

Episode 173 UK Travel Planning Podcast - UK Trip Report: How Laura Planned a Solo, Accessible Journey at 60

Tracy Collins [00:00:00]:

Dreaming of taking your own UK adventure. In this episode you'll hear how listener Laura turned her 60th birthday trip into a 15 day journey through England and Scotland, complete with afternoon teas, train rides and Highland cows.

Intro [00:00:12]:

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 [00:00:46]:

Hi, I've got Laura here this week to talk all about her trip report. Now, Laura has been on the Global Travel Planning podcast. Actually, I think Laura this episode and your episode of Stamped on the Global Travel Planning Podcast are coming out the same week. So it's like a double Laura, which is really exciting. So if you enjoy this episode with Laura talking about a UK trip report, do pop over to the Global Travel Funnel podcast and listen to Laura's episode talking about travel there as well. But anyway, this episode, let's go back to it, is all about your recent trip to the uk. So I'm going to stop gabbling on and let you introduce yourself, Laura. Tell us whereabouts you're from, where you went in the uk.

Tracy Collins [00:01:29]:

Just kind of a brief overview and how long you were there for sure.

Laura [00:01:34]:

So I'm Laura Sternheim Dilts from Massachusetts, near Worcester, Massachusetts and I went on this trip in honor of my 60th birthday and both my children are away at school so I'm a semi empty nester and arranged for job care so I could easily go. And I had researched to go when it's less crowded but still nice. And so you know, I chose September and I went September 7th through the 22nd. It was 15 days. I would have liked to have stayed a few more days in Edinburgh than I did, but I wanted to be home in time for the beginning of Rosh Hashanah. So I had planned it accordingly and was home a day early for the eve of Rosh Hashanah. Jet lagged, but I was home and planned to send Rosh Hashanah with my one of my best friends.

Tracy Collins [00:02:27]:

So okay, so you kind of chose the September, you kind of knew when you were going to go, you knew when you had to be back in the States. So tell me a little bit about your itinerary because you mentioned Edinburgh. Where else did you go?

Laura [00:02:40]:

Yeah, so I Started in London, then I went to Only, which is near Ravenstone to see a friend, a lifelong friend. And then I took the train to Glasgow and then I joined a Colette coach tour and did all of Scotland, all the way up to the Oakneys, back around and ended in Edinburgh. And it was so magical. And if you're going to go to Scotland, you definitely need to go outside the cities. And I feel that way about the UK in general. Even though I love London, always want to spend some time in London. I truly enjoyed my times outside the cities and being around the people and the different landscapes and all that kind of stuff. I truly, really loved that.

Laura [00:03:31]:

And the trains. Thanks to Doug, I was brave enough to do trains. I loved my five hours, five and a half hours going to Glasgow on the train.

Tracy Collins [00:03:42]:

Oh, so I love the fact that, that you're already saying, don't just go to London. And I, I, I understand if people are going to go to the UK for the first time and they've got a limited time and they think, right, okay, everybody wants to go to London. I know it's one of the most popular cities in the world for people to visit, hence the fact we've got a whole London travel planning website which is dedicated to London alone. But there is so much more to the UK than London. And as you say, getting out and exploring out of the cities, whether that's in Scotland, whether that's in Wales, whether that's in England, whether it's in Northern Ireland, any of the, just getting out of the cities and going and exploring the landscapes because we have such diverse landscapes. You also got to the islands. I was so excited you went to Orkney because it's just amazing. But just the variety and also getting to meet lots of different people in the UK as well, which is really great because we're all, you know, there's English, there's Scottish, there's Welsh, there's Northern Irish, that.

Tracy Collins [00:04:38]:

We've all got our own accents, we all have our own, you know, regional histories and our own, you know, just our own quirks in idiosyncrasies, depending on where we come from. You know, I'm northern, proudly northern. I'm from Northumberland. So I just love the fact that you, you got out and you did that and you, you planned part of the trip was independently and you were traveling solo, so I'm going to say as well. So, you know, solo travel, fantastic. You know, being able to do that at any stage of life is fantastic. Going out in there and just doing it. And also, I am going to mention, I'm sure you won't mind me saying that you have got some mobility issues as well.

Tracy Collins [00:05:16]:

So you've had to kind of plan about those sort of, you know, those. Those needs and things, whether it was on the train. Challenges. That's a good word. Yeah. So let's talk a little bit about kind of how you put it together, because you had that kind of solo bit where I know you're taking the trains and. And I, Doug, helped you with that, and then you picked up this chair around Scotland. So kind of.

Tracy Collins [00:05:39]:

How did you. How did you put it together?

Laura [00:05:41]:

Well, I started two years ago, so what I had on my itinerary. Plus, I've listened to every one of your podcasts at least three or four times. And that's how I found you originally, because I'm dyslexic and I hate to read. So, I mean, I can read, I have a master's degree, but I much rather listen. And I have an oral memory, so I can remember chunks of your podcasts. Like, I could regurgitate them to you. So you would talk about something and I would look at it and I'd put it on the list, and then I take it off the list and I have a whole bucket list of more places I want to go in the uk And I always want to go to the uk, so I have a whole nother trip I want to already do, but it probably won't be till at least 2007 because. But because I've got a whole bucket list of places at some point.

Laura [00:06:29]:

So I made lists, I listened, I researched, I reevaluated, to be honest, I tried to find a friend to go with. Talked to eight different people, some local, some in other parts of the United States. I'm a networker and I have friends from all parts of my life. And many people were interested, but for various reasons, it wasn't working out. And because I had a friend drop dead at age 56 who I was originally going to go to Scotland with. I told my mother I wasn't waiting anymore, and I was doing this either alone or. Or no matter what, I was doing it because life's too short and I'm doing this. And I mean, I saved two years tax returns to pay for most of it.

Laura [00:07:15]:

And like, originally I added going to Greenwich because you talk so fondly about Greenwich. But in the end I said I would need more time in London if I was going to do Greenwich because I really wanted to see my friend that Lives in Ravingstone near only Buckinghamshire. So and originally I was looking at hotels, but I reached out to my friends that live in Britain and they offered to put me up. So I changed my itinerary slightly because of that. And to me I'm prioritizing my friends in the world. So almost all my trips this year I'm connecting with friends from different parts of my life. So in London, out on the Jubilee line in zone three, I stayed with my friend Chris. Our fathers worked together at the University of Massachusetts.

Laura [00:08:07]:

They both were physicists. And Chris and his family moved back to Australia when he was nine and I was 12. But our families went camping together, hiking together, so we've stayed in touch our whole lives. So he and his brother live in the UK and have married Brits, so their mom still lives in Melbourne. And I reached out and said I'm coming to England. And he says, well, just let me know. And I said, well, I'm looking at fall or Christmas because this is when I was still planning. And then I nailed it down more to September.

Laura [00:08:39]:

And he says, well, stay with us. I said, are you sure? Because I was about to pay for an add on pre trip to London, not because I wanted the add on activities, but because it made the hotel package was an incredibly good price and it was really good hotels in the center of London. So I was planning to skip most of the touring they were doing because this is my fourth trip, was my fourth trip to the UK and I've done a lot of stuff and I didn't really want to do some of it, but I wanted to be in London and do my own thing, you know, so. But he said no, stay with me. I'm like, well that's a no brainer. I wanted to see him anyway. So I stayed with Chris and his family, got to meet his children, his wife spent more time with them

because he had started a new job. Originally one of the things I added to my itinerary because he wanted to do it and he's lived in London for 20 years and never been to the Tower of London.

Laura [00:09:32]:

Now I've been to the Tower of London, but it was in my 20s so I said, okay, I'll do the Tower of London. Now I hadn't bought the ticket that I really wanted to that you recommend with walks because by the time he said I can't do it, go ahead and buy one on your own. I couldn't do the VIP early entry one, but I did a regular two and a half hour early entry one. And I'm glad I did. But that was one tour that I wasn't originally doing, but he had wanted to. So glad I went. Totally enjoyed it. But again, that wasn't originally on my list. So my itinerary changed based on what I was doing.

Laura [00:10:10]:

I knew I wanted to do afternoon teaspoon. I knew I wanted to go to Liberty of London to buy fabric.

Tracy Collins [00:10:16]:

Ah yes.

Laura [00:10:17]:

I knew I wanted to do the London Eye. And I originally wanted to do the Hop On Hop off bus, which when we get into the more details I'll tell you. And then I knew I wanted to see my friend Mary, who is my exchange friend. Now I'm in 4H, which is the equivalent of young farmers in the UK. As a teenager, my family hosted many equivalent farmers from around the world in our home for a few weeks. From the UK, Costa Rica, Germany, lots of places. So Mary and another girl stayed in our home. And every time I've been to the UK since, Mary has come to meet me wherever I was.

Laura [00:11:00]:

And then, well, we went to afternoon tea in Northamptonshire and I sent you the link to it. And then we went to an Indian restaurant in the town next to hers and. And my favorite part of besides catching up with her was she took me for a drive in the countryside, which was gorgeous, but we happened to go through thatched roofs, houses with thatched roofs and telephone booths in the middle of nowhere. But it was like for that neighborhood. And I took pictures of mailboxes and phone booths throughout the UK because they're iconic and it just made me smile because they seem to be like sometimes in the middle of nowhere. It just cracked me up where these phone booths were. There were some that were now lending libraries. It's just a fun thing that's unique to the UK and it just made me smile when I saw these different phone booths and stuff.

Laura [00:11:58]:

And it also meant I was already on the train, same train route I needed to go. So that kind of affected my DIY part of my tour. And then because of logistics to do Scotland on my own. First of all, I don't want to drive the amount of energy it would take to plan all that. I started looking at different tours and picked one that would work for me that was considered easy pace. I did work with a travel agent to help with that. I looked for at a few separate from that and chose that one because every day we had free time in the tour, so it always took us

places. But then I had time on my own because I like to be able to do my own Thing, but it meant I didn't have to figure out how to get to point A, to point B.

Laura [00:12:45]:

The transportation was figured out. I didn't have to figure out did I need to buy an early ticket to do XYZ to get in to see this castle, that castle. I didn't have to figure out breakfast and dinner because most of the breakfast and dinners were included. And that way it was all paid for. So that's why. And I do all kinds of travel, so it was a way to do, like a hybrid approach for myself.

Tracy Collins [00:13:12]:

Is that the dog?

Laura [00:13:14]:

Yes. I'm sorry. He's. That's my dog, Martha. He's a beagle. Jack Russell.

Tracy Collins [00:13:26]:

Well, we're not going to cut that out because this is real life. So Ryan. Ryan's my editor. So everybody listen to the podcast. We're leaving in. Well, even in Matzah, because then he has a guest slot on the. On the podcast.

Laura [00:13:38]:

I also took pictures everywhere I went of all Brits love their dogs. I have pictures of all these dogs. And I asked every time I take a picture of a dog, and they're like, sure. And I'd learn the name and I'd get to love them up. So. Because I like. As my mother yells at me for talking to strangers. I love talking to strangers, so.

Tracy Collins [00:13:56]:

Well, you know, talking to strangers and talking to stranger with a dog as well. I mean, there's a great reason to start a conversation. I think that's always the thing when you see a cute dog walking past.

Laura [00:14:04]:

Exactly.

Tracy Collins [00:14:06]:

So I know you used a lot of our resources to help plan your itinerary, which is great because you're a member of our. Obviously, you've mentioned the podcast, which is great. You know, I am. I was a teacher, and I'm kind of aware that everybody has different learning styles. So the kind of listening thing with the podcast, I know it appeals to so many people. And it's just, you know, you can listen to me when you go for a walk. You can listen to me when you drive your kids to school, which I've heard drives kids bar me saying, I'm not Tracy again. You can listen to me at the gym.

Tracy Collins [00:14:34]:

You can listen to me all the time. It's great. And those of you who enjoy the reading and actually, I met a lovely lady today who's a big fan of the website. She loves reading through the website.

Laura [00:14:43]:

Well, I did go to the. I did also go to your website to get more details of things. You know, it's a wealth of information. People need to go to your different websites. They're. They're excellent.

Tracy Collins [00:14:54]:

Well, I will, I will actually just going to give a big shout out there. So is that. And I'm going to, I'm actually going to appeal to everybody who's listening to this podcast to really do me a massive, massive favor because we have been. We are being hit constantly by the developments and AI. We are being hit constantly by the AI overviews that search engines like Google are now using. And it's having a massive impact now. We provide a huge amount of resources out there. The podcast, the website, we've got the Facebook group for everybody to use.

Tracy Collins [00:15:29]:

But we need you to use them. We need you to go on our website and if you enjoy the podcast, go and check out the website, go and look at our articles because it helps us to survive. Because I'm serious when I say this. I'm not joking that without everybody's support and help, we're not going to be around in the next couple of years. We're just not going to be able to do it because it's like a brick wall is being built between our resources and what we do. And, and you guys and that brick wall, you won't even be able to see us. People won't even, you know, you guys have found us, but eventually people aren't aren't even going to see us because it's going to be a brick wall dividing what we have got and, and you guys wanting that stuff. And it's just, and if, you know, all you're going to get is AI and, and not the genuine.

Tracy Collins [00:16:14]:

You know, Doug and I love the uk. We know the UK like the back of our hands. And if you want that kind of community as well, come and join the. And family and connection. We're gonna lose that. So, so that's a bit of an impassioned plea from me there, Laura, but I think that's a good time to put it in.

Laura [00:16:32]:

But it's, it's really worth it. And you have, you update your newsletters and like, I love that you have one on the best places to take pictures of the phone booths, for example. I just. Or your, you know, your favorite pubs or the history of pubs or I love that you have the links for the afternoon teas that you vetted that you say are excellent. You know, so I listened to your podcast, but then I would look at the materials to be able to plan accordingly. And then obviously I purchased some of your, some of your resources, your planning map, Doug's ebook on train travel, which gave me the confidence to do the train travel. And your introductory planning guide to London. I think those are the three that I purchased and I wouldn't hesitate recommending or purchasing them.

Laura [00:17:26]:

They're high quality, easy to use, and make it very helpful. And if I was doing a more complex DIY trip, I would have definitely paid for a consult with you, but I felt I could handle London on my own. But if I had really wanted to do Scotland on my own, there's no way I

would do it without talking to you and Doug to make sure I got it right. Because I am a planner and I like to leave things a little bit flexible. But I want all the things I worry about planned out.

Tracy Collins [00:17:57]:

Yeah. Well. And I mean, that's what we do. I guess whenever the video one, if we do a video, kind of somebody's got an itinerary and they send us to go over, we do that by video. And then obviously we offer the one to one so we can chat through, which really works. But. But also. And I think it's really key.

Tracy Collins [00:18:14]:

You were traveling by train. And we're going to talk a little bit about the transportation because you were traveling by train. And I know you were very incredibly nervous about the train and taking the train, but I know that Doug also, I know there was a messaging going on with Doug trying to reassure you as well about kind of booking assistance and stuff like that. And you bought the book. But how did you find your experiences? Did you feel. Oh, no, that. That you were. You felt prepared for it.

Tracy Collins [00:18:40]:

And the fact that you actually did it as well before you had that kind of confidence from the resources.

Laura [00:18:46]:

Yeah, yeah. And. And you had told me to mention about the tube strike. So right before I left after two years of planning, there was all these news alerts about the tube strike. And you guys also give an alert on your Facebook pages. So that's another reason for people to sign up for that. Because if you're. If it's not on your radar, you guys always talk about that stuff and give suggestions for Plan Bs and that kind of thing.

Laura [00:19:10]:

So about a week before I reached out to. I had already arranged for XFA cars for transport from the airport and then from my friend's house to the Houston station. Because I knew I cannot handle two carry on suitcases and a medium sized suitcase and my cane. And I don't want to injure myself. And to be honest, Riz's prices are excellent. And I told him he was more affordable than getting to Boston. And I meant it I first shared. I do a shared van from where I live.

Laura [00:19:42]:

It's more expensive than a private vehicle with Riz. So if people are questioning, I'm telling you, you know, city to city, his services are excellent. So I reached out to him. We actually had a phone call on the WhatsApp. We. We agreed on what. He made several suggestions, one of which I wish I could have afforded where I would just have a car, like, private. Well, I don't know if it's on call, but mine, you know, for the whole day, couldn't afford that.

Laura [00:20:08]:

I would love to, but that was, like, way out of my. So we ended up doing a ride in and a ride out of the city, and I walked in between. I urge people, even if they're not mobile challenged, to make sure they get in shape. I walked one to two miles, two to three times a week and did

chair yoga for over a year. And I've lost over 30 pounds. So I would never have been able to make it in this trip without doing that, because once I got into the city, every day I was walking, like, 7 to 10 miles easy. Probably more, because when I go to New York City, I walk that. And that's with using the subway system and taxis.

Laura [00:20:49]:

So the day I went to the Tower of London and did the London Eye and stuff, I got there about 45 minutes early. I had to be there for 8, 45. So many people were having trouble getting there for the walks. Tour I had signed up for, which was the gentleman I was talking to, said he had seven people, 17 people. Only three of us showed up.

Tracy Collins [00:21:10]:

Wow.

Laura [00:21:11]:

So we had a private tour. I'm telling you, the Tower of London was, like, empty. Like, empty. Like, I could have talked to a beef eater for an hour. You know, by the time I left, okay, there were a few more people, but everything. The jewels, I went around it six times. I could have gone around it, looked at them for an hour, and I remember waiting in line in my 20s.

Tracy Collins [00:21:37]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:21:37]:

Now, in my 20s, they didn't have the moving sidewalk thing. It was empty, Tracy. I mean, empty. I mean, maybe a hundred people in there. It was not.

Tracy Collins [00:21:48]:

See, there's advantages and disadvantages of the Tube site. Disadvantages. Obviously, trying to get around was really, really difficult. And that threw a lot of people out. Hope they don't do it again, because it's the worst. But obviously then it also meant that because you had booked with Riz and you were getting all this transport, you got all these places and nobody in the right.

Laura [00:22:08]:

But then I also Walked miles. I mean.

Tracy Collins [00:22:10]:

Yeah, you did. Yeah.

Laura [00:22:11]:

I couldn't use an Uber. So I ended up just right after the tour, getting on the boat and taking it down to Westminster and highly recommend it. It's lovely. It's another way to see parts of the city, the Shard and the. And the bridge and all the different architecture. And they actually do a little narrative while you're on it, so they're telling you little tidbits. And then I had done a flex. Flex ticket for the London Eye.

Laura [00:22:42]:

Because on one of your podcasts, the grandmother with the two granddaughters that love the cats.

Tracy Collins [00:22:50]:

Yes.

Laura [00:22:51]:

Talked about the flex ticket. So I said, okay, I'm going to do the flex ticket. And then walked across from Big Ben and Parham Lint across the bridge to the London Eye side and I went up to where you, you know, you do your ticket. There was no line, Tracy, again, nothing.

Tracy Collins [00:23:11]:

Nobody that.

Laura [00:23:12]:

Because I have a flex ticket and I had reserved 3:15, but I'm early. Can I go? He's like, no problem. I think he would have let me go even if I didn't have the flex ticket. I'm telling you, there was nobody. I walked the ramp up to it. We're talking like two minutes. I was on a. In a pod with two other people.

Laura [00:23:31]:

A mother, daughter that were in. That were from. Oh, God, it starts with an M. I can't think of the name of the town. But they were in the city for the day and they decided to do a touristy thing after they did whatever business thing they needed to do.

Tracy Collins [00:23:45]:

Yeah. Yeah.

Laura [00:23:46]:

I couldn't believe the pod was empty.

Tracy Collins [00:23:48]:

I was like, well, you know, do you know how many times I've been on the London Eye? I can't count how many times I've been in the London Eye. I've never been on it without, like being quite a few people in the pod. So you were, you are really lucky. See, saying there was some. There was some upsides to this.

Laura [00:24:02]:

Yeah. Oh, I mean, it was amazing. And they took my picture, I took their picture. So, you know. Yes. It was a 30 minute circle thing.

Tracy Collins [00:24:09]:

I love it. I love the London.

Laura [00:24:11]:

It was just amazing. And so you have to appreciate moments. I understood the magnitude of the blessing of the tube strike that day numerous times and said, hot dang, I'm really lucky.

Tracy Collins [00:24:29]:
You certainly were.

Laura [00:24:31]:
And then afterwards, I got an ice cream from an ice cream truck and then I messaged for my ride to go back to my friend's house because I was exhausted by that point. My ice cream was My lunch that day.

Tracy Collins [00:24:44]:
Can I briefly interject as well, because. Because I have. I have heard. I've heard other people who. Who do stuff about London really being quite. Oh, what's the word? Complimentary. Thank you, Laura. I should just say to everybody, it's quite late at night at the moment, so when I'm recording, so I think my brain's.

Tracy Collins [00:25:05]:
Yeah. So not very complimentary about the London Eye. I love the London Eye. Now, I can remember going to London when I was about the first time I went, I was about seven. And the tallest thing in London at that point was the BT Tower, which is tiny. Now it's. And I remember my dad pointing out it was like a big thing, BT Tower, which, honestly, you. You wouldn't even see it, it's so small these days.

Tracy Collins [00:25:25]:
And to me, you know, London is about changes. It's not. The history of London is in the buildings. And it doesn't matter if it's a new building, where in London, because that is London. London is about. Over the centuries, you know, when places were bombed in World War II, then new buildings have gone in the place, all that sort of stuff. And the London Eye to me is exactly that. It is London.

Tracy Collins [00:25:52]:
So this. Oh, it's an eyesore. No, to me, it's not an eyesore. So that's my first point. I'm going to say to me, it's not an eyesore. It belongs there. And also, you just get the best view from the London Eye of the Thames. You can see the Thames, you see how it kind of winds around the Parliament building.

Laura [00:26:10]:
It's so cool, the whole thing that, you know, you see the whole layout of it.

Tracy Collins [00:26:15]:
Yeah, you get. You see the House of Parliament, see, you see the Elizabeth Tower before anybody tells me, because I always get told, Big Ben, Elizabeth Tower, whatever. You see that. You see the red buses going across Westminster Bridge, you see the Uber boats going down the Thames. You just get this fantastic bird's eye view of London and I love it.

Laura [00:26:38]:
You see the massive. How big it really is.

Tracy Collins [00:26:41]:
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Laura [00:26:42]:

I mean, to be honest, it's because of your passion for the London Eye and other people's raving about it that I decided to do it. Now, I do have to preface one of the things I asked in the Facebook group because I was very worried because I can't stand still because of my back injury for very long. So I said, is there seats in the London Eye? And when you said, yes, there's a bench, that's when I decided I could do it. Otherwise, 30 minutes in, that kind of thing, I couldn't have done standing. And I know you said, oh, but they're often, you know, people are sitting in them. Well, I have a cane, and I have no problem saying, excuse me, but I need a seat.

Tracy Collins [00:27:21]:

Now.

Laura [00:27:21]:

I have to say, the Brits are very accommodating. And everybody always said, oh, please take the seat. Can I help you? Always. But I have no qualms of politely speaking for my need. But I didn't have to worry about it because again, I was in the pod with two other people. I could have laid down on it.

Tracy Collins [00:27:41]:

Plenty of places to sit, Laura. Plenty of places.

Laura [00:27:45]:

But we could. The three of us could have laid down on the seat.

Tracy Collins [00:27:50]:

Oh, dear. I'm supposed to go around. You could have done. By the sounds of it, hardly anybody on it. I'm glad you enjoyed it. I really am. And look, I mean, I. I sometimes feel on the podcast, I do talk with passion about the things that I love, because I can talk about the things that I love.

Tracy Collins [00:28:05]:

So I share them, like the vna, you know, like the, the. The ceremony of the keys. Like, all the things that I, I really.

Laura [00:28:12]:

Those passions, a lot of those items I originally wanted to do, but for various reasons, I had to pick and choose. Like, I really would have liked to have gone to the va, but I knew that was more walking. And I'm like, oh, I got to like, that was a backup plan. If the weather was bad, I would change what I was doing and go there. Because I love art deco. I love art deco and I know architecture. There's art deco. So.

Tracy Collins [00:28:37]:

Right. Well, I'm going to say next time, next time you're in London, if I'm in London, we are going to go the V and A for the day, we'll go. We'll sit in the cast court. Because I always definitely want to go on the cafeteria.

Laura [00:28:49]:

I want to go in the cafeteria.

Tracy Collins [00:28:50]:

Right. Well, we'll go in the cast courts, and then I can have my kind of hour in the cast courts absorbing all of the. The history. I just love. Everybody knows I love the cascot. And then we'll go and have lunch and then enjoy the cafe and the art deco. So we'll do that.

Laura [00:29:03]:

And I also wanted to do the. The fashion. The. The one exhibit I wanted, it was.

Tracy Collins [00:29:08]:

All the fashion and the jewelry. You've got to do the fashion and the jewelry.

Laura [00:29:12]:

So. And then the other thing that I really wanted to do when I was in London was afternoon teas. So I researched not only what you said. But I watched YouTube reviews on afternoon teas and so I chose the famous traditional one at Fortnite Mason at the Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon. Oh my God. This gentleman was playing the grand piano. It was so beautiful. The sandwiches and the scones were good.

Laura [00:29:40]:

The top tier of the pastries, they need to improve. And I did say that in an evaluation to them the chocolate pastry, the mousse pastry was good but the arrests were eh. Their sandwiches were amazing, the atmosphere was amazing and of course their tea is amazing and the service, it's lovely. Highly recommend going. They just need to improve the top tier of the. Of the afternoon tea there and then the other afternoon tea which you have to go to if you haven't the best amazing food was at Peggy Portions. Now the day that I went to Peggy Portions I also had a a photo shoot from your favorite scallion studio, Scaling Scaling Scaling Scaling Studios. And I didn't have.

Laura [00:30:30]:

But I had her employee Jean and poor Jean was late getting to me because she ended up having to take use three of those bicycles to get to me because three of them broke. I said I hope you're going to complain. She says, yep, the chain broke this. The tire went flat. And she's texting me. She says, I'm sorry I'm late. I said I'm here when you get here. Please do not panic on my account.

Laura [00:30:52]:

Just take the time you need. It took her instead of whatever, you know, normally in the tube it would take a few minutes. She had planned ahead, but three bicycles had broken.

Tracy Collins [00:31:01]:

Oh my goodness.

Laura [00:31:03]:

Yeah. And then part of what we wanted to do, she said I can't really do all the spots you want because the tube's down and we can't get to part of us. That's fine, we'll do something else.

So that's how besides the iconic with Elizabeth Tower and Big Ben and the foam booth which she did manage to get. And I sent you the picture. Big Ben, the phone booth and a bus all in the same picture. I was so excited because that's totally iconic and she managed to catch me in it and we did all. I had so much fun doing the photo shoot.

Laura [00:31:41]:

That was a splurge to myself for my 60th birthday. I had paid for my daughter to have her senior photo shoot. It's a thing in the United States. I said, well, I paid one for her. I'm doing this. I had so much fun and I have lovely pictures. Definitely worth doing. I don't know if I would do it again next Time, because it was a lot of money, but I had so much fun.

Laura [00:32:00]:

And the pictures are amazing. I get compliments on all the pictures. So I might budget to do it again and do a different area. It was just so.

Tracy Collins [00:32:10]:

And also traveling solo. Laura, I was going to say, like, traveling solo. How do you get. How do you get those photos? Because you either have to stop somebody in the street and hope they're not going to run off of your phone to take the pictures, but you have them professionally taken. So I think it's.

Laura [00:32:25]:

A lot of selfies. Oh, I'm glad it was worth the money. Do you know what I'm saying? Well worth every cent. And I had so much fun doing it. And so we ended up walking over to Buckingham palace and I didn't realize. I didn't remember all the gardens there. You know, it's funny what you remember. Your brain remembers.

Laura [00:32:43]:

So I got to see Buckingham palace from further away in a view that I don't remember. And I've been to Buckingham palace every time I've been to the uk, but it just was different now. It was crowded and there was a lot of press because Harry had come to visit to reconcile with his brother and his father. So there was this. All this buzz, and I didn't know that, but I said to the reporter, because there was cameras, I said, what's going on? He says, well, nothing at the moment. He was so funny with his accent and probably some British swear. He says, but this is what we're waiting for. I said, oh, thank you.

Laura [00:33:20]:

Okay. Yeah. I don't remember exactly what he said, but it was definitely a British, like, sarcastic swear kind of comment. And have beautiful pictures with the flowers and the gardens. And then we walked to the park that's between where the palaces and it's the other. I can't think of what. It's at the other end, that park that's in between.

Tracy Collins [00:33:47]:

The other St. James's park or Green Park.

Laura [00:33:50]:

St. James's well, you walk in between to get from one end to the other.

Tracy Collins [00:33:55]:
It'll be St. James's Park.

Laura [00:33:56]:
Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:33:57]:
Did they have the pelicans and you can. Yeah, you've got the bridge and you've got the great view of the London Eye.

Laura [00:34:02]:
Thank you. So originally I wasn't going there, so we took some pictures in that park and then we went to walk back. Now there's a lot of crowds and there's barricades, but people are walking back and forth. When we got back, the policeman said, I'm sorry, nobody's allowed to cross. And I said, oh, why? He says, well, the crossing of the guard is about to happen. I'm literally at the barricade, the police officer. And I said, well, how long will we be here? Oh, I don't know. It might be 15 minutes until it happens.

Laura [00:34:31]:
I said, well, how long is it? Oh, okay. So I said to Jean, I guess we're watching the car right in front of me. Like, if I had planned it. And the reason I skipped it, because I don't like crowds. I don't want to have to stand still. I could lean on the barricade right in front of me, have great pictures, got to hear the music, got to see the horses. I'm like, okay, embrace this amazing moment, you know? And I was there because again, the tube strike and I had to change what I was doing. And we had decided to go that way because then I'd be walked half the way to the neighborhood in Belgravia where Peggy Portions is, and I was going to have to walk there anyways.

Laura [00:35:15]:
So by doing the photo shoot that way, I was half where I needed to go. And originally I was going to try to get on a bus, but none ever came. So Jean, this is after her. A lot of times she's like, I'm not letting you walk another mile or two alone. I'm walking with you. So she walked me all the way to Peggy Portions to make sure I got there. I mean, this young lady did not need to do that. She's from the Ukraine.

Laura [00:35:43]:
She's an immigrant. It's her second career. She was a dancer and then went to photography school because she wasn't going to be able to dance. She's 28. She knew she physically wasn't gonna be able to dance anymore. Lovely. Enjoyed getting to know her. And I made it to Peggy Portions.

Laura [00:35:59]:
But I highly recommend. You've got to go to Peggy Portions. The most amazing food. And I was early, so I said, well, I have a reservation, but I had to walk because of the tube. Is it possible? Can you see me early? And they're like, are you Laura? I'm like, yes. Well, as long as you don't mind being in the back room. So they put me in the back room. Well, Peggy's husband was working on his computer in the back room.

Laura [00:36:22]:

It was a dining room, but it's not the prime location, to be honest. I loved it because I had the whole space to myself. Talked to him for an hour. He clearly didn't really want to work that hard. So I learned he's also a chef and he's in charge of all the savory parts of the menu. Every bite of that. I chose the vegan menu because I was going to do several teas and I had already done the traditional menu at Fort Mason and I was doing another traditional afternoon tea with my friend Mary, so I wanted something different. And the vegetable sandwiches, there was a beetroot with avocado, a hummus one.

Laura [00:37:01]:

Amazing. And the scones, they were hot. And then she's a pastry chef, so the pastries were amazing. I ate one of them there and took the rest home to my friend's house. They were actually were gluten free and part of his family celiac. So I shared them with them. Amazing. And I also bought the cookbook.

Laura [00:37:22]:

I collect cookbooks because. And because I like reading them for fun. I. I would definitely go back there again. Like, that was one of the best meals. I know you asked later about food. That was some of the best food of my trip.

Tracy Collins [00:37:37]:

Can it. Can I tell you that I've actually not been to. I have not been to Peggy Portion. Right now. I really want to get a piggy portion and I think I've emailed them a few times because there's the thing that you can do like to the PR saying I'd like to come and you know, like take some photos and have some food or whatever. And they, they kind of, from what I gather, they pick who they, who they feel is the best people to respond to or they. I guess we're talking the kind of influencers. Maybe the people on Instagram.

Tracy Collins [00:38:03]:

You have 25 million followers. Clearly I'm not an influencer enough.

Laura [00:38:09]:

You know, they now have, they have a thing. They have a breakfast tea with like, I don't know if you like breakfast, but like you can pick a breakfast food item to go with. It's like an afternoon breakfast.

Tracy Collins [00:38:22]:

I'm waiting for the invite from Peggy Portion because I'm actually going to say to Peggy Portion. Like, I is like nearly 600,000 people don't listen in our podcast. Not enough of an influence. So I'm just, I'm waiting for the invite.

Laura [00:38:37]:

I mean, and for people to know if you don't make a reservation, you can walk in to buy their pastries and stuff.

Tracy Collins [00:38:44]:

Well, I need to, I need to, I need, I really need.

Laura [00:38:47]:

It's just of, of the afternoon teas and I toyed with the other one I would like to go back is the one at the Shard because one for the View. But I Love. I've seen where they. The ship and they make the. I'm assuming it's dry ice when they.

Tracy Collins [00:39:03]:

Pour the dry one. Yeah, that. Doug and I have done that one. We loved that one. Because not only do you get a good afternoon tea, you get a great view, like you say, from the shot. I love this.

Laura [00:39:12]:

There's also an Asian themed one. Something at the Shard in the Asian.

Tracy Collins [00:39:16]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:39:17]:

There's another restaurant that's like, yeah, that one appeals to me because I love Asian food. I don't know what that one is, but I saw that there is an afternoon tea at an Asian restaurant in the Shard.

Tracy Collins [00:39:29]:

There are so many afternoon teas. I try to keep up with them. I think there's a whole dedicated website just for afternoon teas. And I do get invited quite often to afternoon teas. I did do a couple when I was back last time, but again, it's one of those things. Like there's only so many afternoon teas you can do. Well, one a day, preferably. If I'd actually had a choice.

Laura [00:39:50]:

You better bring stretchy pants.

Tracy Collins [00:39:52]:

I know that that's the other problem as well. It's like I have to be careful how many afternoon teas I do have because. But I don't like scones, which is always a big thing for everybody. I'm not a big scone fan. I like a cheese scone, but I don't like a sweet scone. So I can judge it based on the savory stuff. Is my favorite. The savory is.

Tracy Collins [00:40:10]:

Is definitely my top thing on afternoon tea and a good cup of tea.

Laura [00:40:13]:

Oh, I don't know. I know you've been to the Diamond Jubilee tea. You know they have a savory afternoon tea menu.

Tracy Collins [00:40:19]:

Yeah, savory afternoon tea is all the way. Is my thing. Absolutely. Yeah. Okay. So. So to just do a kind of quick overview of everything in terms of your favorite things that you did.

Because we've talked quite a lot about London, but obviously you did quite a bit in Scotland too.

Tracy Collins [00:40:35]:

And I know you went. You were in Glasgow for. For a couple of days. You did some stuff solo. Because I know you kind of talked to us a little bit about different places to eat, but talk about kind of your favorite experiences in. And places that you were. We went to in Scotland. Yeah.

Laura [00:40:51]:

I apologize. But we started with the beginning of winter. So my favorite. Well, Doug would be on this. Totally the ride to Scotland. Definitely part of my favorite piece. Just seeing the countryside, the street art in Glasgow and Glencoe, the breathtaking landscapes. Just, just.

Laura [00:41:12]:

It's so beautiful and magical. The Highlands. You have to go to the Highlands. My favorite castle that I went to was the Yukhart Okit Inverness. The town of Bora. Getting to see Highland Coo. Yeah, Highland Coo, which is not really the most popular cows for raising. And most of them are a tourist attraction.

Laura [00:41:43]:

So one place our coach stopped, we could buy vegetables to feed them, to take pictures with them. And they were. They told us they could eat their weight and vegetables. I did farming. So in Australia and the UK Highland cows are huge compared to other cows. I mean, they're just big. Huge, but so adorable. We ran into more Highland cows at this historic site from World War II of Italian prisoners.

Laura [00:42:19]:

They bought, brought. They built a chapel.

Tracy Collins [00:42:22]:

Oh, it's on Oakney. Yeah.

Laura [00:42:24]:

Yeah, it's on Oakney. And there was more Highland cows there. And there was.

Tracy Collins [00:42:30]:

That's the Italian chapel on Oatmeal.

Laura [00:42:34]:

But they were actually. Those weren't tourist ones. That was like some farmers. So there was a mom and a dad and a baby. Now, the baby was huge, but the baby came over to the water trough that was near the fence. He wanted people to pet him and rub his ears. It was so darn cute. That was one of my other thing that I, you know, that was part of the tour.

Laura [00:43:01]:

And I did look up where we went was the sheepdog demonstration. And I sent you a picture because the gentleman who did the demonstration, and I'm familiar with sheepdogs because

I worked with them. It was fun seeing the demonstration. But he brought. He went to get puppies. He brought them out in a bucket. A bucket full of puppies. So darn cute.

Laura [00:43:22]:

And I was at that point, I was sitting on a. A tree stump because I can't stand that long. And he knew I was off to the side. He came over to me first and handed me a puppy. And the whole rest of our tour group, there was 40 of us that I traveled with, went, aww. And so then he passed them out. Well, there was another puppy that walked over to me. So I.

Laura [00:43:42]:

I have this one puppy who's licking me and getting loved up. And another fellow traveler was taking a picture, was whining. So I ended up holding two puppies.

Tracy Collins [00:43:53]:

A.

Laura [00:43:54]:

It was lovely. And then I really loved the ferry ride to the oak knees. Now you definitely need your motion sick patch behind the ear and the acupuncture bracelets if you. I get every kind of motion sick. So I totally empathize with your husband. And I made sure I was out in the air and not underneath. And I was fine with the patch and you have to put the patch on several days before it was really choppy and I've done a lot of boats and stuff. At one point I held onto one of my fellow companions because I swear I thought I was going to fall off the bench.

Laura [00:44:26]:

It was that choppy. And we went to Kirkwall St Ola and we had another local guide there and we got off the coach and walked around the church. 70 mile an hour winds. I almost fell. Another traveler helped me not fall. I could not believe the wind. And I'm like, are we going to be able to get back to our hotel? We got to take a ferry back and some of the coaches from other companies that day didn't make it back because our tour guide said what they had to do. Other companies, they had to try to find lodging for people overnight and I thought without luggage, medicine, all this.

Laura [00:45:10]:

But we managed to get back. But so highly recommend the oak knees. Plan accordingly. Worth it for the choppiness. And I definitely would want to go back. It was just everything there was so amazing and I'm glad I went to the Isle of Skye. But the oak knees, I would say top down more than the Isle of Sky. Loch Ness.

Laura [00:45:36]:

Okay. I went to Loch Ness. Eh? Take it or leave it. I mean the water was lovely. I did take my picture with this, you know, the statue, Loch Ness. But I'm telling you, the Oakneys people have to go all the way up there. They plan, take a tour. Go.

Tracy Collins [00:45:53]:

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. Go to the Highlands, go to the far north, go over to Orkney Islands. I'd like to go to Shetland. I haven't been up to Shetland. Even further. The Scottish

Islands are fantastic, you know. And I know everybody heads to Edinburgh and Edinburgh and Edinburgh. It's like in Skye.

Tracy Collins [00:46:09]:

Sky, Sky. We always hear about sky, but there's just so much more. It's a bit like, you know, heading to London and. And just go to London and maybe the Cotswolds and maybe Bath. There's so much more.

Laura [00:46:17]:

Do you know, misunderstanding. I loved every minute of the whole trip. I'm just saying go to some other places that aren't as popular now.

Tracy Collins [00:46:25]:

Yeah, yeah, no, I agree.

Laura [00:46:27]:

I wish I had more time in Edinburgh and I did. Do I want to make sure I mentioned and I know you have a link for it is to do the Ice Lander bag workshop.

Tracy Collins [00:46:38]:

Oh yes. Yeah. The islander bug. Yep.

Laura [00:46:41]:

Now I. I made a bag. It's a gift for somebody so I don't want to say more than that, but it was so much fun. Highly recommend it if you like bags, if you like doing workshops, it's. It's worth it. So I did that on my own because I had free time in Edinburgh.

Tracy Collins [00:46:58]:

Yeah, yeah, I did. I did that in January this year as well, on my own because Doug didn't want to go and make a bag. So I went off and made. And it was good fun. I enjoyed it.

Laura [00:47:05]:

And. Yeah, so highly recommend that. But I don't think there's a wrong thing to do in the Highlands. I mean, even though I was on a coach, but I love just sitting and watching the scenery. And I'm glad I didn't have to drive. I mean, as a solo traveler, I'm not driving.

Tracy Collins [00:47:24]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:47:24]:

Logistics wise, I'm not going to do it.

Tracy Collins [00:47:27]:

Oh, hey, when I go back, I go with Doug and he. He does the driving. I get to see the scenery, he gets to do the driving.

Laura [00:47:35]:

I love seeing all the animals. I did list for you in my notes, all the hotels we stayed at were lovely. So even though I didn't pick them, they were all lovely for different reasons. So I gave you the list of that and then I gave you a list of restaurants because. Yes, my favorite meals were the two pub meals. Pubs have excellent food, so even if you don't drink, and I'm not a big drinker, I had one pint of lager with my friends outside of London at their pub, which I gave you. It's in Kilbourne, the Black lion in Kilborne. It's an Indian fusion pub.

Laura [00:48:10]:

So it's think of pub food, but Indian spices. The most amazing lamb chop appetizer. I'm dreaming about that lamb chop. You know, it's good when you still think about it. And what was lovely is people had their dogs inside the pub. I was. I was just so I. Obviously, I'm a dog lover.

Laura [00:48:28]:

I just thought it was wonderful that the dogs were allowed in.

Tracy Collins [00:48:32]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:48:32]:

And in Glasgow, our first night, we were at a pub, the Gale and Grain or Gil G, A, E, L and Grain. Yeah. And I had haggis, the turnip and potatoes. I always remember. Can't remember the names of it.

Tracy Collins [00:48:53]:

Yeah. Haggis, neeps and teddies.

Laura [00:48:55]:

Yeah. Amazing. And because your husband always raves about I am Brew, I had the sugar zero because I'm diabetic. I am Brew. Loved it. Wish we had it here. The way I would describe it to Americans is think of cream soda with a tropical twist. That's how I would describe the flavor.

Laura [00:49:13]:

So I had, I am brewing many times while I was in Scotland. And my dog walker son is a bagpiper and they go to Scotland. She's Scottish and she's planning another trip with their bagpiping, like she's helping coordinate it. And one of the games here locally in New Hampshire, they're getting iron brew in for the high. I said, oh, can you bring, can you smuggle one can for me, please? I'll bring you one. But they, they're having it shipped specifically for the event.

Tracy Collins [00:49:52]:

Well, that's great. At least you can get some.

Laura [00:49:54]:

Yeah, but you can't. You can't buy it regularly here. And I'm like, it's so much better than Diet Coke. Oh, my God.

Tracy Collins [00:50:01]:

Well, it's different. And another drink that I really like in the UK that you don't get anywhere else I think is dandelion and burdock, which is worth trying.

Laura [00:50:11]:

I wanted to take a shout out for supermarkets or the groceries. Mark and Spencer and. Yeah, Sainsbury.

Tracy Collins [00:50:19]:

Yep.

Laura [00:50:20]:

Yeah, yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:50:20]:

Sainsbury's, Marks and Spencers.

Laura [00:50:22]:

And there's another. I can't think of it. But I love going to grocery stores wherever, whatever countries I'm in. So because of you, I had to try your favorite snack cake and. And Doug's had to compare them. Yeah, like your cherry. Your cherry one better. Sorry.

Laura [00:50:41]:

Doug and I bought candies. Pega Pig candies.

Tracy Collins [00:50:48]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:50:48]:

Kids. If your kids like gummies, highly recommend you bring some of those back. The chocolates. But I like buying food and I, I always bought snacks and things because I'm diabetic, so I don't ever not travel with food and breakfast every day. There was always fruit available, so I took it with me. So even though there's meals, I always have emergency foods. And I truly loved having tea every night. I mean, I always have had tea.

Laura [00:51:16]:

I'm always a tea and coffee. But because of the trip, I'm now like up time for my evening tea.

Tracy Collins [00:51:22]:

Yeah, I like my cup of tea and my shortbread. Scottish Scotch. Scottish shortbread. That's. Yeah, yeah.

Laura [00:51:28]:

And then I did go to a distillery. I'm not really a. A whiskey fan, but I did like whiskey in things. I loved it in the different sauces for different savory meals. And our tour guide would do different surprises. I mean, I'm sure it was in his itinerary, but we were surprised he bought whiskey fudge. Oh, my God, you gotta have some whiskey fudge. That's all I'm saying it's delicious.

Tracy Collins [00:51:56]:

Oh, my goodness. Well, it sounds like you tried some. Did you have any sticky toffee pudding? Because that's always the thing that I hear from Americans.

Laura [00:52:03]:

Our dinners always had a choice of three starters, three mains and three desserts. So one of the times I did pick the sticky toffee pudding. However, as a diabetic, that's not a smart choice. So I took two bites, I tasted it, but there's no way I could really eat that. That would have been my carbs for the whole meal. I understand why people love it. It's delicious. But I knew I couldn't enjoy it.

Tracy Collins [00:52:29]:

See, I find it, it's a bit too sweet for me, to be honest.

Laura [00:52:33]:

I'm glad I tasted it. My favorite is, Is it the, Is it kraken? The whipped cream with the berries?

Tracy Collins [00:52:40]:

Raspberries.

Laura [00:52:41]:

The raspberries soaked?

Tracy Collins [00:52:42]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:52:43]:

And the whiskey with the oats that I highly recommend.

Tracy Collins [00:52:47]:

That is nice.

Laura [00:52:48]:

Yeah. So I definitely like whiskey in things, but not so much as the drink. But I'm really glad I went to a distillery with a tasting and I did give you the website for the one that was included in our tour. It's definitely part of the Scottish experience. And if you're able to have alcohol, I would encourage you taste it. Otherwise, at least go to learn how it's made. It's very interesting. And the history and how different regions taste different and why.

Laura [00:53:16]:

So it was very interesting. I'm glad I learned about it. And your cheeses. I wish I wasn't lactose intolerant. I wish I could have eaten more cheese. Amazing. A little bit of cheese that I did eat was delicious, but I had to eat it sparingly. I don't know, I, I enjoyed every meal.

Laura [00:53:33]:

Every meal. There wasn't. You know, the UK gets a point, poor rap for food.

Tracy Collins [00:53:38]:

It does, it does. I did a food show in Borough Market a few years ago and the, the, the guide kind of asked what to think of when you think of British food, and it was all, all bland, you know, beige, Bland, bland, beige. And then at the end of the tour, they were like, no, completely wrong. And I, I, I don't know, because I, I find British food tasty, hearty. I love potatoes and there's a lot of potatoes and things I love, like, things like gammon seeds steak. I like my scampi. I like the traditional.

Laura [00:54:08]:

Not, I did not end up having gammon steak. I would have tried it, but. And the fish and chips. Oh, I forgot to give you the Fish and chip place. I'll have to send it to you. And that was amazing. The fish and chips was amazing. And in New England we have really good fish and chips.

Laura [00:54:25]:

And it's called fish and chips in New England for a reason, because we're New England. So you know, we have a lot of British related food here. So I mean, I grew up with fish and chips and of course you have to have it with the malt vinegar.

Tracy Collins [00:54:42]:

Oh, yes.

Laura [00:54:42]:

Amazing.

Tracy Collins [00:54:43]:

Mushy peas.

Laura [00:54:45]:

I really don't like mushy peas. I did.

Tracy Collins [00:54:47]:

No, I don't either.

Laura [00:54:49]:

I did really, I did eat it, you know, I did taste. I'm always willing as a world traveler, unless it's something I'm allergic to. I'm always willing to try something once, you know, I'm willing to try it. You know, I, I love in the UK they ask about your allergies and stuff. If someone has a food issue, you're not going to have an issue in the uk Even now. Most of the menus had it. Some of them were rural places. It didn't.

Laura [00:55:12]:

But if you told them, they would make sure that whatever you were eating was safe for you to eat.

Tracy Collins [00:55:17]:

And, and a lot. Most of the time they, they should technically ask as well. They, they generally will ask.

Laura [00:55:23]:

They do, yeah. So it must be the law or whatever. But it's.

Tracy Collins [00:55:27]:

Yeah, I know they're really good and a lot of people have mentioned that. So you had a good trip. You really did have.

Laura [00:55:33]:

But I already want to go back. So I told Lisa of go Coswell. So that's on my list. Yeah, my, my friend Mary that I visited, she said, well, I'd go to Codswells with you. So I will be back. I really would like to also do York. I want to go to your home area because I feel like we've gotten to know each other. So I would enjoy doing that.

Laura [00:55:56]:

Definitely. Any friend asked me, I will go back. No matter, no qualms. Definitely would go back to Scotland. I went to Wales when I was 18, but I don't remember a lot of it. So I wouldn't mind going back to Wales because I really, I remember the bed and breakfast. Isn't that funny? I mean it's 40 some odd years later. I don't remember most part.

Laura [00:56:14]:

I was only in Wales for three days and I can't remember what I did there.

Tracy Collins [00:56:19]:

Well, it's a long time ago, so you just have to go back. And also we're gonna, we're gonna, we're gonna go at the VNA and have afternoon tea.

Laura [00:56:25]:

Definitely, Definitely.

Tracy Collins [00:56:27]:

I think that'll be really good. Now I'm gonna wind up Laura because we've been talking for, for a long time. It's great. It's been really interesting and. No, no, don't apologize. It's been really interesting. I enjoy talking to you and I'm sure that people listening and you're listening are going to be like, interested with what Laura, how Laura's trip went. I always end the podcast as, you know, with the same question.

Tracy Collins [00:56:47]:

Everybody anticipates it. So what would be your one tip for anybody visiting the uk? I know it wasn't the first time that you went, but for somebody who would be going for the first time, what would you advise?

Laura [00:56:58]:

Yeah, so if you're solo traveler, just go and do it. And if you have a mobility issue, it is possible. You just have to plan accordingly. And passenger assistance in the airports, the train people are extremely helpful offering you. Hey, do you need a seat in the Edinburgh Castle? I used the passenger assistance to take the ride up to the top of the castle. I chose

to walk back down at my own pace. Walking up, it would have been really hard. And it exists and is available anywhere they have visitor assistance.

Laura [00:57:36]:

Utilize it. That's what it's there for and it will make your trip enjoyable and make it doable for you. That's my advice for first time travelers who have a challenge. If you want to do something in traveling the world, you can do it. You just have to do it your way. It's okay that you don't do all the things. I acknowledge my physical limitations. When I'm tired, I'm perfectly happy sitting at a cafe and watching the world or at a park.

Laura [00:58:04]:

Even on my coach tour, I sat at the park waiting for the coach to come back. I talked to Brits, of course, anybody who had a dog. That was an excuse to say, I am definitely not a shopper. I've confirmed that I went in and out. I'm wearing my one of my purchases. So you could see it. It's a scarf. The food markets, yes.

Laura [00:58:26]:

The regular shopping. I could take it or leave it. I go in, look, go sit. I definitely am not a porn shopper. My daughter, on the other hand, loves to shop. When I travel with her, I go find a place to sit and I say, if you see something I need to see or, you know, I'll like, then I'll come over and look at.

Tracy Collins [00:58:44]:

I think that's a good plan. I think that's a good plan. And I think. I think you made the trip work for you. You did the research, you planned it all. You got the assistance when you needed it. It didn't stop you doing the trip. And, you know, hats off.

Tracy Collins [00:58:58]:

I think you had a great. You had a great trip, you had a great time. You were very flexible when things changed. Like the example, the tube strike threw a bit of a spanner in the work just before you went. But, you know, you worked with that as well and were really flexible, and I think having that attitude is the right way. Wherever you travel in the world, you go with that flexible attitude. Sometimes things change, but you make the best of it and you adapt when you need to.

Laura [00:59:23]:

Right. My also, my feeling is if you miss something, it means you're meant to go back to that country. So there are things I didn't get to do, so I know it means I need to go back. Like, the first time I went to Greece, the museums were on strike, the workers were on strike. So I knew it meant I was to go back. And I have been back, and the museums were open.

Tracy Collins [00:59:44]:

There you go. There you go. You see? It's silver lining. Absolutely silver lining. Well, Laura, it's been so good to chat with you this week.

Laura [00:59:51]:

There is one other thing I do want to mention.

Tracy Collins [00:59:53]:

Go, go, go.

Laura [00:59:54]:

The Ladies who Travel. Yeah, the new Facebook group. If you're a woman and you like to travel, and if you want to do solo and you're scared, highly recommend they join that Facebook group because it's a wonderful group of women and people are giving such wonderful support and advice.

Tracy Collins [01:00:12]:

Oh, yeah. Well, yeah. Thank you for that, Laura. So that's. That's our new Facebook group, Ladies who Travel, that I do with Melissa, which is basically. It's a series that's come out of my global travel planning podcast. So at the end of every month, Melissa and I sit down and we talk about just. Just how we travel and any kind of issues for traveling, whether you're traveling solo, but just traveling as a woman.

Tracy Collins [01:00:34]:

Right. And we talk about all sorts of things like packing and jet lag and when things go wrong, what do we do? And we're just doing it. We're doing an episode next week about traveling when it's, you know, like in the colder seasons and how we plan for that and what we pack, especially because Melissa's from Australia, where she grew up, where it was hot all the time. So it's a bit of a. It's all right when you. We're used to the seasons, but when you used to kind of live in somewhere where it's hot most of the year. It's a bit of a challenge. It can be a bit more difficult than you would imagine.

Tracy Collins [01:00:59]:

Yeah. So. So come and join. So we, that, that that Facebook group started off, we've had it for a while but, but last month some reason the Facebook God smiled upon us and we have grown to. At this point I think we're nearly at 16,000 members. We have, we've had meetups with people, we have virtual, we have online meetups, we have online cuppa with myself and Melissa, which is really good to come and join. So it doesn't matter where in the world you can come and chat. So, so that's been a lot of fun and yeah, so we're working on that at the minute.

Tracy Collins [01:01:33]:

So thanks for that, Lauren. And you're, you're in that group as well, helping us moderate, which is brilliant. Yeah. So that's a fantastic community as well. I will mention before we sign off anyway, thanks for coming on the episode is that you have given me the details of the places that you stayed and the restaurant. So I will put those in the show notes so you can check that out. But yeah, this week I just want to say thanks so much Laura for coming on and also you're another one of our listeners who enjoys leaving messages via speak pipe as well. So we look forward to hearing from you every week because you go on, whether it's a UK podcast or the global podcast, leaving us a message and we've been getting some fantastic messages coming through, some requests and some episodes that people are enjoying and just saying hi from wherever you are in the world.

Tracy Collins [01:02:20]:

Which is. Blows my mind when I get a message from somebody in, in Texas or even somebody in New Zealand or somebody in, in Malaysia. Just saying we'll listen to your podcast and love it because you know, we record these episodes and they go out into the ether and I just want to hear from you guys and Laura, you, you were one of our listeners who got in touch and, and you know, we've become good friends, haven't we? So it's been, it's fabulous.

Laura [01:02:43]:

Yeah. So hopefully they meet you either in the UK and you made me want to go back to Australia. I. Well, it's been a long time but it's now back on my list to put up with the long haul flight and come. So I definitely want to go back.

Tracy Collins [01:02:57]:

To Australia, come and visit, come and visit myself and Melissa. We'll very much look forward to seeing you. But I'm going to sign off for this episode, so you can find all of Laura's information that she shared in the show notes@uktravelplanner.com until next week. I'm going to sign off. Do you want to say bye, Laura?

Laura [01:03:13]:

Bye everyone.

Tracy Collins [01:03:14]:

Happy Travels and Happy UK Travel Planning from me.

Laura [01:03:18]:

Bye.

Tracy Collins [01:03:20]:

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 stay until next week. Happy UK Travel Planning.