

# Episode 179 – Trip Report with Laura Norton: From Liverpool Legends To London Landmarks & Beyond

Tracy Collins [00:00:00]:

Dreaming of your own UK adventure. In this episode, listener Laura Norton shares how she brought hers to life. From the Beatles in Liverpool to the best of London and beyond, before finishing with a few memorable days in France and a voyage home on The Queen Mary 2.

Tracy Collins [00:00:52]:

In today's episode, I'm catching up with Laura Norton, who joined myself and Doug for a consultation more than a year ago to plan her UK adventure. Fast forward 15 and she's back to share how it all went. From the Beatles in Liverpool and the excitement of London to a hop across the channel to Paris and Normandy and an unforgettable voyage home on the Queen Mary 2. If you're planning a similar itinerary, you'll love hearing Laura's reflections, travel tips, and standout moments from her journey. So let's dive into my chat with Laura and find out how her and her husband's trip of a lifetime unfolded. Hi, Laura. It's so good to have you back because you are a guest on our hundredth episode of the podcast. Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:01:34]:

Which is amazing. So this is going to be episode 179, and actually by the end of the year, we'll have hit 181, which is crazy.

Laura [00:01:42]:

That's amazing. It's just such a wealth of information. It's so amazing you guys do this.

Tracy Collins [00:01:47]:

Well, I can't believe it. So I'm hoping that you're going to come on the 200th episode, which will be. Yeah. Which will be sometime in 2026, I guess, what, four or five months in. And talk about your favorite episodes, because that's what everybody did in episode 100, which was fantastic. And we know that trip Reports are absolutely a lot of people. And if you love trip Reports, get in contact with me, buy a Speak pipe and let me know, because I want to know which is your favorite and which ones do you really enjoy? Because I know trip Reports just seem to resonate with so many people now. Laura came on the hundredth episode and she's coming on today to do the last trip report of 2025.

Tracy Collins [00:02:27]:

So, Laura, I'll stop talking and I will let you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about where you're from, where you went on the trip, who you went with, and just give us a kind of quick overview of the itinerary. Sure.

Laura [00:02:43]:

So my name is Laura Norton. My husband and I live in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the US we don't have any of our human children, but we have four very spoiled cats that are our babies. And this trip was to celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary. So that was in June, and we traveled in August after we did our 25th wedding anniversary trip, which was a cruise to Hawaii and had been delayed a little bit because of COVID We were joking about what do we want to do for our 30th? My husband's like, you know, I'd like to go to England sometime. And that's all it took. I latched on and started the planning.

Tracy Collins [00:03:19]:

I know. So exciting. So give us a quick overview. Where did. Where did you go? Because I know, obviously deciding where to go is a huge, huge thing.

Laura [00:03:26]:

Yes. So we actually flew into Manchester and then stayed in Liverpool for two nights, then went to London. We were in London for a week, then took the Eurostar to Paris. Paris was just kind of a stopover one night just because we didn't want to travel so much in one day. Then we took a train to Cannes so that we could do some things in the Normandy area. Then we took a ferry from Caen back to England to south to Portsmouth and then train into Southampton and spent the night. And then we took The Queen Mary 2 from Southampton, transatlantic back to New York City before we flew home.

Tracy Collins [00:04:03]:

I know that. That's so exciting. So exciting to do that. That's one of the. I'd love to do one of those cruises from. I hear so much about them. Southampton over New York. Just sounds amazing.

Tracy Collins [00:04:12]:

Now, Doug and I actually helped you with your itinerary, but we did it a long time in advance. I think it was well over a year. We did.

Laura [00:04:20]:

Yeah. I think it was the spring before. Yeah, the spring of 24 is when we did it. And like I had mentioned there, for me, any trip that we take, the planning is part that I really enjoy. That's part of the excitement for me is the planning part. So. So that was fine. And I just.

Laura [00:04:37]:

I'm. I'm my father's daughter as far as detail planning. And that's exactly how he was of making sure you had things ahead of time and knew what you were going to do. So I definitely wanted to get your guys feedback on what we thought our dictionary was going to be. And Doug's knowledge about train travel was amazing. And it was that. That was probably the biggest part that made me a little anxious, was because, you know, we, where we live in Michigan, the only train we have goes like from here to Chicago on Amtrak. So no subway, no tube, anything like that.

Laura [00:05:07]:

So that was the part, I think, that made me the most anxious about our travels. But after talking to him and the links that you guys provided it, it was so much easier and wasn't worth worrying about.

Tracy Collins [00:05:18]:

Oh, that's right. I'm going to do it. A little promotion here, Laura, because actually this episode goes out in December and Doug and I have got. We actually have January and February open for consult. So anybody who's listening and you're thinking, you know, I want to do a consult and speak to. Speak to myself and Doug. Seriously, those bookings are there. Get on and book it.

Tracy Collins [00:05:37]:

Because you guys booked it well. Yeah, well in advance. And it helped so much with your planning.

Laura [00:05:43]:

Yeah, I definitely. Anybody, it's worth it, the peace of mind, getting the feedback. It helped me actually tweak a few things and, you know, feel well prepared.

Tracy Collins [00:05:52]:

Brilliant. Thank you. Now, let's start at the beginning. So you arrived in Manchester and then you headed to Liverpool. So talk us a little bit about about your kind of first impressions when you arrived and how did your journey go into Liverpool and tell us a little bit about what you did in Liverpool, because I know you were very, very excited about one particular thing you were doing.

Laura [00:06:14]:

Yeah, so when we flew into Manchester, you know, coming through, getting off the plane, getting through passport control, immigration was very smooth. I think it took us maybe a total of 15. It took us longer to walk from the plane through the airport to get to that part than to actually go through it. So we got our luggage and because of the timing of when our flight landed and when we were going to be able to get into our accommodations, we actually stored our luggage there at the Manchester airport for a brief time and took a Uber to. There's a small airport aviation museum just on the other side of the Manchester airport from the departures. And so we spent some time there watching the planes coming in and out, which my husband was thrilled with, got to one of the largest planes that flies in the U anywhere in the world, now land and take off. So that was pretty cool. And so then we headed back to the airport when it was closer to time and Took the train into Liverpool into Lime street station and then took an Uber to our accommodations which was in Speke.

Laura [00:07:16]:

So it was a little bit outside of Liverpool at George Harrison's childhood home at 25 Upton Green.

Tracy Collins [00:07:23]:

So.

Laura [00:07:23]:

And we never would have found about that if it wasn't for one of your podcasts that you interviewed the owner of that, that house. So that was. My husband loves the Beatles and so that was one of the big highlights for him. So walking in there for the first time, knowing,

standing in that living room, knowing that that's where you know, the Beatles stood, they practiced. You were in that same environment was pretty surreal. And you have the entire house and it's a three bedroom now we. To stay in his parents house because that's where the ceiling fan was. And it was, it was pretty warm while we were there, but tolerable.

Laura [00:08:01]:

So it was wonderful. We did take the Mystery Tour or the magical Mystery bus tour in Liverpool which was also a very interesting stop at Strawberry Fields, Penny Lane, seeing all of those wonderful things. Before we got on the tour we had toured some area at the dock area there which was wonderful. Walking along the Merc and then eating at the food truck. There's a food truck place that we ate at. So it was really, it was really again just knowing, seeing everything online and researching and then you're actually physically there is just a little overwhelming.

Tracy Collins [00:08:40]:

Oh, Liverpool, Liverpool is amazing. Honestly, if you're a Beatles fan, I just think Liverpool should be in your itinerary because it's, it's a fab. It's a lot of history as well in Liverpool. It's an amazing city. It's a northern city and of course it's where the Beatles come from. So I was so excited that you, you booked and stayed in Georgia and we've had loads of feedback from, from people who've listened to those, that podcast and we're like, oh my goodness, it's amazing. And as you say, yeah, chatting to the guy who bought it, it was just like his story is fantastic. I think it's maybe episode.

Tracy Collins [00:09:12]:

I'm trying to think 28 or 30 of the podcast. I should have actually got that information. But yeah, we've got a whole podcast where we chat about actually the story about buying it is great. So I'm so glad you stayed. How many nights did you, did you stay there?

Laura [00:09:24]:

We were there for two nights. You know, certainly worth it. You know, at some point we'd love to go back, have a little more time. And when we were planning this trip we started with the cruise, knowing what, which one we were going to be on and then worked backwards, you know, with our time. Would love to have had a little more time and you know, if we go back again, the experience was amazing. It is a good 20 to 30 minutes outside of actual Liverpool. So I don't think we would necessarily stay there again, stay more, you know, closer to all of the attractions in the history, but definitely would go back and love to spend more time there.

Tracy Collins [00:09:58]:

Oh well, another, another great place to stay actually. Liverpool, if you're a Beatles fan, is a Hard Hard Day's Night Night Hotel. Doug and I have stayed there a few times and that's really cool because that's got a load of the memorabilia as well. So if you love the Beatles, it's honestly, it's a, it's a no brainer. It's so amazing. So then after Liverpool you headed to Sheffield?

Laura [00:10:15]:

Yeah. So we took a train from Liverpool to Sheffield. The original plan was then to again store our luggage and go to the CE out there where the drummer, my husband is also a big

fan of Def Leppard. That's where they're from, their hometown. And we were going to the cemetery where their drummer Steve Clark, who unfortunately passed away was at to visit the grave. Pays respects. This is part of where we learn to be flexible and that plans don't always go as you think they're going to. Another thing we learned is we way overpacked.

Laura [00:10:47]:

So part of it, you know, Todd, my husband Todd, he's like, you know, yes, I kind of want to do this, he says, but really it's okay. Taking luggage on and off the trains and getting him into an Uber and back and forth was. He was just. We were just a little overwhelmed at that point. So to be honest, we ended up actually just staying at the train station and people watching and reading and didn't end up going to the cemetery, which was fine. And that's part of, you know, the thing we learned. We wanted to see things, but we didn't want to push ourselves so far every day and be exhausted. We wanted to be able to enjoy it.

Laura [00:11:19]:

So that was one thing. One of the areas we were like, okay, we're going to be flexible. We're just. That's okay.

Tracy Collins [00:11:23]:

Yeah, we'll just do it.

Laura [00:11:24]:

And then we got on the train into Sheffield into London and interesting. At one stop on our way, all of these young men, probably late teens, early 20s, gets on standing room only. Apparently one of another train had run into issues and so it wasn't running and they were all heading to Sheffield for a football. There was a big football event going on. So that was kind of a, that was kind of a different interesting experience just to see, you know the, the songs that they sing is just, you know, so different for us, for Americans. So we don't get that. But it was. So it was really actually cool to experience.

Laura [00:12:00]:

They were very well behaved and very nice. But it was, it was kind of a cool experience.

Tracy Collins [00:12:06]:

Yeah, that's good. I guess getting a train when there's a football match on, as you say, all the fans getting on is always interesting. I guess it would have all had the scarves on and you would have like, you would have known who they were supporting because it's, it's kind of every obvious depending on what colors they're wearing and the scarf and everything. But that's cool. But actually that's one of the, that is one of the things that says like, and I guess that you guys did it is to reserve seats because. Yes, for example, on a day like that where there's a football match, the train is going to get absolutely like I say, standing room only. And so at least if you've got a seat reserved and I'm not saying that's, that's not infallible because sometimes the train like they can get cancelled and that's unfortunately you kind of can be stuck. But I think it's one of those things that try to make sure you've got a reservation the free and then at least you've got the peace of mind that there's a football match.

Laura [00:12:57]:

We were very, very thankful we had reserve seats on that train.

Tracy Collins [00:13:01]:

I bet, I bet. Because I can just imagine how full it can get with. And seats don't sell out. That's another thing. They will keep selling tickets to the train so you know they can get very, very full. Absolutely full.

Laura [00:13:13]:

Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:13:13]:

Okay, so you say you took the train from Sheffield down London. So talk about London. Because you had, you had quite a. In London, didn't you?

Laura [00:13:20]:

Yep, yep. We had an entire week in London. So we came into the train station again, took a taxi to our flat that we had rented. We were in the St Catherine's Dock area, which we absolutely loved that area. I mean right by Tower Bridge, the Tower Tube station. We, that's what we used the entire time. It was, you know, a tent not less than a 10 minute walk, great restaurants in the area, but very quiet. And so that it was just a perfect location for us for doing our traveling.

Laura [00:13:53]:

Around town and then we did a couple of day trips. So yeah, we loved it. It was, you know, again, as Americans we're so used to our air conditioning. But I was going to say even though it was warm, I mean places were great. They had two floor stand fans, left the windows open. It was perfectly fine. We did, it was not a problem. Love to be able to have the windows open.

Laura [00:14:17]:

We could as we laid in the bed at night and looked out the window, we could see the tops of the Tower Bridge and we could see the shard off our outer windows and off the balcony. So it was a perfect location for us.

Tracy Collins [00:14:28]:

Oh, that's. That is lovely. Yeah. I mean London can get, can get really warm in those kind of summer months and like AC isn't a standard. It's not a standard. In a lot of the museums, it's not a standard. They're starting to put it now on the tube, but it's just not standard. And you kind of, I guess for places, buildings that are kind of hundreds and hundreds of years old, it's just so it's, it's one of those things that a lot of hotels will, if they haven't got AC will give you a fan, which helps.

Tracy Collins [00:14:54]:

And we've stayed in plenty that I've got a fan. But if, like, if AC is really important then you know, when you're booking somewhere you, you do need to check that it has got ac. Don't kind of make that assumption. Like a lot of countries, like in Australia we have AC everywhere and obviously in the States you have ac. So it's just not as common even in places, a lot of places in Europe that don't have it and you swelter in August when it's really

hot and you're like. But yeah, so I'm glad that it didn't, it was fine for you guys. So talk me about through your kind of highlights of London. What were the things that you were just like? Wow.

Tracy Collins [00:15:29]:  
Yeah.

Laura [00:15:31]:  
I think for us just again, after all the research and looking online and listening to different podcasts and different Facebook groups and just the fact to be standing on that balcony and we're actually there. I mean, I actually got a little teary eyed just because it was just, you know, so much history, you know, we don't have in the United States. Yes, we have history, but not to the extent. And a lot of in Europe in the old. And it's just, it was, we just love to walk again. We didn't pack our days, you know. Yes, there's so much to see. And yes, we will go back, but we just wanted to be able to enjoy it.

Laura [00:16:04]:  
So just walking along the Thames and taking in the scenery was just wonderful for us. You know, we did take a couple of day trips from London. One was to the Warner Brothers studio Harry Potter studio tour. Because that was one of two things that was on my list that we had to do for me. And then the other day trip we did is we took a train to Dis and went to Thorpe Abbots. My husband is a history major and World War II is his area of interest. So we had watched the bloody. Watched the Masters of the Air series about the bloody one hundreds before we went.

Tracy Collins [00:16:42]:  
Yeah.

Laura [00:16:43]:  
And again, just that standing on that hollow ground and so much was there. It was, it was, it was very moving. Very, you know, just. It was a great, great experience. The other thing that we did in London that was, you know, another thing on my checklist I had to do is I'm a nurse, been a nurse for 30 years. And so going to the Florence Nightingale Museum.

Tracy Collins [00:17:02]:  
Oh, yes, very.

Laura [00:17:05]:  
Yeah, that was, that was very moving for me.

Tracy Collins [00:17:08]:  
It is really good. And it's. Yeah, it's. It's somewhere I only just recently went, actually went last year I had. I did a London pass thing for three days and I thought I'm gonna go and see some of the stuff that I haven't seen before. Some of the museums are included and the. The Florence Nightingale Museum was included in that. So I actually went with a friend of mine who's a retired midwife and she also.

Tracy Collins [00:17:28]:

Absolutely loved it was really, really interesting. And there's a bit where you can actually listen to Florence Nightingale's voice. Yes, I loved that. I thought because, you know, you can we look at the photos and especially when it seems so far away in the past when you hear about it, but actually being able to hear the person's voice, it was like, oh, wow. It brings her back to life and real. It was great. Yeah.

Laura [00:17:54]:

They had an area too where you could make a rubbing of her signature. And so I have that and it's actually hanging in my office at my doctor's office that I'm where I'm a manager. I have it hanging in my office.

Tracy Collins [00:18:05]:

Oh, that's so cool. As a momentum. So, yeah. Oh, well. So any. Any nurses listening? If you're nursing you head in London, seriously, Nightingale Museum really should be included in, in your itinerary.

Laura [00:18:16]:

Definitely worth it.

Tracy Collins [00:18:18]:

Did you go to any of the big hitters? Because obviously travel, London, Westminster Abbey, did you, did you fit in those?

Laura [00:18:25]:

Yeah, we did. So we did, you know, we walked, we didn't get in to do a tour of Westminster Abbey. We did walk around, you know, Big Ben, Elizabeth Tower, Parliament. We did do a tour of the HMS Belfast. We did that again, the history things, Buckingham Palace. So yeah, you know, all the, you know, the kind of the big highlight, touristy type things. Yeah, just, you know, it was, yeah, it was wonderful. So we, yeah, it was great.

Laura [00:18:56]:

Definitely going back. Would love to just spend another, you know, week to 10 days just in London. There's so much to see and would like to do, you know, some other day trips. Cotswolds, you know, that was another one on my list. Just not enough time in one trip.

Tracy Collins [00:19:10]:

Yeah. And the thing is that sometimes you can kind of pack stuff in and you end up, you think, and even, you know, I'm also sometimes guilty of this because I'm like, I get so excited and like even last year I was in London for five or six weeks and I was like, I had a long list of, I'm going to do all these things. And actually what you forget is that you get a bit tired and fatigued and then it's like, actually no, I'm not going to manage to do another 30,000 steps for another, like every day for another week because it's, it's just too much. So I think, I think pacing yourself and kind of picking those kind of must do things that you really, really, really want to do and then kind of working it around that like you managed to do, you know, you did your day trip and you did Harry Potter again. You booked Harry Potter well in advance because that, that Warner Brothers trip that gets booked up so quickly.

Laura [00:19:51]:

Yes, actually I think it was someone posted on your Facebook page, hey everybody. They've opened up for 2025 that day and I was on it.

Tracy Collins [00:20:01]:

Yeah, you absolutely need to book. Because we hear so often people go, oh no, it's booked up. I'm like, yeah, you need to need to book. We actually have got a page on the London travel planning website which just kind of gives you an idea of when to book things, how far in advance. Because there's nothing worse than the thing, the one or two things that you really want to do when you try, you go on and they're booked up. It's like, no. So tell me a little bit about. Did you go into Paris? Was.

Tracy Collins [00:20:25]:

You said it was kind of just a, it was a stop off because you were going to go and do the World War II tour. So how did you go about kind of planning that trip over to Paris from London? I know you took the Eurostar, so how did all that work?

Laura [00:20:39]:

Yeah, neither one of us like to get up early. I do it every day for work. So I don't like to do that on vacation. So we did, I think it was the 9:30 train out of St. Pancras and on the Eurostar. And actually that process at least getting through passport and security wasn't bad. It does get very, very crowded in the waiting. That, that was interesting.

Laura [00:21:05]:

But then once we got on the train we did and I'm kind of losing track. I can't remember whatever the middle, middle of the road seats are. So we had a light lunch that was provided and you know, very comfortable. That was great. When we got to the station, then we took a um, Uber or a taxi, um, which. Then we got maybe a block, a block and a half away from the train station. And something was wrong with his meter, it wasn't working. So actually flagged another taxi driver who happened to be right here, who's our, his friend, flagged him over.

Laura [00:21:39]:

We grabbed stuff out of the trunk and put it in the other taxi, you know, and of course, you know, my mind's like, I think this is legit. I don't think we're getting ripped off. I think this is okay. But it was fine. We got to the hotel. We stayed in a very small hotel right by the Saint Lazar train station because that's where we knew we were going out of the next morning to go to Cannes. So we wanted to stay close to that. So it wasn't the closest to a lot of the attractions.

Laura [00:22:06]:

But again we weren't there, you know, less than 24 hours, so that was okay. But we could see the Eiffel Tower from our balcony, which was nice. So we got to see it light up at night and see it sparkle. We did. We did a little bit of a walk that afternoon and went to see Moulin Rouge and then we walked past the Paris Opera House and then just kind of relaxed in the room because we knew we were going to be up a little bit early the next morning to get the train to Cannes. So yeah, and then that, you know, that the Eurostar was no problem. The train, the train to Conn was a little trickier again. Thankfully we had reserved seats.

Laura [00:22:44]:

But the first train, the first section of it, didn't realize it was a double decker train. And our seats ended up being in the top. And by the time we got on. Most of the luggage storage was already taken. The air conditioning wasn't working very well, so that was probably out of all of the trains. There was a little glitches there. And then when we got to the station, we had to do a transfer. We had about 10 minutes, no escalators, carrying all of our luggage, but we made it.

Laura [00:23:14]:

There were other people that were in the same boat with us. And you were talking earlier about how they just keep selling tickets. And we got on that train, there was nowhere to sit, and all of, you know, several of us just standing. And eventually, a few stops later, people got off and we could, you know, find a seat. But, you know, we figure out of the whole trip just having, you know, one or two small glitches like that, we felt very fortunate.

Tracy Collins [00:23:35]:

Yeah. Yeah. I guess, like you said, you just gotta kind of have a bit of flexibility and. And I always think anybody who has the opportunity to talk to Doug as well has a little bit more knowledge and confidence about when things don't exactly work out, that how to do stuff. I think he's really good at kind of, you know, sharing that. And we've even have people, when things have gone wrong, that have kind of messaged him and he's kind of said, look, you know, this is what you need to do just to help people out. But I think that really helps. Just a quick question, because this is something that I.

Tracy Collins [00:24:12]:

Did you. How did you find the difference between London and Paris? Because I find them so different. They're so different. They're so close together. Capital cities, but they are so different.

Laura [00:24:22]:

Yeah, they are so different. And again, like I said, we just, you know, we did a little walking and some of the side streets, little cafes, whatever were nice and stuff, but just doesn't have the same. I know they always say, you know, well, French are so rude. I mean, people were nice to us. You know, we. As long as you greeted with a bonjour and at least attempted, you know, a little bit, then they were fine. But not at. As outgoing and friendly necessarily as when we were in London and my husband and I were talking and was like, yeah, we'd go back to.

Laura [00:24:50]:

To London or any place in the UK in a heartbeat. I don't know that we would go back to Paris or, you know, and maybe if we had been staying a little closer, maybe had a longer time, maybe we feel a little bit different, but not so sure that that's an area we'd want to go back to.

Tracy Collins [00:25:03]:

No, I have to say, and again, I Think I'm gonna get, I'm getting a bit of a reputation for this. I think on my other podcast, the Global Travel Planning one, I've got one about, about places that I'm not so fond of and unfortunately Paris kind of comes to the top of my list and there's many reasons why. And I did. I actually used to live in France. I speak French fairly well. I

used to be totally fluent. It's gone now because we're talking 30 odd years ago. But, but I, yeah, I, I just struggle a bit with Paris.

Tracy Collins [00:25:27]:

I love France. I just, just Paris. I, I don't know. I think I, I think, yeah. I always say to people, don't build Paris up too much and you. Your head because I think you may, you may be disappointed. You may not again. People might, I might have people listen going, I loved it and which is fine.

Tracy Collins [00:25:42]:

We're all different. We all like, we all love different things. So then you did a World War II tour when you. Before you. Then. Yeah, how did that go?

Laura [00:25:52]:

Yeah, we, yeah, that was great. We, we again chose our comics. We did VRBO close to the train station in Khan, partly because then we needed to get to that, that ferry. So we didn't want to stay in Bayou. I know a lot of people stay in Bayou because that's where all the tours go out of. But we stayed in Khan and then it was just a short, I think like 15, 20 minute train ride from Khan to Bayou where we then met and we went with Overlord Tours was the group that was the agency we used. There were I think like 14 of us in a small minivan, um, with the guide and it was, I mean it was a long day. It was a full, I think eight and a half hours.

Laura [00:26:32]:

But it was, it was wonderful. It was amazing. You know, I think again, my husband being the World War II, his area that he loves, just all of it was just taking it all in and so interesting. And going into some of the bunkers. I think for me standing on Omaha beach where the Americans landed. I mean now granted you're standing there as people laying on the sand, sunbathing. A little bit different environment than obviously at that time. But just again, just that, just that history overwhelming, washing over you of this is where it happened.

Laura [00:27:03]:

This is, this is where it was. It was. Yeah, it was wonderful. I'm glad we kind of changed our itinerary a bit and expanded. Instead of spending as much time in London and taking that extra side trip, it was, I feel was really worth it.

Tracy Collins [00:27:16]:

Yeah, I think that's really good. And I think just opportunity, you know, like you say for your husband, he loves that, that history. And you have the opportunity when you're there to actually go and, you know, stand in the footsteps of where those people were and had that experience. And so, you know, it just brings it back to you. I think it just makes it a bit more real when you have the opportunity to do that. But I know, I think, I'm sure when we did the consult, Doug helped you a bit with that kind of logistics around that bit in France as well. We're pretty good on European travel because we've done so much of it. And then you got the ferry, which was interesting, over the Portsmouth.

Tracy Collins [00:27:49]:

So how did that go? And then kind of how was the logistics for the last few days?

Laura [00:27:54]:

Yeah, so again, you know, we. We did use Uber quite a bit and with our travel. So we took.

Tracy Collins [00:28:02]:

We did.

Laura [00:28:02]:

We scheduled the Uber, not a problem. Picked us up. We had actually. And got to the ferry deck there. We went through Brittany Fairies is who runs those. Um, and I do. I remembered when I booked it, I was like, I know we got like at least a room with bed. So because, you know, left early in the morning, could rest and take some.

Laura [00:28:20]:

I guess I didn't really remember until we got on the ferry and got into a room that I'm like, oh, I got a regular room room. It was like an actual hotel room and it was on the back of the ferry. We had our own little kind of balcony area at the back of the back of the ferry. A full queen size bed. I'm like, oh, I didn't remember doing that. But okay, this, this works great. So that was really nice. Just to be able to relax and, you know, go to the eater and get something to eat.

Laura [00:28:45]:

It was a really smooth, great weather. Smooth sailing on that. Not a problem. Got off at Portsmouth and they're doing some work at the docks at the Portsmouth. So we actually, they actually drove buses onto. After the cars got all unloaded off the ferry, drove buses on there for us to take that to the area where we caught our taxi. They couldn't get us directly there. So yeah, then we.

Laura [00:29:10]:

We got a tax there again. We took the train from Portsmouth to Southampton and then actually stayed. And in Southampton we stayed at the White Star Hotel. So a lot of Titanic memorabilia and stuff in there, which was wonderful. We walked around a little bit that afternoon and then got up the next morning to get on the cruise.

Tracy Collins [00:29:31]:

And how long did it take you to cruise back?

Laura [00:29:33]:

Seven Nights.

Tracy Collins [00:29:34]:

Wow.

Laura [00:29:35]:

Wow.

Tracy Collins [00:29:36]:

Oh, yep. Yeah, I bet that was pretty special.

Laura [00:29:39]:

It was weather wise. We were so fortunate. The entire time we were in England and in France, we never had rain. It was beautiful weather. We were very fortunate. A little bit of rough seas the first couple of days across a bit it was remnants of Hurricane Aaron coming across the Atlantic. But after that it just, it was fine. And you know, after being gone and going, even though we didn't push ourselves, it was nice.

Laura [00:30:06]:

Like we're just not doing much of anything. Yeah, we're just gonna relax and we, you know, did a few of the, you know, a couple of shows, went to some lectures. You know, one thing I mentioned earlier about we did pack way too much and part of it too. And we know this wouldn't be every trip, but we had one duffel bag just with our extra fancy clothes for the cruise with Cunard. They are a little bit more, you know, a little bit dressier than a lot of cruises and stuff. And we knew that that was, you know, kind of the fun of it. So we obviously wouldn't pack that way every time we go on a trip. But we did do one of the formal nights which was fun.

Laura [00:30:44]:

It's just not, not something that we typically do. So it's fun to dress up a little extra and do something fun and special. And so yeah, we just took in the shows. There was actually one lecturer, guest lecturer that we happened to meet in one of the lounges. He just sat down next to us. My husband had his Beatles T shirt on. This gentleman had a Beatles hat on. Got to talking, he found out was one of his guest lecturers.

Laura [00:31:07]:

He was doing things on musicians and musical history. He had done Buddy Holly, he was doing, he did one on Elvis and he was going to be doing one on the Beatles. So we got to talk a lot. He was in Liverpool for Beatles week. We missed that by a week. But he was there and told him about staying at 25 Upton, which he thought was very cool. And when he actually did his lecture a couple of days later, he actually did a shout out to us when he showed George Harrison the famous picture of him holding his guitar outside of 25 Upton. And he's like, yeah, where my friends Todd and Laura stayed.

Laura [00:31:41]:

Lucky them. So that was kind of a extra little cool bonus.

Tracy Collins [00:31:44]:

Oh, that's really cool. I love that. That's just, those are just amazing stories to hear that, you know, you didn't plan it, but just something like that happening and being able to like say to the guy, guess what? We've just stayed. I mean, that's amazing. That's fantastic. And I love the fact that just having that seven days to just. Just say chill out on the. On the way back as well.

Tracy Collins [00:32:02]:

And I know. I knew when you mentioned about having too much luggage on the train that it was because. I knew because I know when people go on cruises there's a kind of expect. You've got to do the dress. Yeah. And haven't. I've actually got a friend that's just done the same thing. She was over there, I think she's eight weeks.

Tracy Collins [00:32:18]:

And they, they had a few cruises and, and. And she was taking trains all around Italy and France and I was like, oh, Natalie, their luggage. And she said, but I've got. We've doing all these cruises, I have to look nice. So I know it give me a bit of a. Kind of a. Yeah. Bit of a stress with it, with the luggage.

Tracy Collins [00:32:35]:

We'll swing back and talk a little bit about kind of your accommodation and food and the kind of logistics things because. I know, I know. Find out about kind of like the highlights of places you stayed and what you ate and stuff like that. So I know you stayed in Quite a few VRBOs. How did they go? Were there any particular kind of ones? You kind of went, oh, this is really nice. Or they're all good.

Laura [00:32:57]:

Yeah. Actually, we were very fortunate that all in Liverpool, London and in Cannes, they were all through vrbo. Communication was wonderful with everybody. It was very smooth. If we had any kind of glitches, we can message them. And they were great, you know, about getting back to us in Paris. Obviously we stayed at a hotel and again, it was just a small boutique hotel, which was wonderful and they were actually great to work with. So my husband is a diabetic, so we traveled with insulin.

Laura [00:33:33]:

And so I have a little trap. We've got a travel thing that has. Something has to be frozen though, for the inside of it to keep stuff cold. And so they were wonderful. They put it in their own little fridge freezer for us all off, you know, when they're at breakfast area. So that was not a problem. So no, they were all wonderful. I would recommend any of the places we stayed at for anybody to stay.

Laura [00:33:54]:

And if we go back, when we go back to London, I have no problem whatsoever staying in the same place.

Tracy Collins [00:33:59]:

Brilliant. Well, I'll get the. I will get the links for those places that you stayed with. I actually do work with VRBO as well, so if anybody's out there thinking about booking, we have got some affiliate. We have an affiliate link for vrbo. So take a look at that and I'll put links to the places that you stayed in as well, Laura, and obviously to. To Upton Green as well, because that'd be cool. Yes.

Tracy Collins [00:34:17]:

Now, talking about talk, I love talking about food. Good. And drinks. Tell me, was. Was there any kind of stand out highlights of things that you ate that you went. Oh, wow.

Laura [00:34:26]:

Yeah. My husband is a. Has totally been now addicted to sticky toffee pudding. That was his absolute favorite thing that he got in. And obviously where you cannot find that since we've gotten home. But that we, you know, we did, you know, traditional fish and chips a couple of

different times. Where we stayed in St. Catherine's dock, there's a restaurant, the Dickens Inn that was right across the.

Laura [00:34:52]:

The way there from us and we ate there a couple of times. Great atmosphere, wonderful food. So, yeah, I think those are probably the ones that really stick out to us. And in France it probably was. We just weren't there. I don't think enough actually. When we stayed in Cannes, we actually went to a local small grocery store and brought stuff and cooked in the VRBO because by that time I think we were kind of done with eating out.

Tracy Collins [00:35:18]:

Oh. But it's always loved. It's like, it's. It's always. So just take that bit out. Right. It's always really good fun just to go and check out the supermarkets anyway. And I mean.

Tracy Collins [00:35:26]:

Yeah, yeah. French supermarkets. I. You have to drag me out because I. Well, I used to live in France, so just looking at the fresh produce and the cheese. Cheese. The cheese. Oh my goodness.

Tracy Collins [00:35:36]:

Like cheese heaven. So that's good. And I love the fact that you mentioned sticky toffee pudding because that, that comes up so often. It seems to be such a favorite with everybody. It really does. So like swinging back, guess the logistics. So obviously Doug helped a lot with the train stuff. So you found the train stuff pretty smooth.

Tracy Collins [00:35:52]:

Pretty good.

Laura [00:35:53]:

Yeah. It really wasn't that bad. And if you had questions everybody was so nice about, you know, I'm pretty sure, hey, I think this is where we need to go out of. This is where we're.

Tracy Collins [00:36:01]:

Yep.

Laura [00:36:02]:

This is where you go, you know, do I scan. Scan things with my phone or you know, do we wait till we get on the train and they check it? That was fine. Again, I mentioned, you know, we didn't have a lot of exposure to subway. We've been in New York City once, so, you know, use the subway there. But the tube system Was don't be afraid of it. Don't. Don't get all anxious about it. It is so easy to use.

Laura [00:36:23]:

And once again, if you have questions, you know, ask a couple times. And one time we were like, nope, this isn't the station you need. You need the next one. And, you know, was great.

Tracy Collins [00:36:32]:

So.

Laura [00:36:33]:

And we just used our smartphones and did tap.

Tracy Collins [00:36:36]:

Yeah.

Laura [00:36:37]:

For paying. And it worked great.

Tracy Collins [00:36:39]:

It's very easy. And Doug's actually just being over because. Well, I know when this is. He's actually there at the moment when I'm recording this podcast, but by the time this podcast comes out just before Christmas, so they've been back and he'll be making lots of YouTube videos to show. To show a lot of this as well. And he's doing a lot. He's actually doing a lot at the moment of kind of London too. You know, Canterbury or London Oxford, London to Windsor.

Tracy Collins [00:37:01]:

And he's doing all that to kind of show just so you can get that, so you kind of can visualize it and also kind of how to use the. The Tube and stuff like that, because it's. It is actually really easy. But we also know that if you're not used to that system and getting trains, it can. It can feel a bit scary because you don't know what you don't do. And that's. That's the scary thing, isn't it? So overall, logistically, everything, you kind of paced it well. You kind of.

Tracy Collins [00:37:24]:

Yep. There's nothing. You would kind of go back and change it.

Laura [00:37:26]:

Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:37:27]:

Never. Yeah.

Laura [00:37:28]:

Didn't miss. Did miss a TR or any. Yeah, we were very fortunate in life and it was great.

Tracy Collins [00:37:33]:

Oh, you had. So is it really well planned trip? I know you planned it, you know, a long way out. You really knew what you were doing and, you know, you have the consult and everything. Was there a part of the trip that just exceeded your expectations of what you had? And I know you loved it all.

Laura [00:37:49]:

Yeah, I mean, actually, before we were to thread, I was going through the questions with my husband. I'm like, I'm just. I'm kind of struggling with this. And then all of a sudden it comes of dawn on both of us. Not something that exceeded as far as what we had planned. However, there was one particular medication that I grabbed the partial filled bottle and not a

full bottle of one of my husband's medications. And so he was going to be short. And so I was.

Laura [00:38:18]:

I'm Googling, you know, like, you know, what are our options? And, you know, is It's a fairly common medication. It's not like it was, it wasn't a controlled substance or you know, anything like that. And you know, I said like, yeah, sometimes local, you know, GPS might be able to help you out. And the flat we were staying at in London, there was a GP office in that building. So we actually went down there, I explained the situation. He's like, oh yeah, two blocks over there's this pharmacy, they have a prescribing pharmacist there, went over, explained the situation, showed the original prescription bottle, he said, no problem, have a seat. And within 15 minutes we had a 28 day supply and paid 35 pounds.

Tracy Collins [00:38:57]:

That's amazing. That's so good.

Laura [00:38:58]:

It was, yeah. So again, not something that obviously we planned but so exceeded how easy it was and how helpful everybody was and it, you know, it made a big difference. You know, this Medicaid could have made the rest of the trip not nearly as fun.

Tracy Collins [00:39:16]:

Yeah, it's good to know that.

Laura [00:39:17]:

Yeah, without it.

Tracy Collins [00:39:19]:

Yeah, it's good to know like things like that that you can, you know, that you managed to solve it and people helped you and you got to, got it all done and dusted and, and it didn't become a big, big issue. So that's really good. So I'm, I'm, it's lovely to hear that. And they are very good. The, the chemists and the pharmacists in the UK pop in and always, you can always ask them stuff. We, yeah, they're really, really helpful. So I don't know like there's just, just, there's lots of big chemists all over the UK so it's not a problem that you will find one to go and if you've got an issue. Same with dentists.

Tracy Collins [00:39:50]:

I've had to go and have an emergency dental care when I was in Edinburgh a few years ago and just luckily where we were staying they gave me a number and later on that day I went in, obviously I've travel insurance. I claimed it back on travel insurance but it was all sorted because it could have been pretty big problem. So antibiotics was all given and it was all sorted. So again travel insurance is, is really good when the big things like that happen.

Laura [00:40:14]:

Yes, yes. Because I even asked us, you know, do you want a receipt for your travel insurance? Which I like, I appreciate it but I'm like, it's 35. Yeah, no, it's fine. Yeah, it's cheaper than what we would have paid for it actually with our co pay in home.

Tracy Collins [00:40:26]:

So right So I always end the podcast with the same question. You'll know what's coming up now, but what would be your one piece of advice for someone planning their UK adventure?

Laura [00:40:36]:

You do a consultation and just don't overpack your days. Just enjoy being there. You know, even just if it's just walking around and taking in the scenery, that's okay. You don't have to see everything.

Tracy Collins [00:40:50]:

Yeah, you can always come back. You can always go back. It's, it's, it's going to be there. So definitely. Yeah. In fact, I would say don't plan to just go once because you. So much to do and see. You will want to go back again.

Tracy Collins [00:41:03]:

But Laura, it's been such a joy to speak to you again and I'm, I know next year we'll, we'll catch up for the 200th episode, so that's going to be good. So you then get your thinking cap on to see which are you going to be your favorite episodes, because you're going to have 200 to choose from this time. That's right.

Laura [00:41:17]:

I'm going have to go back and, and do some listening.

Tracy Collins [00:41:20]:

I know it's going to be, it's going to be a lot, but yeah, thanks so much for coming on and, and filling us in.

Laura [00:41:25]:

Oh, thanks for, for asking. This has been great.

Tracy Collins [00:41:28]:

Oh, no, brilliant. Well, thanks so much, Luke.

Laura [00:41:30]:

Laura, thank you.

Tracy Collins [00:41:33]:

Thank you for tuning in to this week's episode of the UK Travel Planning Podcast. As always, show notes can be found@uktravelplanning.com if you've enjoyed the show, why not leave us feedback via text or a review on your favorite podcast app? We love to hear from you. And you never know, you may receive a shout out in a future episode. But as always, that just leaves me to say, unless. Until next week, happy UK Travel Planning.