

June 2024 London and Scandinavia Trip Report

London Lodging (Part 1): For the first three nights of our vacation, we stayed at the *Kimpton Fitzroy* ([Kimpton Fitzroy London | Luxury Hotel in Bloomsbury near Russell Square](#)). This hotel is consistently ranked as one of the best hotels in London by Travel & Leisure magazine. It is a bit of a splurge hotel, but since the trip was for my birthday, I didn't mind paying more. The hotel is gorgeous, and the service was top-notch from check-in to check out. The Kimpton Fitzroy is about a three-minute walk from the Russell Square tube station (Piccadilly line), so it is quite convenient to get to and from Heathrow. I will note that the Russell Square station does not have an escalator, so you do need to take the elevator to and from the platform (the stairs are marked for emergency only). Like all other Kimptons, there is a wine social hour from 5-6 pm.

Copenhagen Lodging: In Copenhagen we stayed at the *Andersen Boutique Hotel* ([Home - Andersen Hotel \(andersen-hotel.dk\)](#)), which I found on TripAdvisor after reading a lot of reviews. I could not have been happier with this hotel! From the moment we walked in the door, the service was so friendly and attentive. Breakfast is included and the spread was nice – we took advantage of having breakfast most mornings. The hotel does a wine happy hour each day from 5-6 pm (the first glass of wine is free and then each glass after is ½ priced). The hotel is about a four-minute walk to the Copenhagen Central Train Station and about 6 minutes to Tivoli Garden, making this a superb location.

Stockholm Lodging: In Stockholm, we stayed at the *NOFO Hotel* ([NOFO Hotel Located at Södermalm, Stockholm - Unique Design](#)) which is a boutique hotel that I also found on TripAdvisor. We were about a five-minute walk from a T-bana station and were only two stops to Gamla Stan. There were lots of bars and restaurants near us, although we only went to one bar which we adopted as our “neighborhood” bar for drinks and Euros watching. The shower in our room was quite large (dual rain showers), which was nice. This hotel also included a free daily breakfast, and the spread was large and varied. There is a lovely outdoor patio to have breakfast in the morning or a glass of wine after a day of sightseeing.

London Lodging (Part 2): For our last three nights, we stayed at *Hotel Indigo* in Kensington ([Kensington hotel: Hotel Indigo London - Kensington \(ihg.com\)](#)). We were a two-minute walk to the Earls Court tube station (District and Piccadilly lines) with lots of pubs and other food options nearby. The hotel is in a beautiful row house, and our room was very nice. Staff was friendly and gave us drink vouchers for the bar as my welcome amenity, which we redeemed one evening before going back to our room. The location was convenient for getting around London and for going to Heathrow.

Departure Day: We had a 10:25 pm flight from Washington Dulles to London Heathrow, so we were able to work all day from home, do last minute chores, and pack before heading to the airport via metro. There was no line at the bag drop shortcut for United, so we quickly dropped off our bags, sped through security, and started the long trek to the Polaris lounge. We decided to have dinner in the restaurant in the lounge, which was just OK. I think I will keep to the buffet for the future. Our flight boarded late (apparently cleaning the plane took a lot longer than expected), and then we had to deplane due to a mechanical issue. We took off about 90 minutes later than scheduled, so we were happy that we had declined meal service and ate beforehand. I had a glass of wine while watching *Friday* and eventually fell asleep. The lay flat seats were especially clutch on this flight! John and I chatted after the trip and decided that we probably won't do such a late flight again just in case there are issues (I seriously thought at one point we were not going to take off that evening).

Day 1: After landing in London, John and I went through passport control (super easy and quick as U.S. passports use the same line as British and EU ones), got our bags, and took the Piccadilly line to Russell Square. Our hotel room was not ready when we checked in, so we left our bags and walked around the

corner to the **Friend at Hand** pub ([The Friend At Hand Pub Restaurant in Bloomsbury \(greeneking.co.uk\)](http://TheFriendAtHandPubRestaurantinBloomsbury.greeneking.co.uk)). We met friendly Americans at the table next to us and chatted about the concert they were going to (not Taylor Swift!) and the baseball game we were attending. We headed back to the hotel, got our room, unpacked, and then headed down to the wine social hour. The area the social hour is held in is a bit hidden, but gorgeous. Once done there, we headed out for dinner at **Mercato Mayfair** ([Mayfair - Mercato Metropolitano](http://Mayfair-MercatoMetropolitano)), which I fully admit I knew about because of Instagram. It is a food hall in a deconsecrated church, so a beautiful venue. We each got a pasta dish and beers. Unfortunately, the small roof terrace was full, so we couldn't sit out there. After dinner, we headed back on the Tube for a round of pints at the **Marquis Cornwallis** pub ([The Marquis Cornwallis Pub & Restaurant in London, Greater London \(themarquiscornwalliswc1.co.uk\)](http://TheMarquisCornwallisPub&RestaurantinLondon.GreaterLondon.themarquiscornwalliswc1.co.uk)) before heading back to the hotel for lights out.

Day 2: We were up early to head to Paddington Station to take the train to Windsor for the day. You do have to change trains in Slough for an easy and quick ride to the Eton/Windsor Central station. The walk to the castle is only about 5-6 minutes from the station – you cannot get lost due to signage and crowds. We had 10 am timed tickets (highly recommend pre-booking tickets as the queue to purchase that day was very long). We visited St. George's Chapel first (burial site of Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, Princess Margaret, George V, George VI, Jane Seymour, and King Henry) – gorgeous and full of history. After the chapel, we made our way to the actual castle to go through the rooms. After our time at the castle, we sought out lunch and ended up at the **Prince Harry Pub** (lol) ([The Prince Harry Windsor – A traditional pub serving great food in the heart of Windsor \(princeharrywindsorpub.com\)](http://ThePrinceHarryWindsor-AtraditionalpubservinggreatfoodintheheartofWindsor.princeharrywindsorpub.com)) which was actually quite tasty and had very friendly service. We then made our way to the water for our two hour boat cruise ([French Brothers Boat Trips - Windsor 2 hour round trip - BOOK ONLINE](http://FrenchBrothersBoatTrips-Windsor2hourroundtrip-BOOKONLINE)). We did the downstream option that left at 2 pm. It was nice, but not my favorite of the boat cruises we have done on vacation. You do get pretty views of Windsor Castle and other parts of the town though. We headed back to the train station after the cruise because we had tickets for a play in London. After getting a round of beers at **The Garrick Arms** pub ([The Garrick Arms Pub Restaurant in Charing Cross \(greeneking.co.uk\)](http://TheGarrickArmsPubRestaurantinCharingCross.greeneking.co.uk)), we headed to the Wyndham Theatre to see *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (written by Eugene O'Neill and considered his best work). It was the final evening of the play and starred Bryan Cox and Patricia Clarkson. It was beyond excellent! We ended the night back near the hotel with a round of beers at Friend at Hand pub.

Day 3: The whole reason for our European trip in June! We slept in, got ready, and left the hotel to head to London Stadium (home of West Ham United for any Premier League fans) for the Mets vs Phillies game! John got me the tickets for Christmas since I am a lifelong Mets fan. We met so many fans of both teams on the Tube, so it made the ride a lot more fun. We ate lunch at **Bat & Ball** ([Bat & Ball • East London's mecca of Ping Pong, Live Sport and Events \(thebatandball.com\)](http://Bat&Ball-EastLondon'smeccaofPingPong,LiveSportandEvents.thebatandball.com)), which is the closest I have ever seen to an American sports bar overseas. After lunch, we still had time before we needed to head to the stadium, so we had a round of pints at **Tap East** ([Home | Tap East](http://HomeTapEast)). It was a nice space full of fans inside and out. We then headed down the road to the stadium (you honestly cannot miss it) for the baseball game. I have a picture of one of the food stands and it is called "American Street Food", lol. John did awesome and got us amazing seats about six rows off the field behind the Mets dugout (John's parents spotted us on TV several times!). The Mets won in dramatic fashion (of course) which made the experience all the better. After the game we headed back to Bat & Ball to watch the Formula One race before heading back toward the hotel. We finished the night with a round of drinks and snacks at Friend at Hand pub (it really was our "neighborhood" bar for our time in London!).

Day 4: Time to head to Copenhagen! We took the Tube to Kings Cross and then the Thameslink to Gatwick Airport. It was a little long, but much cheaper than the Gatwick Express. We flew Norwegian Air to Copenhagen. Check-in at Gatwick was a bit disorganized and confusing, but once we understood it, it

was fine. We enjoyed final London beers before boarding our uneventful flight. Passport control in Copenhagen was a bit slow, but we were in no rush. We activated our Copenhagen Cards, gathered our bags, and took the 15-minute train into the city. Our hotel was a quick walk from the station. We were hungry after unpacking, so we walked to **Warpigs** ([Warpigs - BBQ & brewery in the heart of Copenhagen](#)) for some nosh and beers – very cool space and I wish we would have had time to go back. We then walked back to the hotel for their social hour. We ended up chatting with a lovely couple from Florida who is currently traveling full-time. After our glasses of wine, we walked over to **Tivoli Gardens** ([Tivoli Gardens - Tivoli](#)), which was included on the Copenhagen Card. We had dinner at **Mikkeller Faergekroen** ([Mikkeller Færgeskroen](#)) restaurant (very charming and we ate outside on their large patio) and then followed the music to where we got to see the send-off festivities for the Danish men's soccer team for the Euros!! John found a picture a day or two later and we were like "we were there!!". Little things like that remind me of how cool traveling is. We walked around a lot (I don't do rides), bought a Christmas ornament at a shop, got final beers, and then headed back to the hotel for lights out.

Day 5: My 42nd birthday!! This was a very "Melissa" day because it included a lot of my favorite activities. We started with breakfast at the hotel and then walked to meet our bike tour of the city with **Bike Mike's Copenhagen** tours ([Bike Mike Tours – ride on! Copenhagen \(bikecopenhagenwithmike.dk\)](#)). I highly recommend it, especially if you are only in Copenhagen for a short time. You hit the highlights of the city, and it also provides a good overview of the city. Mike also gives a lot of food recommendations! Most of our tour group were Americans – I think the youngest rider was probably 12 or 13 so definitely a good activity with older kids. We did get to see the Guards marching to Amalienborg Palace for the changing of the guard (we didn't watch it). Our tour ran a little late, but we still had plenty of time to head to the water for our canal boat tour with **Hey Captain!** ([» #1 rated Copenhagen canal and boat tour | Hey Captain](#)) The boat tour was led by an American (well actually Danish-American) and everyone in the tour group was American. We saw lovely sights and had a very nice, chill afternoon on the water – exactly what I wanted on my birthday! After the boat tour, John and I headed back to the hotel to change and have a glass of wine at social hour before walking to **Lidkoeb** ([Lidkoeb](#)) for birthday cocktails. Cool space with excellent cocktails. Afterward, we hopped on the bus and headed to **Restaurant Barr** ([Home - Barr \(restaurantbarr.com\)](#)) for dinner. It is right by the water, rustic, charming, and with excellent food. Highly recommend. After dinner, we capped the night by walking to Nyhavn for beautiful nighttime views and a final round of beers by the water at **Skipperkroen** (luckily there were heaters and blankets so you could sit outside) before heading back to the hotel.

Day 6: Day trip out of Copenhagen! We got up early to catch the train to see **Frederiksborg Castle** ([Frederiksborg - The Museum of National History \(dnm.dk\)](#)). It is an easy trip and covered by the Copenhagen Card (both the castle and the train). We got there right when they opened at 10 am, downloaded their audio guide app, and had a wonderful time walking around the castle and gardens. Since we got there at opening, there were no crowds. By the time we left in the afternoon, it was a lot busier. After the castle, we had lunch by the water at **Café Kik** ([Welcome to Café Kik. - You will find us in Silkeborg & Hillerød \(cafekik.dk\)](#)) which has a really nice view of the castle across the water. After our late lunch, we headed back to the train station to head back to Copenhagen. The only time our Copenhagen Card public transport was checked was on the train back. We saw a guy get kicked off the train for an invalid ticket (I am sure he also got a nice fine). Once back in Copenhagen, we changed, enjoyed another wine social hour, and headed to **Ruby** ([RUBY COCKTAIL CHRONICLES \(rby.dk\)](#)) for cocktails. This had a very cozy vibe and delicious cocktails. After a couple of rounds of cocktails, we headed to **Baest** ([BÆST \(baest.dk\)](#)) for our 8:30 pm dinner reservations. I highly recommend reservations here as we saw multiple people without reservations turned away. We enjoyed multiple courses and left very full. After was a leisurely walk back to the metro station and lights out at the hotel after a long day.

Day 7: After enjoying breakfast at the hotel, we headed out for the **Museum of Danish Resistance** ([Visit the new Museum of Danish Resistance \(natmus.dk\)](https://natmus.dk)). Highly recommend making time for this museum when in Copenhagen. The audio guide is fantastic, and we were there for almost three hours (pretty sure we read and watched almost everything). I didn't really know about Denmark's role in WWII or that they were occupied by the Germans, so this was very educational. After the museum, we just enjoyed spending a couple of hours wandering around Copenhagen. We kept this day light since we had 5:30 pm reservations at **Alchemist** ([ALCHEMIST](https://alchemist.dk)). Reservations are very hard to get and pretty much go immediately when the new dates open. I luckily snagged a reservation and didn't mind it was on the early side. This is one of the most unique, memorable, and expensive dining experiences I have ever had. During the evening you experience about 50 "impressions" – most are food, but some are interactive experiences. Every dollar was worth it because the food and drinks were top notch. You will spend most of your evening in the main dining space which has imagery playing all around you with scenes that change as the night goes on. The presentation of the food for each course was very interesting, although I will say that if you don't want some envelope pushing on both food and presentation, this is not the place for you. From arrival to leaving, our entire experience was about 6.5 hours. We left full so we went straight to bed when we got back to the hotel.

Day 8: Our last day in Copenhagen, so another early morning. After breakfast, we headed to the **National Museum** ([National Museum of Denmark - a collection of museums all over the country \(natmus.dk\)](https://natmus.dk)) for about three and a half hours. The museum is large and impossible to see/read everything on one visit, but I tried. After the museum, we walked to **Christiansborg Palace** ([Christiansborg Palace \(kongehuset.dk\)](https://kongehuset.dk)). We went up in the tower for city views (note: there are not very many stairs for this tower climb – most of it is on elevators except the very last portion and that is maybe 20-25 steps) before heading back down to see the main part of the palace. It's always interesting to see different time periods and personal tastes reflected in European palaces and castles. After exploring the palace, we decided to take advantage of a very sunny Friday late afternoon and wander nearby to sit by the water. We got two rounds of cocktails at **Little Green Door** ([Little Green Door](https://littlegreendoor.dk)) while soaking up sunshine and people watching. Afterward, we walked around the corner to **Lord Nelson** (lordnelson.dk) for some beers before heading around another corner to **The Dubliner** ([Forside | The Dubliner](https://forside.dk)). It was the first match of Euros 2024 (Germany vs Scotland) and we wanted to watch. The pub was quite full, but we snagged a table near the front and had a wonderful evening of food, beers, football watching, and singing along with the cover band. It was a wonderful way to wrap up our time in Copenhagen.

Day 9: Up early for our 8:44 am train to Stockholm. Our train was not direct – it had a connection in Lund. We easily switched trains and had enough time to get sandwiches and waters at a shop in the train station for the ride. The train from Lund to Stockholm had coffee, water, and fruit in our car which was nice. After eating lunch, we got a round of beers from the café car and enjoyed the scenery. We arrived at Stockholm Central Station around 2:30 pm. This is a large and busy station, but the signage is good, so we easily found our way to the metro. We had downloaded the SL app on our phones on the way to Stockholm and purchased a 72-hour ticket (activated upon arrival in Stockholm). Our hotel was only a few stops from the train station, checked in, and unpacked. We had time and it was a sunny day, so we sat outside at **Honey Honey** ([Restaurang Honey Honey Stockholm Välkommen till Restaurang Honey Honey](https://restauranghoneyhoney.se)) near the hotel for a round of drinks before heading to the metro. Dinner was at **Beirut Café** ([Beirut Café, Lebanese passion in Stockholm \(beirutcafe.se\)](https://beirutcafe.se)) which was very good. The food hall it is in was already closed for the evening, but it was still cool to look down at the stands on the main floor. Every dish we ordered was fantastic. We ended our night at **A Bar Called Gemma** ([A Bar Called Gemma](https://abarcalledgemma.se)) for a couple of rounds of exceptional cocktails. We had seats at the bar and talked a lot to the bartenders who really seemed to love engaging with the customers. Highly recommend reservations, especially on a Saturday night. We saw multiple people turned away. Then it was back to the hotel for lights out.

Day 10: Up early to head to Gamla Stan for our first full day in Stockholm! We had a 10 am free walking tour booked with Nordic Freedom Tours ([Free Tour Old Town at 10.00 in English | Free Walking Tour Stockholm \(stockholmfreetour.com\)](https://www.stockholmfreetour.com)). The tour is 90 minutes and meets right outside the Gamla Stan T-bana station. Our guide was born and raised in Gamla Stan, so it was wonderful to get a real local perspective of the area and its history. We lucked out with such a warm and sunny day, so the views were even more beautiful and picturesque. After the tour, we figured since we were right outside the **Nobel Museum** ([Nobel Prize Museum](https://www.nobelprize.se/museum)) we would go in to see it. It is a small museum and even with reading pretty much everything, we were in and out in about an hour at most. I would not go out of my way for this museum, especially if you are short on time in Stockholm. After the museum, we had lunch at **Café Nova** where we could sit outside, look at the water, and people watch. We still had time before our boat cruise, so we popped in for a quick drink at **International Bar** (internationalbar.se/gamla-stan) to give some business to our morning tour guide (she is a bartender there). Then it was time to head to our 2 pm boat cruise. We did the **Under the Bridges of Stockholm** tour with Stromma ([Under the Bridges of Stockholm – Boat Sightseeing Tour \(stromma.com\)](https://stromma.com)). It was so nice out, so we opted for seats outside. This was a mistake. We should have sat inside for better views and for the audio guide. Also, a very large family and friends group ended up sitting outside and decided that singing and playing the guitar was a good idea with absolutely no regard to anyone else around them. That ruined the tour a bit for us. After the boat tour, we walked around to take pictures and then headed to **Lucy's Flower Shop** ([Lucys Flower Shop \(lucysstockholm.se\)](https://lucysstockholm.se)) for 6:30 pm reservations. Since it was a Sunday, it was not overly busy, so we got to talk to the bartender quite a bit (funny note: one of the ladies sitting at the bar for drinks had also been at Gemma's the night before!). This is a dark underground bar and has a totally different vibe than Gemma's. It was good to compare the two, but our edge goes to Gemma's. After a couple of rounds of drinks, we took the T-bana to have dinner at **Omnipollos Hatt** ([Omnipollos hatt](https://omnipollos.se)) for a casual dinner of delicious pizza and beer. We ended the night with a round of beers at Honey Honey on the way back to the hotel.

Day 11: After breakfast at the hotel, we took the bus to Djurgården for a full day of sightseeing. We started at the **Vasa Museum** ([Welcome to the Vasa Museum \(vasamuseet.se\)](https://www.vasamuseet.se)) which a ton of people recommended to us, but admittedly I was still skeptical about a museum dedicated to a ship that sank only a couple of minutes into its one and only voyage. I was wrong! This was fascinating, especially to learn how they raised the ship in the mid-20th century. Do not pass on this museum when in Stockholm! After a few hours, we headed out and made our way over to **Skansen** ([Skansen | The world's oldest open-air museum](https://www.skansen.se)). We spent about two hours walking around, but honestly this was not for us. It definitely seems like a fun place with children (lots of play areas, animals, etc), but just wasn't our vibe. If I could go back, I would skip this and just rent bikes to ride around. Dinner this night was 8 pm reservations at **Portal** ([Portal Restaurant Stockholm](https://portalrestaurant.com)), which was my favorite dinner in Stockholm. We had seats at the bar and got to see parts of the kitchen work. Food was top notch and when we left around 10 pm, it was still light out!

Day 12: Our last full day in Stockholm. After breakfast at the hotel, we took the bus to **City Hall** ([Stockholm City Hall – City of Stockholm \(stadshuset.stockholm\)](https://stadshuset.stockholm)) for 10 am tower climb reservations and then an 11 am tour. The whole tower climb (up and down) is about 35-40 minutes. It's not the hardest tower climb I have done, and there is an elevator that goes part way up for those who need it. The views of Stockholm from the top are incredible and we got lots of amazing pictures. They do tell you when you need to wrap up picture taking and to start heading back down. Once on the ground we had time before our tour, so we took pictures and walked around the outside of the building. Our 11 am tour was very good – the building inside is so pretty and you get lots of good history and other information inside. As someone who works in politics, I always love hearing about government in places I visit. You can only book the tower climb and tour a week out from when you want to visit, so make sure to set a calendar

reminder. After our tour, we took the bus to Gamla Stan as we wanted to go to the **Royal Palace** ([The Royal Palace - Kungliga slotten](#)). On our way up to the Palace, we saw a crowd and heard music – we were right on time for the ceremony in the palace square. As a bonus that afternoon, the Norwegian Royal Guard played to welcome Sweden to NATO. If I had to re-do the order of this day, I would have done the Royal Palace in the morning because the afternoon was full of cruise and bus groups. It was really hard to see things at times. The Palace is huge with tons to see, so you easily can fill a few hours here. After the place, we wandered around Gamla Stan some more and stopped for outdoor drinks at **Café Cronan** ([Cafe Cronan – Gamla Stan – Cafe Cronan – Gamla Stan](#)). The outdoor part was cut short when it started pouring rain. After the rain, we wandered over to **Wirstrom's Pub** ([WIRSTRÖMS - A GENUINE IRISH PUB IN STOCKHOLM \(wirstromspub.se\)](#)), a lively Irish pub where we chatted with some other patrons and watched Euros. We then headed back on the metro toward our hotel and had dinner and drinks at Honey Honey while watching Euros.

Day 13: Up early to finish packing, check out, and head to Arlanda Airport for our flight to London. We took the metro to Central Station and followed signs for the Arlanda Express. After buying tickets, we found out the Express wasn't running, so they directed us into taxis (no extra charge). Understanding Norwegian Air better this time, check-in and dropping our bags was much smoother. We had final Swedish beers at **60 Degree Bar and Brewery** before boarding the uneventful flight to London Gatwick. After collecting bags at Gatwick, we boarded the train to Victoria Station and transferred to the District line to Earls Court. After check-in, we walked around the corner to **The Blackbird** ([The Blackbird - Fuller's Pub and Hotel in Earls Court \(blackbirdearls court.co.uk\)](#)) for lunch, drinks, and Euros watching. We then hopped on the Tube to Temple station for our **Hidden Pubs of Old London Town** with London Walks ([Hidden Pubs of Old London Town Walking Tour \(walks.com\)](#)) led by Andy. During this walk we heard the history of London City, got to see Fleet Street, and visited three pubs – the **Edgar Wallace** ([The Edgar Wallace, London \(edgarwallacelondon.co.uk\)](#)), **Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese** ([Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese Pub and Chop House Fleet Street London \(ye-olde-cheshire-cheese.co.uk\)](#)), and **The Blackfriar** ([Nicholson's Pub in London | The Blackfriar \(nicholsonspubs.co.uk\)](#)). I thought learning the history of the area was fantastic, but the time at the pubs was too short so you could not enjoy them. I thought our Friday night pub walk last year (also with London Walks) was better and more social. After the pub walk, we headed back to the hotel and redeemed our free drinks at the bar before lights out.

Day 14: Day trip out of London to another palace – this time to **Hampton Court Palace** ([Hampton Court Palace | Historic Royal Palaces \(hrp.org.uk\)](#)). We took the Tube to Wimbledon and switched to the train to the palace. The walk to the palace is quite easy from the train station, but there is also a bus if needed. I highly recommend buying tickets in advance, especially if visiting in the summer. We queued before the opening time and were the fourth and fifth people let in. Make sure to stop in the shop once inside for the audio guide, which was very informative. There is so much to see – Fountain Court, Henry VIII's kitchens, the Great Hall, the Chapel Royal, and the Gardens to name a few. I have read all the Tudor historical fiction books by Philippa Gregory, so I was very excited to finally visit Hampton Court Palace. We took a break for lunch at one of the cafés on the property before continuing our exploration. You can easily fill a day at Hampton Court. We were there until mid-afternoon but then headed back to London because the England vs Denmark Euros match was at 4 pm and we wanted seats in a pub! We watched the match at **The King's Head Earl's Court** ([Fuller's Pub and Restaurant in Earl's Court \(kingsheadearls court.co.uk\)](#)), watched the next match, moved to sitting at the bar for dinner, and ended up talking to a Canadian now living in Luxembourg and then an American guy from Connecticut who was in London with his family for the Taylor Swift concert. It was so much fun and an absolute gem of a day!

Day 15: We were up early to get on the Piccadilly line to head to Arsenal! We had tickets for the **Emirates Stadium** tour ([Arsenal Emirates Stadium Tours - Buy your tickets now | Arsenal Direct](#)), which is

a behind the scenes view of the stadium including the home and away locker rooms, Diamond Club, players entrance, home dugout, press conference rooms, and the pitch. John and I are huge Arsenal fans and saw a game last year when we were in London. I had done the stadium tour before in 2019, but it was so fun to do with John and just see how happy he was. One of my favorite pictures of our trip is the two of us pitch side at Emirates! After the stadium tour, we visited the small museum (included in our ticket price), bought our nieces outfits at the Team Shop, and then headed back to the hotel to drop off our purchases. We changed and then headed on the Tube to **Claridge's** for afternoon tea ([Traditional Afternoon Tea: Mayfair, London - Claridge's \(claridges.co.uk\)](#)). The hotel is gorgeous and the room where the tea is held is magnificent. We opted for the tea with champagne (of course) and filled up on sandwiches, scones, and desserts (we got two rounds of sandwiches!). Highlight of the tea: sitting next to Kathy and Rick Hilton!! As a reality show and celebrity gossip lover, I was in shock and amazement. Kathy is just as odd in real life as she appears on TV. After tea, we decided a long walk was in order. We walked to Buckingham Palace so John could see that (we didn't do that last year), took pictures, and continued to walk up to Trafalgar Square. We stopped in **The Admiralty** ([The Admiralty - Fuller's Pub and Restaurant in Trafalgar Square \(admiraltytrafalgar.co.uk\)](#)) for a pint before continuing our walk to the Tube. We headed to **The Aviary** rooftop bar ([Aviary London | Rooftop Restaurant & Terrace Bar | Finsbury Square](#)) for 7 pm cocktail reservations, which again is a place I found on Instagram. The outdoor portion of the rooftop space was full, so it was very helpful we had reservations. Our cocktails were fine, but nothing memorable. We really were paying for the view. We headed back toward the hotel, stopped for some pints at The Blackbird, and then it was lights out.

Day 16: Final day of vacation. We got to sleep in, take our time packing, and checked out as late as we could. We did a final round of pints at The Blackbird before getting on the Piccadilly line to Heathrow. We had a 4:40 pm flight to Dulles, so we had plenty of time to drop bags, get through security, and enjoy the United lounge. Lunch, desserts, and drinks were had before we boarded our flight home. No flight issues and we got back to our apartment easily to unpack and sleep!

Other Notes/Tips:

- Definitely get the Copenhagen Card! There are two options – one with 40+ attractions plus hop on/hop off bus and another (Discover) with 80+ attractions and unlimited public transport. We took a lot of public transport (train, metro, and bus) so the Discover card was a better option for us. On the Copenhagen Card website ([Copenhagen Card](#)), you can price things out to see a) if a card is a good option, and b) which one.
- Do not activate your Copenhagen Card until you are ready to use it! The timer starts upon activation.
- If you get the Copenhagen Discover card that includes public transport, you do not tap in/out of stations. You simply have to show the QR code if asked. For the bus, some drivers looked at our code and some didn't.
- For Copenhagen, dress in layers and pack for all seasons! I wore sweaters, a light jacket, sleeveless, short sleeves. The weather was unpredictable and there was rain almost every day.
- Copenhagen and Stockholm are pretty much cashless. We only took some money out in Copenhagen as our bike tour had to be paid in cash. Looking back, I should have taken money out in the U.S. and paid in dollars (it was an accepted currency by the bike tour company).
- In London, you don't need an Oyster card for public transport – you can use your phone or credit card to tap in and out. However, my boyfriend ran into multiple problems using his phone and had to switch to his CC. I, however, had no problems with my Oyster card 😊 I have read on the Rick Steves travel forum that there might be a monetary limit per day on phone/CC taps, but don't quote me on that.