the kind of place where you can slow down, take your time and just soak it all in.

Doug [00:03:26]:

I couldn't agree more. In fact, I would add on to that, it's a relaxing place. We've spent many times visiting there and just had a picnic up near the park and just chilled out, haven't we?

Tracy Collins [00:03:37]:

Yeah, it really is. It's a very special city.

Doug [00:03:39]:

Okay, so the next question is, what's the best way to get there to Bath from London, for example?

Tracy Collins [00:03:45]:

Well, I'm actually going to turn this round and ask you because as the UK train expert, I think if you explain how to get there from London by train, that would be really good.

Doug [00:03:54]:

Well, yeah, I guess that makes sense, doesn't it, really? Okay, so departed from London Paddington, which is the train station on the west side of London, using the Great Western Railway service. It takes about an hour and 15 minutes for the fastest service to Bath Spa.

Tracy Collins [00:04:10]:

So that's perfect. So that's the best way to get there by train. And you say it's just over two hours and we've done that journey so many times.

Doug [00:04:17]:

Yeah, our train is about 1 hour 15 minutes to the fastest service. 1:15 for driving, depending where you're leaving in London from. I guess it's two hours plus, depending how many times you stop and to say where you're leaving from.

Tracy Collins [00:04:28]:

Yeah, I would never say to leave from London though, would we? Would never say drive in London. I say that all the time. But if you are planning to, you know, include Bath in, in a

driving itinerary around the uk, which many, many of you do, we know it's a very popular place to go. What about actually driving there and, and parking?

Doug [00:04:48]:

Well, there is car parks available in Bath itself, but to be honest, I don't think you need to really. I mean, we're big fans of park and rides, aren't we?

Tracy Collins [00:04:57]:

Yeah, we do definitely recommend them.

Doug [00:04:58]:

Yeah, there's three around Bath itself, depending which direction driving in from. But the park and rides themselves can work in a slightly different way.

Tracy Collins [00:05:07]:

Yes, I know some of them you park the car and you pay for the car parking and then you get a free bus and some of them you pay for the bus and you have free parking.

Doug [00:05:18]:

Yeah, those work a bit different, but they're easy to work out, aren't they?

Tracy Collins [00:05:21]:

Yeah. So it's either which other way. One time you pay for the parking and you don't pay for the bus. Although you pay for the bus and you don't pay for the parking.

Doug [00:05:28]:

Yeah, that's it. But using a parking ride, it can actually save you time because you haven't got to drive into the center of, well, any city but Bath in this case. And so that can save you a lot of time. You haven't got to sit in traffic.

Tracy Collins [00:05:42]:

Absolutely.

Doug [00:05:43]:

And me is doing nearly all the driving, if not all the driving. It gives the driver a bit of a break as well, so.

Tracy Collins [00:05:49]:

Yeah, that's true. So if you're planning to go and just if you. Well, basically, if you plan to do that and go on a day trip and you're driving. So it's part of your driving itinerary, that's what would recommend. We are going to talk about accommodation in a bit, but actually that's something to consider if you are going to get accommodation that you need to really think carefully about the parking issues. But I say we will mention that in a bit. But we honestly do recommend trying to avoid parking or even trying to park in any of these cities, especially at. Bath is extremely popular.

Doug [00:06:18]:

Yeah, yeah. I mean, for Bath itself, we've recommended to some. We've done itinerary consoles for. There's a lovely little village called Bradford Avon, not too far. It's actually minutes away by train. So even if you're driving into that direction, you know, you can maybe stay. If you plan on staying more than one day in Bradford Ponto and then catch the train in.

Tracy Collins [00:06:39]:
Yeah, that's a good idea.

Doug [00:06:41]:
So do you think it. I mean, we know it's doable as. As a day tr. You know, recommend staying overnight. Really?

Tracy Collins [00:06:48]:
Yeah. Ideally, if you can, we would recommend that you, you know, have a few days in Bath, but you can. If you. If you're limited itinerary time and limited time in the UK and you're kind of putting your itinerary together and you want to really go to Bath, but You're struggling to fit it in. You can do it as a day trip and I don't. I've done that many times from London. Our partner that does this is the English Boss, which is a small coach. It's a small group coach that will take you to Stonehenge, Bath and to a secret Cotswolds village, which I won't mention because it's a secret, but I've done that before and that's a really great.

Tracy Collins [00:07:28]:
It's a small group, really great guide. You get to cover Stonehenge, Bath and as I say, part of the Cotswolds. So that covers kind of three very popular destinations. But you do get time and Bath to explore and at least have, you know, a small taste of the city, really. Other ways to go to Bath, if you're staying in the Cotswolds, for example, you can go out with Go Cotswolds, who again we work with, do small group tours. Excellent small group tours. Last year I actually went to Bath with my mom to the Christmas market. And they also now have a new Bath and Southern Cotswolds tour which departs from Morton and Marsh or Stratford upon Avon.

Tracy Collins [00:08:08]:
Now, for both the English bus and Go Cotswolds, we have a promo code for a small discount, so I will link to those in the show notes. And we actually have had Chris from the English Bus and Lisa from Go Cotswolds on the podcast previously as well. So you can listen to them all about their companies, what makes them so special. Another option is you can take a private tour if you want, from London out to Bath. So my tailored tours, again, they've been on the podcast, they can talk all about their private data to Bath. If you want something a bit more bespoke for you, you want to kind of maybe include a few places on the way to stop off, for example, Stonehenge or Avebury, for example. You can talk to them. Otherwise, that's a great way to get out To Bath if you want to do privately.

Tracy Collins [00:08:51]:
But if you can, I would say try to stay at least one night just to soak in the amazing atmosphere of Bath.

Doug [00:08:59]:

Yeah, I totally agree with that. So let's talk about accommodation now. So you stayed in Bath a few more times than I have. So where did you stay and would you recommend those areas?

Tracy Collins [00:09:09]:

Well, we stayed. We actually stayed together a few years ago at the Black Fox, which was. It's an 18th century inn with what they describe as 21st century luxury, which it is, and it was fantastic. Really enjoyed that didn't we really did.

Doug [00:09:22]:

It was really nice.

Tracy Collins [00:09:23]:

Yeah, Very historic. Fantastic breakfast and say and it was just really close. Close to the train station, close to walking to the, the actual Roman baths itself, to the actual center.

Doug [00:09:35]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:09:35]:

So that was really cool. So we really enjoyed that. And then actually for my mom's 80th birthday I took her to. She chose Bath is where she wanted to go for kind of a. A few days away. So we stayed in number 15 by guest house which was excellent, food was excellent, you got dol in the bedrooms, lovely bathroom. It's a real lovely boutique hotel and with lovely little touches. Like there's a little pantry that you can go and get crisps and drinks and sweets which was just fantastic.

Tracy Collins [00:10:06]:

They'll also pick you up from the station as well if you organize that with them. So if you arrive at the train station and you need to get obviously with your luggage to the hotel, they'll organize that for you. So that's a lovely hotel. And then the other hotel that I stayed in actually I was invited to stay in last year was the Hotel Indigo in Bath. And now this is a beautiful four star boutique hotel. It's again close to the station, very close to Bath Abbey and the Roman baths. Lovely restaurants, gorgeous rooms, bathrooms beautifully decorated. And actually I have a full review of my stay at that hotel on the website which I will link to.

Tracy Collins [00:10:44]:

But there are lots of boutique hotels, Georgian B B self catering flats, lots of varieties, different places to stay in Bath. I will just say though, if you're driving, make sure that have got parking included in the accommodation. That's one thing that we are constantly reminding people of. It's very important in Bath, but beautiful. And another tip, I will say as well as looking, if you know, if you're driving, making sure that you get parking is to consider booking ahead. If you're visiting during a festival period, during the summer school holidays, you know, it can get very busy. Especially I mean the Jane Austen festival, which is annual Christmas market is very popular. So if you're planning to go stay in Bath in those periods, do book ahead.

Doug [00:11:30]:

Okay, so we know there's plenty of things to do in Bath, but what are some of the top attractions that visitors shouldn't miss?

Tracy Collins [00:11:37]:

Well, I think you should also join me talking about some of these things on and because you know we both love the same things in Bath, don't we? Right. So the number one that you really shouldn't miss if you go to Bath are the Roman baths and they are the top attraction. They were built in 70 AD, can you believe it? And they were built on top of thermal springs. A lot of it is in ruins, but much of it really is remarkably well preserved. You can actually see the change in rooms and the plunge pools that people swam in.

Doug [00:12:07]:

Yeah, that's true.

Tracy Collins [00:12:08]:

2,000 years ago. It's. It's absolutely incredible. The museum is excellent, it's interactive. And one of my favorite things about the museum is there's a model of actually what it looked like, because it was an entire complex that the Romans built. And you can even if you want, and we have both done this, sample the actual mineral waters we have, and you can see the spring. You can actually see the. The water coming from the spring.

Tracy Collins [00:12:31]:

So it's absolutely incredible. It's 100% somewhere you should include in your itinerary.

Doug [00:12:36]:

Yeah. And doesn't matter how many times visited there, it seems to get better every time. They just sort of embellish a little bit more of it or add this in and you think it's just fantastic. We love going.

Tracy Collins [00:12:47]:

Oh, it's absolutely incredible. And the museum is appropriate for all ages.

Doug [00:12:52]:

And very importantly, from an accessibility point of view, it's 90% wheelchair friendly.

Tracy Collins [00:12:58]:

Yeah. It's honestly a fantastic place to. Now, if you do go, make sure that you go early. And if you're going during peak season, so summer holidays, school holidays, weekends, even that you book ahead because it does get booked up and we've seen long queues, haven't we?

Doug [00:13:14]:

Really have, yes.

Tracy Collins [00:13:16]:

So the second place that I would say that you should visit is Bath Abbey. Now, it's only one minute walk away from when you come out of the baths. You turn right and the Abbey's right in front of you. You can't miss it. Now, the. The Abbey dates back to the seventh century.

There is a small fee for entrance and my mum was. She really wanted to go and see Bath Abbey, so she.

Tracy Collins [00:13:36]:

She loved it when we went in. It has beautiful stained glass windows and just the architecture is absolutely stunning. Now, what you can do, and I must admit I haven't done this and I'm sure it was Wendy in the previous episode a long time when she was doing a trip around the uk, she did. She. They climbed to the top of Bath Abbey and the view is amazing. So I actually need to add that to my list for next time.

Doug [00:13:56]:

Most definitely. And I can't believe I've not done it already.

Tracy Collins [00:13:59]:

Well, that's two. That's both of us need to do that. We need to climb the top of Bath because apparently the views are amazing.

Doug [00:14:05]:

Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:14:06]:

So, now, obviously, Bath is very famous for its architecture and there are two places that you shouldn't really miss. One is the Royal Crescent. Now, the Royal Crescent, it consists of 30 identical luxury Georgian townhouses. And they are simply stunning, aren't they?

Doug [00:14:25]:

They are.

Tracy Collins [00:14:26]:

They are beautiful. Really, really beautiful. And you, if you've got Western Georgian history and you want to actually see what it was like in a Georgian home, you can go into number one Royal Crescent, which is a museum. I found it a little bit pricey to go in, but honestly, it was absolutely worth it. And I did it this year. Oh, no, it was actually last year. It was October last year. I decided I was going to go and have a look around and honestly, it was well worth.

Tracy Collins [00:14:50]:

It was very interesting. I will put some photos of what. What you can see, but I would recommend doing that and having a look around. And then just beside the Royal Crescent is the circus. Now, the circus is basically, it is a circle, but it's not a circus, as in clowns and acrobats. It is a circle of, again, identical Georgian town houses. And they are stunning. So absolutely beautiful to enjoy, really, in architecture.

Doug [00:15:19]:

I enjoy looking at these sort of things as well. Even, you know, I'm not an architectural expert or Georgian expert, but it is actually visually worth looking.

Tracy Collins [00:15:28]:

Yeah, but they're made of the Bath stone as well, so they're just that kind of lovely, creamy color as well. And of course, there's a Pulteney Bridge. Now, this, the architect who built this was inspired by the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. So it's one of the only bridges in England, maybe in the world, I think, obviously, along with the Pente Vecchio, which has got shops built along the span of the actual bridge itself. So the architect, Robert Adam, apparently visited Florence and went, wow, I love this. So he designed Pulteney Bridge based on that, and that was completed in 1770. So, again, quite a. Yeah, quite old.

Tracy Collins [00:16:04]:

And you do get a great view of the bridge if you take a boat tour. We did that, didn't we?

Doug [00:16:09]:

Yeah, we did a walking tour and a boat tour as well, which was a lovely combination. And you do get a lovely. Well, obviously a different perspective from the river that you do from the road.

Tracy Collins [00:16:18]:

Yeah. And that was a combination. One is a combination. So we went on the boat to start with and then I had a walk and tour afterwards. So I'll actually link to that in the show notes. So that was absolutely fantastic. Now, obviously, I can't not Talk about bath without talking about the thermal bath spa, which is of course, as Bath is named after the spa, the spring, you can actually bathe in those lovely, warm, mineral rich waters just like the Romans did, which is amazing. Really.

Tracy Collins [00:16:45]:

So, yes, there is a spa. You can book that and you can go and bathe in those waters and enjoy. Enjoy relaxing.

Doug [00:16:52]:

Yeah, very nice.

Tracy Collins [00:16:53]:

And of course, if you've done that or you see you've done a little bit of sightseeing, you've had a bit of time at the spa and you think, oh, I could do with a bit of shopping. Also there's quite a lot of nice shops in Bath as well. I do enjoy. And of course bookshops shops, they've got some, some great bookshops, but I know Your favorite is Mr. B's Emporium.

Doug [00:17:09]:

I love Mr. B's Emporium. It's just so relaxing. The staff are incredibly passionate and helpful and really enjoy going in there.

Tracy Collins [00:17:18]:

Yeah, there's some comfortable chairs. You can sit down as well when you, you know, have a. Perusing the books. I did, I did, absolutely. And of course, just around the corner from Mr. B's. And I have to mention this, of course I have to mention this because we're talking about. Bathroom is the Jane Austen Centre.

Doug [00:17:34]:

Ah, yes. Bath is so closely linked to Jane Austen. So really, what is the best place to visit for fans?

Tracy Collins [00:17:40]:

Well, I've just kind of mentioned it. The Jane Austen Center. So that is an interactive museum. You get a guided tour by character actors and then you get to look around the museum. But it's an interactive museum. So I've got actually a picture of my mom writing with a quill, which she really enjoyed. You can dress up in Regency outfits. You can have your photo taken with a Jane Austin Waxwork or.

Tracy Collins [00:18:05]:

And we did this. I did took my mom up there. You can go and have afternoon tea in the Regency Tea Room. And I will also mention the gift shop is amazing. I always go to the gift shop, but I, I took my mom there, as I said, For 80th birthday we went to Bath and she wasn't sure about the Jane Austen Sentinel. She said, I don't know. And she loved it. She absolutely loved it.

Tracy Collins [00:18:26]:

It was one of the favorite things that we did. And what's really interesting is that the center is at 25 Gay street and actually Jane herself lived at 40 Gay street so not too far away for, for a short period of time when she actually lived in Bath. So I, I think that's kind of cute.

Doug [00:18:44]:

Oh, that's very nice. So when is the Jane Austen Festival? And really what can people expect if they visit that?

Tracy Collins [00:18:50]:

Yeah, well, that's really famous because obviously there's an annual festival every year. It's basically in the second week of September and this year, 2025, it's Friday, September 12th to Sunday, September 21st. I am hoping that I can get to it this year. I really. There's lots of different events, including a Regency costume promenade. Can you imagine? Just amazing theatrical performances, talks. It's just that if you're a Jane Austen fan, honestly, it's just fantastic. And it goes on for 10 days.

Tracy Collins [00:19:22]:

So I will actually link to the website as well. So if you want to fit that into your itinerary, definitely look out, see if you can get some tickets for that.

Doug [00:19:30]:

Yeah, I bet they take it sell out first.

Tracy Collins [00:19:32]:

Oh, absolutely. And of course, as well as Jane Austen, more recently we have got Bridgerton, which we was filmed in. In Bath.

Doug [00:19:39]:

All right. Yeah. So where are the key Bridgerton filming locations? Can visitors see them easily?

Tracy Collins [00:19:45]:

Well, I'm not going to give that away. I am not going to give that away because you can do a walk into of Bath and discover all of those. And I'm going to highly recommend it because I did that last year and it was such a lot of fun. The one I will give away is Lady Danbury's house, which is located at the Holborn Museum in Bath. And that's it. That's the only one I'm going to give away. Do a tour on a. Honestly, I highly recommend it.

Doug [00:20:07]:

Well, that's me. Okay, so let's talk about getting around Bath. So would you say Bath's easy to explore on foot?

Tracy Collins [00:20:15]:

Yeah, I think it is walkable and you can see most of the city on foot, really, without much problem. I will say that I did go with my mom, who for her 80th birthday, so she did struggle a little bit. So we did. Uber is available and there are taxis available and Bath. So we did. I did call Uber most of the time to. If we wanted to get somewhere that was a little bit like for example, going to the. The Crescent or going up to the Circus there.

Tracy Collins [00:20:47]:

It's slightly uphill and it was a bit rainy actually for one of the days. So we just called the Uber and that was not a problem.

Doug [00:20:55]:

So visitors don't need to worry about transport within the city then? Really?

Tracy Collins [00:20:58]:

No, because you can get. Honestly, Uber was easily available and there are local taxis, for example, outside the train station as well, you know, because There are few hills. And if you want. Understand. Yeah. And if you want to go out of town, obviously, you know, you'll probably want to get an Uber or a, a taxi. And there is actually a hop on, hop off bus, which I've actually never done. That was another thing.

Tracy Collins [00:21:19]:

I think we're gonna, you know, I don't know how many times I've been at Bath and there are a couple of things I'm like, maybe we need to do those next time. But yes, so there's a hop on, hop off bus. But yeah, we had no problem with any of that. Was actually worked out really well.

Doug [00:21:31]:

It's a relaxing place as well. So that I think the whole pace of Bath is quite steady.

Tracy Collins [00:21:36]:

It is. Except when it does get busy though in the summer and, and in Christmas, so we went to the Christmas markets and it was quite busy. So I think you've got to take that into consideration that it is a very popular city.

Doug [00:21:47]:

It is.

Tracy Collins [00:21:48]:
So it can.

Doug [00:21:49]:
Even with British people.

Tracy Collins [00:21:50]:
Yeah, exactly. So it. So it can be busy. Yeah, yeah.

Doug [00:21:53]:
So, okay, so let's talk about one of my favorite subjects now, food and drink. So what would you say, you know, some of your favorite places to eat or, or, or have a drink in Bath?

Tracy Collins [00:22:04]:
Well, I would say for both of us it's probably going to be Sally Lawrence, isn't it? And we recommend Sally Luns to everybody. So honestly, we should have shares in Sally Loans, which we don't. I'll just be up front. We don't have. So actually the building that Sally Lons is located in, they've dated the fireplace and chimneys back to 1482. You really, I mean, just going into salads and, and the whole experience is amazing. So basically Sally Lunn arrived at bath around 1680. She was a Huguenot refugee and she started baking what have become her famous brioche style buns.

Tracy Collins [00:22:40]:
Now we love them, don't you? And you can get sweet and savory. Now I highly recommend the lemon curd. Oh yes, just delicious. But we've also gone there for dinner, haven't we?

Doug [00:22:48]:
We have, yeah. Yeah, we have. Because they're very filling as well.

Tracy Collins [00:22:51]:
They are. And we did, we had savory ones in the evening.

Doug [00:22:53]:
Save a mushroom one.

Tracy Collins [00:22:55]:
Yeah, it was really nice. So I would definitely. You don't have to reserve. You can just queue up. It does again, get busy, but honest, go and have a salad Onsborn lemon curd if it's at lunchtime and a cup of tea. You will, you won't Regret it. And the settings are amazing. Now what you need to also do is don't miss the little museum after you've had your, your briocheborn is to go down the stairs and there's a little tiny kitchen museum where you can see the medieval oven that was used.

Tracy Collins [00:23:22]:
It's incredible. And you can also see how the pavement levels have changed over the centuries which I found absolutely fascinating. So don't miss that. A lot of people I think don't

know about it. So have your tea. Have your, your Sally Lundsbone and then go and check out the museum downstairs. Now I also did mention before that we stayed at number 15 guest house which was a lovely hotel and I'm going to mention their restaurant because my mom and I ate there I think two nights because the food was so good. And what we tried was a local dish which are bath pork chops, so C H A P S which were just delicious.

Tracy Collins [00:24:04]:

Absolutely delicious. I don't even know how to describe them. Hopefully I've got photographs so I can put in the show notes because it's going to be a difficult thing for me to describe but believe me, they were absolutely delicious and I've never had them since. I didn't have them before that I'd never even heard of them, but they were, they were lovely. So I'd highly recommend that. So number 15 honestly was really, really good. Also actually the Indigo Bath, we had a beautiful, beautiful French onion soup. It was delicious.

Tracy Collins [00:24:30]:

I still remember it because it's one of my favorite things to eat anyway. But it was really good. Good.

Doug [00:24:35]:

So there's different options for all budgets and dietary requirements though.

Tracy Collins [00:24:38]:

Oh yeah. There's loads of independent cafes, there's pubs, there's high end restaurants. There's a lot to choose from. I would just say book though, like if you're thinking of having a Sunday roast, make sure that you book ahead because you're gonna. Especially if you're there during like, well, any Sunday really it's going to be always necessary to book. But make sure that you do book restaurants if you, you know, specifically want to have, you know, one eat one of the specific restaurants. I would also say I went to Bath last. Oh actually it was January this year there on the English bus tour and arrived and we hadn't booked anything for lunch and I thought I really want to go to the Pump Room.

Tracy Collins [00:25:13]:

It's, it's mentioned in Jane Austen's novels. Who doesn't want to go in the Pump Room for afternoon tea? So that's what we did. Luckily they had a couple of spots. Oh, it was lovely. So afternoon tea with the piano playing. So somebody playing the piano. There was somebody. I think they were playing violin.

Tracy Collins [00:25:30]:

Oh, it was just. It was the major, so classic music in the beautiful setting of the pump rooms and just having this gorgeous afternoon. I would highly, highly recommend it. I think it was just. It was lovely. And just to sit in somewhere that, you know, has been mentioned in Jane Austen's novels, it's just. It was just crazy. Yeah, so I recommend that.

Tracy Collins [00:25:49]:

But as you said before, there's loads of places to choose from for food and if you're on a budget, honestly, there's. There's Marks and Spencers. Go and get yourself a meal deal.

Doug [00:25:57]:

Yeah, we've done that many times.

Tracy Collins [00:25:58]:

Yeah, absolutely.

Doug [00:25:59]:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's good to know. So when talking about when to visit, you've been at different times of the year as I have. I. When would you say is the best time to go, though?

Tracy Collins [00:26:10]:

To be honest, I. I think any time of year is perfect for Bath. I mean, I would. I'm just trying to think in the last year or so I was. I've been there in July with my mom. It was quite warm, had a little bit of rain, but it was. It was pleasant. Very really nice.

Tracy Collins [00:26:24]:

I've been there. I was there actually early late January, early February this year. So go and start. It was actually early spring, so there was. There was lots of daffodils everywhere. It was lovely. It was actually quite quiet and it was just one of those cold, crisp days, so it was lovely. Of course I was there in Dec.

Tracy Collins [00:26:41]:

For the Christmas markets, which were just very atmospheric and lovely. I guess the months that I would consider, perhaps if you. If you're. Can avoid it, I guess would be September because you've got the Jane Austen Festival. But again, that's just 10 days of September, so it will just be busy.

Doug [00:26:58]:

Particular interest.

Tracy Collins [00:26:59]:

Yeah, of course, if you go for the. I mean, I want to go for the festival, so I want to go in September, but if. If you're not particularly interested in that or you know it's going to be. It'll be more expensive for places to stay and it will be busier, but I don't think you can really wrong. I think the thing is preparing. If you're gonna go during a school holiday time, during peak season and summer, you just make sure you book things ahead.

Doug [00:27:21]:

Yeah, very good. So you mentioned the Jane Austen Festival in September this year. Do you have any other seasonal tips or festivals to plan around.

Tracy Collins [00:27:28]:

Well, I think it's just checking online because there are lots of festivals that are held. Obviously the most famous one is a Jane Austen festival which is as I said annually every year in September 2nd, second week so that you know that's come out. But there are literature festival just there's lots of things going on. So I think it's just a case of check in if you've got a particular interest that if there's any of these kind of annual events on when you go.

Doug [00:27:54]:

Yeah, that's good to know. So we've mentioned earlier about using Bath as a somewhere to base yourself. So you know where would you say is nearby is it to explore?

Tracy Collins [00:28:06]:

It's a great base because there's, there's lots of places that are close to Bath. So if you base yourself there and want to go out on some day trips, some you will have to take, you'll need a car for. But a lot you can access by train. For example Salisbury and Stonehenge, not very far from Bath at all.

Doug [00:28:21]:

Yeah, easy one.

Tracy Collins [00:28:22]:

Yeah. You know you've got Wales, you've got the Southern Cotswolds, you can go by train to Bristol, you can even go to Cardiff.

Doug [00:28:29]:

Cardiff, that's fine.

Tracy Collins [00:28:31]:

So yeah, there's plenty of options for day trips from Bath itself. So I have got actually a full article on that. So I'll link to that in the show notes as well. So if you actually go and base yourself there.

Doug [00:28:40]:

Yeah, Bath Spa train station is well served.

Tracy Collins [00:28:43]:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean like if you can a pop that actually tours, a lot of tours will leave from Bath that you can go to Stonehenge, Salisbury, Southern Cotswolds for example, you know, Castle Combe, Laycock, they're very accessible from Bath, you know and you can, you can combine half this half day tours to different places. You could go to Avebury and Stonehenge.

Doug [00:29:03]:

Even Bradford on Avon. We said earlier. Yeah, it's a place to visit.

Tracy Collins [00:29:07]:

So. So plenty of places to go from Bath itself.

Doug [00:29:10]:

Oh that's good to know. So can you recommend any guided tours or self drive options to places? Places like Stonehenge, Salisbury or the Cotswolds.

Tracy Collins [00:29:18]:

Okay, so private tours. We would recommend Daniel from Bath Insider Tours. You can actually listen to Daniel on podcast episode 139 where he talks about himself. He's born and

bred in Bath and he takes walking tours including Bridgerton as well as day tours and multi day tours and bespoke tours. So you can, you know we talked about all those different places that you can visit from Bath, you can chat with Daniel about creating a tour for you, be private and you can go and visit all of these places with him. So that's a great option. You know, if you're gonna do some of these kind of self drive options again, I'll just make sure that you've got. We always talk about this, but it's so important you make sure you've got parking.

Tracy Collins [00:30:00]:

If you, if you're gonna leave your car and then drive back, make sure that you've got parking wherever you're staying, the accommodation. But there's plenty of places that you can drive to from Bath as well.

Doug [00:30:10]:

Oh yeah, so many. Okay, so partly touched on this before. So where have you not yet visited in Bathtrace and hope to add to this for next time?

Tracy Collins [00:30:20]:

Well, I obviously would love to do go to the Jane Austen Festival. That's what goes without saying. And this year it's the 250th anniversary of her birth. So you know, how amazing would that be? So what I haven't done and I've looked at so many times is actually the Bath thermal spa. I've just not done it and I really would love to. You really need to book that head. That's the problem. We've actually gone before and not booked it.

Tracy Collins [00:30:43]:

Now if you. In the morning, I think like 8:00am or 8:30 when it opens, you may get spaces that morning. And we thought about doing it, but we had such a full itinerary, we didn't. Also I'd like to try the hop on, hop off bus so I can report to you guys if it's what it's like and where it goes. And also from again, previous trip reports we've had on the podcast. I'd like to walk up Alexandra park and get the panoramic views over.

Doug [00:31:08]:

Oh, that'd be great. That would. Yeah, that's good to know. So on sort of practical tips, would you say Bath is a family friendly destination?

Tracy Collins [00:31:18]:

Yeah, absolutely. I think the Roman baths have done such a great job of the museum. Absolutely. You've got kids to take them and to have a look around it. It's really good. Take them on a boat ride on the, on the River Avon. That's really good fun as well. Yeah, I think so.

Tracy Collins [00:31:30]:

I think it's a family friendly. Absolutely.

Doug [00:31:32]:

Yeah, I'd agree with that one. So attractions, again, partly touching on this as well. Would you recommend booking in advance?

Tracy Collins [00:31:39]:

Yeah, I kind of want to reiterate this to honestly look at booking the Roman baths of Time. If you want to do the thermal bath spa again, book that ahead of time. And if you're going to be visiting during the festivals or Christmas markets, I would make sure that you book hotels as well ahead of time.

Doug [00:31:57]:

Yeah, that makes sense. So really. And then for a first time visitor, how long would you recommend visiting for?

Tracy Collins [00:32:05]:

Well, I really would say stay for two nights. Stay for a minimum of two nights if you can. And I know you know I've got a one day itinerary. So if you're planning to do it independently from London and that's all you can, you can fit in, have a look at my one day itinerary or do one of the tours, you know, with. If you're from London with English Boss or if you're in the Cotswolds, go with Go Cotswolds and, and explore that way. But ideally, if you can spend longer there, I mean, I don't know how many times I've visited. I mean I've stayed in Bath three times in the last couple years and in fact in the last year I think I've been three times and I could go back again and again and as I say, I haven't even, I haven't done everything at all. There's so much more to do.

Doug [00:32:41]:

Oh, that's great. Thank you. Now this last, last part, I'm sure you're expecting this question. If you could give just one tip to someone visiting Bath for the first time, what would that be?

Tracy Collins [00:32:51]:

Well, again, I guess I'm going to repeat myself but just, just please don't rush it. Give yourself at least one night if you can just. And also do the Roman bath. Visit the Roman bath. You'll learn so much about then the history of Bath, how because it grew up around that obviously the, before the Romans, the Celts were there. So you know, you've got that history. It's just fantastic. And make sure that you book those attractions like the Roman baths and the spa.

Tracy Collins [00:33:20]:

If in advance say you're not. You don't waste time a either queuing or miss opportunities.

Doug [00:33:25]:

You don't get disappointed if you visit him, you know, specifically for that.

Tracy Collins [00:33:28]:

Yeah, absolutely. And just have a great time.

Doug [00:33:31]:

Most definitely.

Tracy Collins [00:33:31]:

Yeah.

Doug [00:33:32]:

Well, thank you very much.

Tracy Collins [00:33:32]:

Well, thank you very much because you've been interviewing me this episode which is, which is always fun for me. It kind of gives me a, give me a podcast episode off asking the questions though I've been answering them. Well, I guess what at least me to kind of say for this episode is that you as always. We'll find links to everything we've talked about in the show notes for this episode, and there'll be lots of photos as well, which will kind of illustrate some of the places that we stayed with, some of the places that we've eaten, and lots of the places that we've visited in Bath. Yeah, but I think that leaves us to say, until next episode. Until next week, 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 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.

Tracy Collins [00:34:28]:

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.