



Highlights of my trip to London

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The last time I traveled to Europe, I was with my college roommate and her sister and carrying all of my belongings in a backpack on my back. Last week I was in the United Kingdom with my family and happy that luggage was involved this time around. However, I did carry a stylish Northface crossbody

bag that my friend Angela let me borrow. You can see part of it in this picture of me with the Italian guy dressed in British flag attire.

We booked a Trafalgar tour called Real Britain. We started in London, worked our way up to Edinburgh, Scotland and then traveled back down to London. We stopped in several different cities: Bath, Bristol, Chester, Llangollen which is in Wales, Grasmere, Gretna Green, Alnwick, York, and Stratford-upon-Avon. I felt there was a nice balance of free time and scheduled time with our group.

Our tour guide Emma was from Scotland and now lives in Rome. She gave us lots of historical background on the places we visited as well as a few laughs with her pronunciations of words such as canaries. Someone thought she said Canadians. You had to be there. There was also a nice mix of people in our group. There were US citizens, Australians, a Canadian, and two couples from South Africa. Overall, I was happy with our tour and would do it again.



On any given day over 300 languages are spoken in London. The city reminded me a lot of New York City except with more ornate buildings, cathedrals, history and diversity of people. We decided to

spend a few days in London before our tour started. We were really glad we did because there is so much to see that the tour doesn't cover. I took over 700 pictures on our trip so instead of trying to show you everything, I'm starting with London. I will share a few more pictures in other posts so you have a bigger picture of the United Kingdom. After several days in London, I was ready to get out of the hustle and bustle of the city and see some of the beautiful countryside. I think we rode on every type of transportation during our trip. We took the city bus, the underground subway, taxis and train. I'm not sure who was more thrilled, me or my husband that he didn't have to drive.

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One of our first

stops was Harrods department store. This isn't your average department store. It spans several blocks and is a high end department store. The ground floor has a food hall which is unlike anything I've ever seen before. As you can see in my photos they sell anything from pastries to shellfish. Upstairs they also have an Italian restaurant, an ice cream place and cafe (those are the few eating places I recall). We had tea and scones with clotted cream and jam in the tea room. I

couldnâ€™t leave England without partaking in tea time.

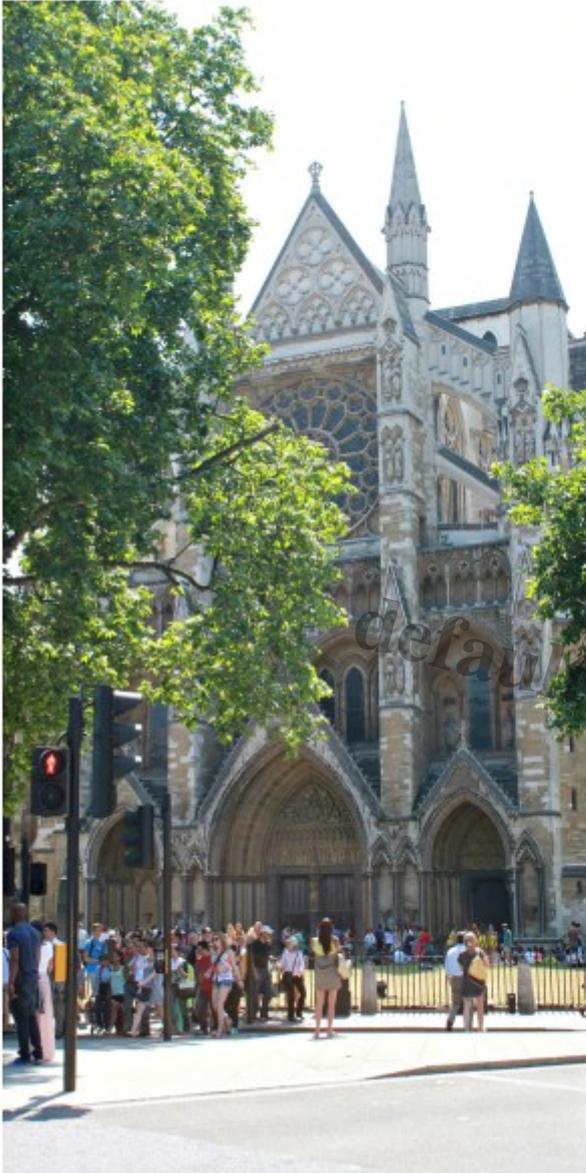
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My kids one request was that we go on the London Eye. The best way I know how to describe it is that is like a huge ferris wheel in which you ride around in capsules. It takes about a half hour to go all the way around. These are a few photos I took from our capsules. The view was spectacular!



The London Eye is located by Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. I learned that Big Ben is actually the name of the bell inside the clock tower. The tower is named the Elizabeth Tower after Queen Elizabeth II. Originally I posted it as the Victoria Tower which is what I thought our guide told us.





We went to a service called Evensong at Westminster Abbey. The boys choir sang part of the service and an ambassador from the Bahamas said one of the readings. There have been many royal wedding ceremonies held here including Prince William and Duchess Catherine. Originally I gave Catherine the title of Princess which I've since discovered is not correct. Something else I learned is that family lineage and titles are very important to the British so I've made the correction.



Buckingham Palace is the Queen's place of residence. We saw the changing of the guard and learned that if the Royal Flag is waving that means the Queen is at home. If the British Flag is up she's away. Unfortunately her Majesty wasn't at home.



Trafalgar Square is a happening place. These are a few photos of us posing on the square.





St Paul's Cathedral is a sight to be seen! We did a self guided audio tour of the cathedral which was extremely interesting. The bottom floor is a crypt where many famous names in history have been buried. Prince Charles and Lady Diana were married in this cathedral.



This is one of the many London Bridges. I hope youâ€™ve enjoyed my little glimpse of London.
Cheers!

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