

Episode 169 UKTP Podcast

Tracy Collins [00:00:00]:

Planning a trip to Scotland. Don't let a few simple mistakes spoil it. Today, Doug and I reveal the 15 pitfalls travellers often make and how you can avoid them.

Intro [00:00:09]:

Welcome to the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website, Tracey Collins. Each week, 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.

Tracy Collins [00:00:43]:

Hi, everyone, and welcome to this week's episode of the UK Travel Planning Podcast. Now I'm with Doug and he's back again to share more travel tips with you.

Doug Collins [00:00:52]:

Hello there.

Tracy Collins [00:00:53]:

So, following on from our popular episodes about the mistakes first time visitors make when applying a UK road trip or traveling by TR or visiting London, we thought we'd continue that series with a focus on Scotland. Now we know, don't we?

Doug Collins [00:01:07]:

We do.

Tracy Collins [00:01:08]:

From our own travels, how important it is to be prepared and avoid, often easy to make mistakes that can leave you feeling a bit frustrated or rushed or feeling that you've missed out on some of the best experiences. So, in this episode, Doug and I are going to share 15 mistakes visitors often make when planning a trip to Scotland. But of course, we're going to also give you information about how to avoid those mistakes, aren't we?

Doug Collins [00:01:31]:

We certainly are. I mean, a lot of the mistakes we're going to come across that we've had that as feedback from people as well.

Tracy Collins [00:01:37]:

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. So, you know, whether you're planning your first Scottish adventure, you're heading back for another visit. Hopefully this episode will give you practical tips, insider insights and plenty of ideas to help you get the most of your time in this amazing part of the uk. We both love Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:01:51]:

We really do.

Tracy Collins [00:01:51]:

Yes. Yeah. Now, don't forget, if you're interested in destinations behind the uk, do head over to our global Travel Planning podcast, where we share tips, itineraries and for many destinations around the world. Now, if there is a destination or topic you'd specifically like us to cover in a future episode of the UK Travel Planning Podcast, do let us know via speak pipe because we love hearing from you.

Doug Collins [00:02:15]:

We certainly do. We love the comments and the feedback.

Tracy Collins [00:02:17]:

Yeah, we do. It's really great. And we do get back to most people when they leave us a message, don't we do.

Doug Collins [00:02:22]:

Thank you. People who go to the trouble of sharing their feedback.

Tracy Collins [00:02:24]:

Yeah. No, it's really, really good. We do enjoy that. And then obviously, finally, I do want to say a big thank you to those of you who support us every month by sponsor the podcast. It really does mean the world to us and it helps to continue for us to bring these new episodes to every week. But yeah, I. I just want to give a little bit, I guess, a background about our connection with Scotland. So I grew up not far from the Scottish border.

Tracy Collins [00:02:51]:

My maiden name is McConachie, so I do have close ancestry from Scotland, actually from the calendar region. That's where my dad's family came from and my grandmother from grandmothers were Campbell. So we've had. I have a strong connection with Scotland and actually one of my mom's closest friends lived in Edinburgh when I was growing up. So we used to spend a lot of time driving up to spend weekends or, you know, holidays up in that area. It was just that little bit too far for me at that age. And I always used to get car sick. So I always knew we were approaching Edinburgh because usually by that point I was about to throw up.

Doug Collins [00:03:24]:

There's a good advert.

Tracy Collins [00:03:27]:

I mean, of course, since then I've been visiting Scotland and exploring Scotland many times. Many, many times before we got married 20 years ago.

Doug Collins [00:03:34]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:03:35]:

And. And you've also got a connection as well, haven't you?

Doug Collins [00:03:37]:

Well, yeah, I used. I've worked in Scotland on and off during my railway days and traveled extensively all around Scotland. Got family not far from Calendar and. Yeah, so we do have a connection. We don't.

Tracy Collins [00:03:49]:

We're not related.

Doug Collins [00:03:50]:

We're not. My. I may or may not have family connections to Scotland, but I'm not sure.

Tracy Collins [00:03:55]:

Ah, okay. Yeah. Okay. So should we talk about. Should we go through kind of, I guess in themed order? That's probably going to make sense. I thought we'd start with the timing and seasonal planning mistakes that, that are easy to make, to be honest. So think about timing and what season you visit Scotland, because it can make a huge difference.

Doug Collins [00:04:16]:

Yeah, most definitely. So you can get extreme.

Tracy Collins [00:04:19]:

Yes.

Doug Collins [00:04:19]:

Of any weather in Scotland.

Tracy Collins [00:04:21]:

Yes, yes.

Doug Collins [00:04:22]:

Sometimes in the same day.

Tracy Collins [00:04:24]:

Yes. Let's cover the weather a little bit later, I think. Let's talk about. Let's talk about popular event, actually, because it's. We're recording this in August. This is going to go at the beginning of. Actually end of September. But so we've got the Fringe Festival, which is apparently the world's largest performance arts festival.

Tracy Collins [00:04:39]:

And there's also the tattoo.

Doug Collins [00:04:41]:

It is the. The Fringe Festival. I understand that does date back to around 1947. Ish.

Tracy Collins [00:04:46]:

Yeah. So it's been gone on for quite a long time, quite a while, and it has got a worldwide reputation and it ends up with lots and lots of people. I guess the, the. The. If you're not

going for the fringe, what you need to know is that there will be lots and lots of people in Edinburgh who are.

Doug Collins [00:05:02]:

That is any. The accommodation gets booked well in advance.

Tracy Collins [00:05:05]:

Yeah. And it's more expensive, so you've got it. I guess it's. It's. What we're trying to say is it's very, very expensive. Accommodation gets booked up way, way in advance. And it's incredibly busy. Incredibly busy in August.

Tracy Collins [00:05:17]:

The tattoo is also on in August as well. And now that's an annual series of military tattoos which is held in front of Edinburgh Castle, kind of in the square of the castle. And we've been there when they've been putting the infrastructure up, haven't we?

Doug Collins [00:05:31]:

We have. We've seen them putting the. The grandstands up and. Yeah. And it gets. When you actually watch it, the tattoo on tv, you cannot believe where the castle is and how small the. The square is and how huge it looks on the TV and how many.

Tracy Collins [00:05:47]:

People will fit into it as well. It's incredible. Now, it is, again, also very, very popular and that also gets booked up. So if you are planning to visit during Aug. That, if you have no interest in cutting the tattoo, if you have no interest in getting the fringe, I would say recommend avoiding staying in Edinburgh in August. That would be my.

Doug Collins [00:06:08]:

It's not just accommodation. Restaurants and cafes are also very, very busy.

Tracy Collins [00:06:13]:

Yeah. So the other time of year that I also say to avoid. I know we're kind of focusing on Edinburgh here at the minute, but it's the obvious one, really, is visiting during Hogmanay, which is a bit of a sore topic for me.

Doug Collins [00:06:24]:

Well, yes, we've had a bit of disappointment there, haven't we, ourselves?

Tracy Collins [00:06:27]:

Yeah. So should. Do you want to explain what Hogmanay is?

Doug Collins [00:06:29]:

Hogman A is the New Year's celebrations, which is incredibly popular in Scotland, as it was once outlawed in Scotland. So Hogmanay is. It's a big thing to a Scots person. It really is. And it's at Hogmanay when they sing Auld Lang Syne, which, you know what.

Tracy Collins [00:06:48]:

It translates as when times passed in times past. Yeah, yeah. And we were there last year hoping for the first time to go to Hogmanay.

Doug Collins [00:06:57]:

Yeah. Neither of us have been before. And what happened the weather intervened.

Tracy Collins [00:07:02]:

This is Scotland we're talking about.

Doug Collins [00:07:03]:

Yes, it was called off.

Tracy Collins [00:07:05]:

It ended up for the. I don't know the first time and I don't know how many years or if ever. I'm sure it was actually called off because it was a massive storm forecast for that evening.

Yeah, it was awful. So I. Yeah, that was very, very disappointing. So it's still on our list.

Doug Collins [00:07:20]:

It is. And the weather also impacted some of my plans, which I will reveal later.

Tracy Collins [00:07:25]:

Yeah, we'll keep mentioning about the weather so we know that's going to be a whole topic you're going to talk about. Another thing I go to talk about if you're visiting. So that's kind of covered. Thinking about the. The time of year in terms of what festivals, what popular events are going on. But I'm going to talk a little bit about midges. You can't talk about Scotland in summer without mentioning midges.

Doug Collins [00:07:44]:

Midges have many names, most of it unrepeatable.

Tracy Collins [00:07:48]:

It's true. Right, so what are they? They're very small biting flies. Apparently it's on the female ones that bite. Don't say anything.

Doug Collins [00:07:56]:

Okay.

Tracy Collins [00:07:58]:

But there are active primarily from late May to September. We didn't see any in sky last year.

Doug Collins [00:08:03]:

Not last year.

Tracy Collins [00:08:04]:

No.

Doug Collins [00:08:04]:

We were lucky.

Tracy Collins [00:08:05]:

Yeah, we were very lucky. And they really like it when it's damp and it's still so. And they swarm and they bite. So you will probably, if you do a search online, you will no doubt see people covered in them because. And they're smaller than flies are smaller than mosquitoes. They are tiny and they swarm like I've seen people covered on the arms and they're horrible.

Doug Collins [00:08:29]:

Have experienced them in the past, but not very nice.

Tracy Collins [00:08:32]:

No. So if there's a slight breeze, you don't find them. But I honestly. You can't predict whether it's going to be breezy or whether it's going to be still.

Doug Collins [00:08:38]:

Yeah, yeah. It depends where you're traveling as well. But on the heather popular area areas, you, you will experience them if the conditions are right.

Tracy Collins [00:08:47]:

Yeah, I think it's about being. The conditions being right or. So basically I'm just saying that if you are going to visit June, July, August in particular, be very aware that it's midgie season and you need to get something to put on to midges away because honestly, you don't want to get bitten by these things.

Doug Collins [00:09:05]:

Not very nice.

Tracy Collins [00:09:06]:

So that's just something I want to mention. And the next one we want to talk about is visiting in Winter, Yes.

Doug Collins [00:09:14]:

This can present a few problems to some people, not everybody. Some people prefer that time of year to travel, but you have to be prepared for things being closed. I don't mean just, you know, touristy places to visit, but some of the areas you could go to. There's lots of things closed.

Tracy Collins [00:09:31]:

Yeah, that's it. It's low season. It's. It's dark for. For start off because the short daylight hours, the weather is changeable and can be quite extreme. Obviously, the further north you go, the, the darker it gets, the, the colder it gets, the more unpredictable. I mean, the weather's pretty unpredictable anyway. But, you know, you may get snow, you may not get snow.

Tracy Collins [00:09:52]:

We've actually traveled in January to Glencoe and there was a lot of snow, a lot of ice around. You can also get fog. I mean, actually we were there in September last year. We're not even talking in winter, spring. And there was a lot of fog and mist on sky.

Doug Collins [00:10:06]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:10:08]:

So you've got to consider this if you're planning to visit during those winter months. So you're going to be able to do less, you're going to be able to drive less. You need to be very careful when it comes to considering driving, especially road conditions. Road conditions. And it's also a time of year when there can be more storms. So you got caught out, didn't you, this year?

Doug Collins [00:10:26]:

Yes, I did. Anybody who follows me on train tips group, they will know that I have big plans for my rail adventure in January to go from Edinburgh to Inverness via the. Via Aberdeen, the East coast and then back down the Highlands mainline. That plan was changed because I was halfway up to Inverness and the notice came out, all trains were being cancelled the following day because of the same. The storms.

Tracy Collins [00:10:53]:

Yeah, massive storms.

Doug Collins [00:10:54]:

So luckily I have vast experience in this and I made lots and lots of plans and stopped over in Inverness and looked at different ways to get back.

Tracy Collins [00:11:03]:

Yeah. But it was a bit tricky. And also I remember a few years ago we were wanting to get the Caledonian sleeper and I think there had been a massive storm and the line was blocked.

Doug Collins [00:11:11]:

Yes, it was, yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:11:12]:

So basically, if you're planning around the kind of winter months, I'm talking December, January, February, even in March, it can be tricky because of storms, because of dark weather, because of potential snow. Yeah. So you really need to be very careful if you plan to visit at that time of year.

Doug Collins [00:11:24]:

It is. And that's why we always recommend on consults and when we offer advice is to build in as much flexibility in your itinerary as time budget allows.

Tracy Collins [00:11:33]:

Yeah, absolutely. Don't do one night. One night, one night. That kind of itinerary moving around a lot because you just don't know if you're actually going to be able to. Yeah, so that's worth considering. Right, so the next theme of these mistakes that often people make is with their itinerary and destination choices. So, okay, once you've got your time and

sorted, you really need to think about where you choose to go or sometimes where you don't go because that's the other thing. So.

Tracy Collins [00:11:58]:

Yeah, I guess and I know I've talked about Edinburgh a lot already, but one mistake we see and we understand if you've got limited time that you may have to choose just one destination and the obvious one is going to be Edinburgh. We understand that. But there is so much more to Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:12:14]:

There really is. I mean Glasgow itself, I mean it's not far away from Edinburgh. You're talking 50 minutes of the fastest train between the cities. Glasgow has a lot to offer.

Tracy Collins [00:12:22]:

Yeah, Glasgow is a fascinating city to explore. We've got, we actually have a one day itinerary on the website for Glasgow. But going up to the Highlands, there's other regions as well that you can go and explore, you know, and even if you. So you want to go to Edinburgh and you've got a few days in Edinburgh, do try to fit in a either day tour or trip by train.

Doug Collins [00:12:42]:

That's right. On a website we have my train itineraries as well. Circular trips as well. So you, you know Perth, I love visiting Aberdeen. I visited many times. Sterling, fantastic place to visit. Inverness. Particular favorite.

Doug Collins [00:12:54]:

Yeah, you know, all these cities have their own identity and their own unique place in Scottish history as well. So definitely worth a visit.

Tracy Collins [00:13:02]:

Yeah, well, you've got far north Scotland, you've got the border region. There's just so much to Scotland, honestly, which is. I kind of, I'm going to mention this because often we get asked about visiting Scotland and including the Republic of Ireland as well. So I just. And again, I understand if you've only got a couple of weeks holiday, but ideally, ideally, if you can devote one trip to Scotland and one trip to the Republic of Ireland, because these are two countries. I mean the Republic of Ireland is obviously Republic of Ireland's nothing to do with the uk. It's not in the uk. Whereas Scotland is its own country in itself and there's lots and lots to see in Scotland.

Tracy Collins [00:13:38]:

There's lots and lots to see in the Republic of Ireland. Now, you know if you, if you absolutely must, there are ways to get across and you. We've done that by. We've actually done this ourselves by coach and ferry, haven't we?

Doug Collins [00:13:48]:

Most definitely. I was just going to say don't forget Northern Ireland in this equation as well because that is also a fantastic place to visit the, the Hahan coaches. I've done several times between Glasgow and Belfast and it is easy.

Tracy Collins [00:14:00]:

Yeah, very, very easy.

Doug Collins [00:14:01]:

It is so straightforward.

Tracy Collins [00:14:02]:

And if you really want to go, if you want to, don't want to go to Northern Ireland, but you want to go to the Republic of Ireland, then you can fly very easy, easily from Edinburgh as well. But you can get the bus over, coach over, ferry over and then get the train today.

Doug Collins [00:14:12]:

You can always take the train from Belfast, from Belfast down to Dublin, which.

Tracy Collins [00:14:17]:

We did last year.

Doug Collins [00:14:17]:

We have done that.

Tracy Collins [00:14:18]:

Yeah. So I just want to encourage you really to kind of try not cram too much in, which I will mention later, but it's just that there is such a lot of beautiful places to visit in Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:14:28]:

It's just stunning.

Tracy Collins [00:14:29]:

You know, every time we go we can spend weeks and weeks and weeks there and I still want to spend more and more time there to see even more.

Doug Collins [00:14:35]:

I often ask myself which has the nicest scenery, Wales or Scotland? And I have to say both of you win for me.

Tracy Collins [00:14:42]:

Oh, yeah, well, I'm going to say Scotland, so Welsh listeners are not going to be happy with me.

Doug Collins [00:14:46]:

Oh, no, no, don't forget Wales, fantastic place.

Tracy Collins [00:14:48]:

Scottish heritage there, probably.

Doug Collins [00:14:50]:

So, yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:14:50]:

Now the other one is, I'm going to mention as well, the other mistake we see make is that often people just visit the Isle of Skye. Now we understand why. And we also have visited Skye numerous times.

Doug Collins [00:15:02]:

We have. I can see the jaw to the place, to the island. It's. It's a big island as well.

Tracy Collins [00:15:07]:

It's beautiful. But unfortunately it's becoming over touristed.

Doug Collins [00:15:10]:

Yeah, unfortunately.

Tracy Collins [00:15:11]:

So it's incredibly busy. Parking is a nightmare. Driving can become a nightmare. There's just a lot of cars, a lot of camper vans on the roads.

Doug Collins [00:15:19]:

And the roads themselves are in all honesty, in a poor state.

Tracy Collins [00:15:23]:

Yeah, they weren't great when we were there last September. The weather had been quite rough. Yeah, a lot of rain, so there's a lot of potholes. You have to be very careful. So if you can, and I understand if you want to visit Sky, I really do, because it is beautiful. But do consider some of the other islands that Scotland has to offer and there are plenty of them in Fact, we've got a guide to all of the islands, so our favorite, I guess we love the Organ Islands, didn't we?

Doug Collins [00:15:45]:

We really did because it was our first visit there, so it was a novelty factor as well. But we thoroughly enjoyed it. Thoroughly enjoyed. There's only one caveat I have with all the. The islands other than sky, is I have to take a boat.

Tracy Collins [00:15:58]:

Yeah. So Doug gets seasick. So.

Doug Collins [00:15:59]:

Very seasick.

Tracy Collins [00:16:01]:

That has kind of impacted. So I've been a mull. And Iona and. And Stef do that trip.

Doug Collins [00:16:06]:

No, no, no, no. I didn't do.

Tracy Collins [00:16:07]:

We are hoping.

Doug Collins [00:16:08]:
And we have wave to you, though.

Tracy Collins [00:16:09]:
You did wave to me as I went. We haven't been to. So I can say, look, we have visited to Scotland many times, but we haven't been everywhere. So. And I. I can't imagine even someone who lives in Scotland could say that we haven't been Lewis and Harris. And that is an island I really want to go to. So we are going to head there May next year, aren't we?

Doug Collins [00:16:26]:
We are, as long as the. The water is extremely still.

Tracy Collins [00:16:30]:
That's always the thing. When I said to Doug, we're gonna go to an island, I get the look. I always get the look. And it's like, oh, really? And I'. So I guess that's an advantage with sky. Yes. You can take the ferry, which we've done multiple times, but there is a bridge. There is a bridge, which does make it easier.

Tracy Collins [00:16:46]:
Okay, so shall we move on to the next lot of topics, which is a practical side of planning? Because the way you get around, what you pack and how far you try to travel can really kind of shape your trip. So I think the first thing we're talking about was underestimate distances and drive times and putting too much in a day, certainly.

Doug Collins [00:17:03]:
So, I mean, particularly something like the North Coast 500, which is a fantastic driving route around Scotland. There's such a lot to see, and trying to do it too fast, I think, is one pitfall a lot of people can fall into, and I think.

Tracy Collins [00:17:17]:
We did that as well. I'm gonna put my hand up and say we did.

Doug Collins [00:17:20]:
We probably did. It's all one of those things that works better the second time you do it. Yeah. I think you learn from your own mistakes sometimes. And we did, didn't we?

Tracy Collins [00:17:29]:
Yeah. Or we learned from our mistakes and we share them, everybody, so they don't have to make the same mistake.

Doug Collins [00:17:33]:
That's the way it works. I mean, we've already mentioned the weather. The weather can Play a part in that as well. And it can slow you down quite dramatically.

Tracy Collins [00:17:42]:
Yeah. But also the roads, if you think about the far north of Scotland, the kind of single lanes, and we were there may. And there were lambs in the road and. Yeah. So you don't get

anywhere fast. There's a lot of campervans. It's quite a busy road. And in fact, busy roads, I should say.

Tracy Collins [00:17:57]:

What is worth listening to is we did a really good podcast episode with Robert from North Coast Explorer Tours, and in that podcast he shares tips for driving in Final Scotland. It was an excellent. Really good. I've had so much feedback about how great that episode was and helpful. We also recommend Trippiermo as well if you're driving in Scotland, because their driving guides are fabulous. But I think it's just underestimating the distance and how much time. And I know, look, we live in Australia a lot of the time and we know a lot of you live in America and you're quite happy to do a lot of driving, but I think. I think it's just the.

Tracy Collins [00:18:30]:

The scenery is beautiful, so give yourself the time to enjoy it.

Doug Collins [00:18:34]:

Yeah, take it in. That's right.

Tracy Collins [00:18:35]:

Because it really is just fabulous. It really is beautiful. You want to be able to pull over and enjoy it and take the photos and just, you know, sit and.

Doug Collins [00:18:44]:

I don't know, just take it.

Tracy Collins [00:18:45]:

Just take it in. So honestly, would, you know, recommend that and try not to put too much in a day, but actually, you know, pace yourself and enjoy it.

Doug Collins [00:18:54]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:18:55]:

The second one is something that we get all the time. Now. We understand that there's a lot of people who. Who like to kind of just go along and go with the flow and make the trip up as they go. You just can't do that.

Doug Collins [00:19:08]:

No, I think those days of travel, particularly on these popular areas, are past.

Tracy Collins [00:19:12]:

Well, yeah, particularly at certain times a year. I'm gonna say. I would mention this for parts of. Parts of England as well, like Cornwall and other parts of England at certain times of year become extremely busy and extremely popular. Now, the place I'm going to mention is. I'm going to actually mention sky, because this comes. We hear this all the time. People, you know, oh, we're just gonna drive and we'll get accommodation.

Tracy Collins [00:19:35]:

You won't find accommodation on Sky.

Doug Collins [00:19:37]:

You will. And you won't find somewhere to have dinner, probably.

Tracy Collins [00:19:39]:

No, you've got to book months and months and months and months in advance for Sky. You need to book where you're going to eat as well, there's one thing.

Doug Collins [00:19:46]:

I will point out as well. If you're traveling on sort of shoulder seasons and winter months, a lot of the people on the accommodation, they're on holiday themselves. So your choice of places to stop and to eat are more limited.

Tracy Collins [00:20:01]:

Yeah, that is absolutely true. So I think be really careful. If you're gonna like the North Coast 500 again, pop a very, very popular route. Book accommodation, book your restaurants, book your ferries. Because you need to book ferries when they become available as well, especially at popular times. Yeah. And you've got to think some of those ferries to the islands, that's the only way for the people on the islands to get onto the mainland as well. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:20:24]:

So, you know, it's, it becomes extremely popular.

Doug Collins [00:20:27]:

They live their life and they also have to bulk up. The. The fairies.

Tracy Collins [00:20:31]:

Yes, as well. Yeah. So, you know, highly recommend it, which obviously sky, you can drive over, you don't have to get a ferry. We've done the ferry, as I've mentioned before, but, but still. And I know when we've booked accommodation in sky, for example, we've always had it back saying, have you booked your. Accommodate your restaurants? These are potential places that you can eat to go to. So it's worth, you know, considering those, those sorts of things. And I know North Coast 500.

Tracy Collins [00:20:55]:

And when we've done other driving trips around Scotland, we've, we've booked accommodation. Now, interestingly, when you got caught out in Inverness, you were lucky to even get accommodation.

Doug Collins [00:21:04]:

I really was. Yes. I mean, the, I was told the, the place I stayed at, which was very, very nice place, if I'd arrived two hours later, I would not have got that place. And because. Continue with that story, it was two nights I had to stay. It wasn't just the one night because the, the, the, the blanket stoppage of trains because of the storm extended to a second day. So I was very, very fortunate. I could book a second night.

Tracy Collins [00:21:32]:
Yeah.

Doug Collins [00:21:33]:
And it was a restaurant as well, which made it easier.

Tracy Collins [00:21:35]:
Yeah, that did make it easy. And that's not actually. That's a good tip because if you're going to book a B and B, you'll get breakfast so that you've already got your breakfast sorted, so you don't have to worry about that. So that's worth. Worth considering. And thinking about another thing which are close to Doug's heart as well here is just not assuming that driving is the only way to get around Scotland. Because you can take some trains, you.

Doug Collins [00:21:55]:
Can take some lovely train journeys in Scotland. The The West Highland mainline is repeatedly named as one of the most scenic railways in the world and that is definitely true. I like the circular trips as well. The east coast and up the Via Aberdeen, Perth and then come back down the Highland mainline, which I've done many, many times. And that's not forgetting also the Borders railway lines as well. Definitely worth a visit. Really, really worth a visit.

Tracy Collins [00:22:24]:
Yeah. And also, like, if you're based in somewhere like Edinburgh, we recommend if you're in Edinburgh, not to have a car. You don't need a car and only pick a car up when you actually leave in Edinburgh. Because we've come across this many times where people have got cars, they're doing a road trip and they don't have. They don't have accommodation in Edinburgh that actually has parking and that is a huge issue. A so actually if you're based in Edinburgh and you want to take some day trips, there's so many great ones by train.

Doug Collins [00:22:48]:
Yeah, that's it. And we've got most of them listed on our website as well. And these are all tried and tested dozens and dozens of times by me.

Tracy Collins [00:22:56]:
YouTube videos as well.

Doug Collins [00:22:58]:
Oh, yes, we've got a YouTube video on there as well.

Tracy Collins [00:23:00]:
With more to come. So.

Doug Collins [00:23:01]:
Yeah, with a lot more to come.

Tracy Collins [00:23:02]:
Yeah, lots more to come. So that'll be worth looking at for.

Doug Collins [00:23:06]:

Including the one which I'm putting together now about my experience when the weather came and challenged my. My resolve. But, you know, I went with it. I enjoyed it and just embraced it.

Tracy Collins [00:23:18]:

Yes. And that was your trip up to Inverness.

Doug Collins [00:23:20]:

Yeah. That's fantastic.

Tracy Collins [00:23:22]:

On this ship again, we should get caught up by the weather.

Doug Collins [00:23:24]:

It can happen.

Tracy Collins [00:23:24]:

Now we're talking about the weather. What else you can get caught out with is not if you don't pack layers. Honestly, even if you're going in the summer months, you may need warm clothes and especially further north you go again because the weather is unpredictable. So we were an Orkney and me and it was the coldest it had been for something like 20 years. I think with the wind chill. It was minus 630, 000 degrees.

Doug Collins [00:23:47]:

It felt like it is even I had to take my shorts off and put some trousers on.

Tracy Collins [00:23:52]:

It was. Well, I ended up in a shop buying a massive grip big furry hat with. Yeah, that went over my ears. It was so cold. It was freezing. I've also. We've been in Edinburgh when we've arrived and we've got sunburned and the next day so. So summer clothes and then the next day I'm absolutely covered with jumper, long trousers, socks on, boots on jumper, then a raincoat and then a hat because it's gone so cold.

Doug Collins [00:24:19]:

I said the day before I was climbing up Arthur's seat in shorts and T shirt.

Tracy Collins [00:24:23]:

That's it. So it's unpredictable. So really, and I know we say this all the time, layers are important, but really layers are incredibly important. And I always have my rain jacket. Yes, always have my rain jacket when I'm well in the uk, but definitely for Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:24:36]:

Yeah, that's true.

Tracy Collins [00:24:37]:

Okay, so we're on the home straight, guys. So we're finally, we're going to talk about the cultural side of things. The little slip ups that can just trip you up a bit and easy to avoid

really, before you go and just. So just help you out. Right, so the first one is really don't call Scottish people English. Whatever you do, they're not English. They're a proud nation with their own identity. So really don't want to be calling a Scottish person English really, because it's it.

Tracy Collins [00:25:03]:

They won't like it. They are Scottish. You know, we have got Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish that make up the uk. So it's important to understand that and to respect that and you know, just.

Doug Collins [00:25:17]:

Everyone has their own identity.

Tracy Collins [00:25:18]:

Yeah, absolutely. And very proud of it. So that is really just, it's a very easy thing. Just, just important to know. The other one is this is, I just want to put this in here because we do get questions about this, is that yes, Scotland does have its own banknotes. So the coins are exactly the same as the English versions and both coins and banknotes have the same denominations. However, Scottish banknotes look different as they have different features and pictures. But as in England, you can't use paper notes, they're no longer legal tender.

Tracy Collins [00:25:49]:

So, you know, in theory, both bank of England and Scottish banknotes are accepted across the uk. There should be estates, pound sterling on them. But in practice, some shops and retailers in England aren't keen on accepting Scottish notes. Boats. It's less of an issue in places close to the border, like where I'm from in Northumberland or in major tourist centers. But honestly it's. If you do have any Scottish cash, I would get rid of it before you leave. But like everywhere in the UK these days, you know, using contactless is very common.

Tracy Collins [00:26:20]:

Yeah, I mean I hardly ever use any cash at all but I just wanted to put that there because I know that is a question that we've had is like, you know, often we get asked what is the currency in the uk. So it's pound. It's pound sterling. Same in Scotland. They just have different looking notes. The other one, I'm going to talk this whiskey. This one's for you, Doug.

Doug Collins [00:26:39]:

Well, it used to be in my drinking days. Yes, I did. I was quite partial to a little Glenmorangie.

Tracy Collins [00:26:44]:

Yeah. And this is just a spelling one. And it's just really that there's a difference between how it's the spelling.

Doug Collins [00:26:49]:

One's with an e and one's without.

Tracy Collins [00:26:51]:

So which is which?

Doug Collins [00:26:52]:

So the Scottish whisky is without an e and the Irish whisky is generally.

Tracy Collins [00:26:56]:

With an e. Okay. So I just wanted to put that one.

Doug Collins [00:26:59]:

I'm not going to say that is a blanket across the board. And you know, there's no exceptions because somebody probably come and tell me that there is another exception. But my understanding is that is exactly as it is.

Tracy Collins [00:27:11]:

So whiskey without an e is Scottish.

Doug Collins [00:27:13]:

Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:27:14]:

Okay, cool. Yes. Now another thing we're going to just mention is just mispronouncing some of the place names. And look, hands up. We all do it. We do it as well. There's some places, there's. There's always a story I always tell about.

Tracy Collins [00:27:26]:

I mispronounced somewhere north Umberland. That made my mum laugh her head off. And I'm from Northumberland. So there you go. But just two common mistakes that we hear of pronunciations. And I'm gonna say we will. We can't pronounce them.

Doug Collins [00:27:38]:

I'm not Scottish. So I've. When I worked up in Scotland, how many times it was. I won't say I was laughed at because I was the boss, but. But a few raised eyebrows.

Tracy Collins [00:27:49]:

Well, we can't say it with a Scottish broke. That's the difference. So. But it is Edinburgh.

Doug Collins [00:27:54]:

Edinburgh.

Tracy Collins [00:27:55]:

Edinburgh, yes. Right. So Edinburgh. I guess what we're trying to say is it's not Edinburgh. Okay. We hear that a lot. We see it's spelt without the h. So.

Tracy Collins [00:28:04]:

And I'm sure there's plenty of Scottish people that I'll laugh at. My pronunciation as well. But I'm trying. But it's Edinburgh, not Edinbrough. That's a basic thing. I just think if you're trying it, that's fine. Edinburgh.

Doug Collins [00:28:15]:

Yeah. I think Edinburgh comes up when people from America have it as predictive text. And I think it just probably changes it to Edinburgh because I understand it is a place in Texas, I think.

Tracy Collins [00:28:26]:

Oh, okay. And it's actually said Edinburgh.

Doug Collins [00:28:29]:

I pretty think. Pretty much thinking.

Tracy Collins [00:28:31]:

And the other one is actually Glasgow.

Doug Collins [00:28:33]:

Yeah. Glasgow. Yeah, that's. It's not. That's gal.

Tracy Collins [00:28:36]:

Yeah, we often hear Glasgow and it's not as Glasgow. So just think go. In fact, it's not even that because if I was. If I was how you pronounce it, Doug, if it was.

Doug Collins [00:28:43]:

If it was Scottish, Glasgow or Glasgow?

Tracy Collins [00:28:45]:

Glasgow, that's it. Glasgow. Yeah.

Doug Collins [00:28:48]:

So just apologies for any Scottish people listening.

Tracy Collins [00:28:51]:

I know we're going to apologize. We apologize present for this, but we just want to say Edom, Edinburgh and Glasgow. There you go. Those. You'll be fine.

Doug Collins [00:28:59]:

Very posh.

Tracy Collins [00:29:00]:

No, well, I was gonna say otherwise. I can just. I can just imagine now all these visitors going to Edinburgh and Glasgow, saying it with a. With a Geordie accent. So. And this takes about. I used to. I used to teach English and actually because I'm from the north of.

Tracy Collins [00:29:13]:

Of England, I pronounce my vowels slightly different. And I remember teaching some kids to speak English and actually some. One of the teachers from the school coming in and laughing ahead off because all the kids were pronouncing all these words with the Geordie accent.

Doug Collins [00:29:26]:

Can you just say the vowels for me?

Tracy Collins [00:29:28]:

A, E, I, O, U. No, you know what you're gonna say? There's a. There's a comedian called Michael McIntyre who does a very, very, very good sketch about the Geordie accent and how we say ear for all our vowels. But anyway, I, I'll actually, we'll link to that in the show notes because it is funny. That's left. But anyway, we're just going to talk about. About. Yeah, so accents and pronunciation we get is.

Tracy Collins [00:29:49]:

Can be difficult and challenging. Now let's talk about food. One of my favorite topics.

Doug Collins [00:29:53]:

Oh, I love Scottish food, I have to say, particularly Scottish breakfast. Usually the older guest house. If you're listening, Murray, thank you very much. You do the best.

Tracy Collins [00:30:01]:

Yeah, he does now. So this is a mistake. We see it's not trying traditional Scottish food, honestly. Haggis, neeps and tatties. Try it. It's amazing. It's amazing how many people we've kind of encouraged and they've got back to us and said, we went to Mecca's mash bar and we loved it. We loved the.

Tracy Collins [00:30:15]:

We loved the haggis. This. And honestly, it's. It's worth trying it. Full Scottish breakfast, as Doug said. So what's slightly different? What is different from an English breakfast? What are you going to get different?

Doug Collins [00:30:25]:

We're gonna get a potato cake, which is delicious.

Tracy Collins [00:30:27]:

Yeah. So tatiscons.

Doug Collins [00:30:29]:

Yeah, some haggis.

Tracy Collins [00:30:30]:

Yeah, haggis. What about lawn sausage?

Doug Collins [00:30:32]:

Oh, yes, the flat sausage. That's very tasty.

Tracy Collins [00:30:34]:

Yes, that's square sausage. Square flat sausage. You'll usually also get black pudding, haggis, fried mushrooms, toast, the usual things. I've also had and I've got to try and think what it was like.

Doug Collins [00:30:46]:

Oats yesterday and Inverness. We had that. Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:30:49]:

Yeah. Which was really tasty. So if you're staying at a BNB and obviously some of the hotels as.

Doug Collins [00:30:54]:

Well, tried at least once.

Tracy Collins [00:30:55]:

Oh, yeah, do try it. True. Try haggis. Now, there are some more controversial foods that you can have in Scotland, as in the deep fried Mars bar. That is quite famous.

Doug Collins [00:31:03]:

I have tried that many years ago. It doesn't work for me.

Tracy Collins [00:31:07]:

No, I, I've avoided it. We actually have a photo of a place in Edinburgh when we're here. Well, because we stayed in Edinburgh for six weeks this year. Year. And we, we, we were so tempted and I was like, oh, no, I.

Doug Collins [00:31:16]:

Don'T think I tried it once. It's not for me.

Tracy Collins [00:31:18]:

And of course, Doug's your favorite drink when you're in Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:31:20]:

Oh, Iron Brew. I live on them when I'm up there. Yeah, it's, it's. I even cut down on the tea, which is something else for me. But Iron Brew, I do really, really enjoy.

Tracy Collins [00:31:31]:

I like the color. Yeah, the color's good because it's bright orange. It's a very lovely color. It's very popular. Do try Iron Brew when you're stuck. Yeah.

Doug Collins [00:31:38]:

And they do a sugar free version as well, which I also like.

Tracy Collins [00:31:41]:

And let us know if you've tried any of these foods. I want to know what you liked and what you didn't like. What was your favorite? And we've heard Iron Brew is, is really popular.

Doug Collins [00:31:49]:

Nice.

Tracy Collins [00:31:49]:

Yeah, it's all right.

Doug Collins [00:31:51]:
It's delicious.

Tracy Collins [00:31:52]:
Yeah. Oh, no, you've got me talking about food and I'm, I want to go back and, and have some of that Snoops and Tatties, my favorite. It's so good. So by the time this episode comes out, Doug will actually potentially be in Scotland. So I'm gonna get some photos of him trying some of these delicious. We'll get some photos of you maybe with a deep fried Mars. But I know I'm daring, you know, I'm daring you for by the time this episode comes out, I want to have a photo of you with a deep fried Mars bar. Check that out in the show notes.

Doug Collins [00:32:17]:
As long as I can have a breakfast as well early in the morning.

Tracy Collins [00:32:19]:
You can definitely have one. Okay, should we move on to the final tip that we, and I guess we've kind of alluded to it throughout this whole episode is really. Is not allowing time to slow down. Enjoy Scotland. So trying to just tick off too many sites without really time to relax and a pub, chat with locals, soak up with the atmosphere. Just enjoy being in Scotland.

Doug Collins [00:32:40]:
Oh, most definitely. It is such a great country to visit. There's something for everybody, really. But just embrace the whole experience.

Tracy Collins [00:32:47]:
Yeah, I love Scotland. I have to say, if it was warmer, I'd live there.

Doug Collins [00:32:51]:
You've said that before, haven't you?

Tracy Collins [00:32:52]:
I've said that numerous times. I do love Scotland and I guess that there's the draw there all the time to go.

Doug Collins [00:32:58]:
You've often said you feel an affinity with Scotland, haven't you?

Tracy Collins [00:33:01]:
Yeah, definitely. And I do. It's to, you know, I. I've traveled to 60 odd countries around the world and. And Scotland will be in in the first handful, without a doubt. It has so much to offer. So do go, do enjoy it.

Tracy Collins [00:33:16]:
Do try to get outside of Edinburgh, outside of sky out, outside of Loch Ness, because those are three places that everybody seems to want to go to. You know, the lovely places. I'm not getting you wrong, but do try and see more. There's so much culture, so much history, so much to see and do.

Doug Collins [00:33:30]:

Yeah, that's right. The history is long and I won't say complex. That makes it sound very, very stuffy, but it isn't it. You know, there is a great amount of history there, relationship with the English particularly.

Tracy Collins [00:33:43]:

Definitely. So in a nutshell, get your time and write. Plan your itinerary carefully, don't underestimate distances or logistics, and be mindful of Scotland's unique culture. Do that and you'll avoid the most common mistakes and have a fantastic trip. Don't forget we've got loads of resources on our website. Plenty of other podcast episodes to help you plan, including our London, UK Road trip and UK Train Travel Mistakes episodes. You'll find all the links waiting for you in the show notes@uktravelplanning.com forward/episode169. So I guess we just have to say thank you to everybody for listening.

Doug Collins [00:34:14]:

Thank you very much.

Tracy Collins [00:34:15]:

Yes. Yeah. If you've enjoyed today's episode, please consider leaving us a review on your favorite podcast app. It really helps others find the show. But until next time, from both Doug and me, happy UK Channel 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 [00:34:45]:

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. Sam.