

Travel Time — TOURING LONDON WITH CHASE & BUD

Ah, London...what better destination for our first post-COVID foreign travel! We've been there a few times, and just love the city. The flight times and schedules from the east coast are manageable. The Brits are organized about travel restrictions and requirements. Even better, our grandson, Brayden, is studying at the London School of Economics for the year. Surely, he'd want his grandparents popping across the pond to say hi! As a bonus, British friends, Rob and Catherine, said they'd join us and show us some of "their" London.

It felt wonderful to start the booking process: looking at flight options, perusing London maps, checking out accommodations in the Bankside area near Brayden's housing on the south bank of the Thames, and figuring out how we would communicate as well as navigate the city.



November 13th we happened upon the annual Lord Mayor's Show when City of London closes down for a 3-mile-long parade celebrating various mounted guards, military units, corporate floats and more. The first such even was in 1215!



Dickens's Old Curiosity Shop is but a stone's throw from the quite modern London School of Economics campus.



Brit pals Rob Callaway and Catherine Gurney treated us to Remembrance Day, honoring fallen servicemen and women. Dignitaries placed wreaths of poppies at the Cenotaph Memorial in Whitehall. Boris Johnson and Prince William attended, and massive crowds cheered the parades.

Of course, we weren't going anywhere unless we could meet the COVID travel requirements and restrictions – both going to the UK and coming back to the US. We started with the airlines and the arrival process in the UK.

We needed flexibility, so we booked our flights with reward points—we could just yank them back into our account if everything fell apart. We also wanted to give the world enough time to adjust to the virus, so we booked in July for a November 10-17 trip – smart move as by the time November arrived, fully vaccinated US citizens no longer had to quarantine on arrival in the UK and negative COVID tests were no

longer required to board a plane. All we had to do was get a rapid test by day two of arrival in London (see sidebar).

But back to London itself. The city feels much the same as it did when we visited in the late 1990's and 2000's. Traffic is crazy, the little black taxis and red double-decker buses still ply the streets—a combination of ancient cobbled lanes, crazy roundabouts, and wider thoroughfares. The pavement is still painted with reminders that they drive on the other side of the street. Look left, right, left when crossing! Icons like Buckingham Palace, Covent Garden, Trafalgar Square and Notting Hill still draw crowds.



Our TripAdvisor flat in Bankside on the south side of the Thames, had easy access to the trendy Borough Market, full of inns, pubs, shops, historical spots and more – all adjacent to the Thames and its lovely riverside walkway.

The timeless architecture of the palaces, government buildings, and luxurious townhomes and the classic formal gardens and parks were still a comfort. But there are changes too. The London Eye, a 443' tall observation Ferris wheel, now dominates the South Bank of the Thames and is the most popular paid tourist attraction in the city. Modern glass and steel buildings are more prominent, and construction is everywhere. Twenty years ago, you couldn't walk a block without passing a cozy pub. Now it's hard to walk a block that doesn't have an Asian or Middle Eastern restaurant—often "take-aways" and franchises. You still hear the characteristic British accent in all its variations, but you'll also hear a myriad of languages from around the globe.

On previous trips we used maps and guidebooks and I hauled pounds of camera equipment everywhere. Now the cell phone is all you need. Google Maps will instantly locate the nearest museum or restaurant and how to get there via walking, cab, tube, bus, or ferry. One click will bring up the menu and another will place a call. All you need is a functioning cell phone (see sidebar).

As for money and paying for things, Brayden schooled us in "tap to pay." You use your credit card or even a phone app and just "tap" if your card has the RFID symbol. London is fast becoming cashless, even in local restaurants. We were able to tap and pay at local convenience stores and eateries, and Rob and Catherine showed us their city via the now cashless Tube. Get over to a comedy club near Covent Garden? No problem. Have a sunset cocktail at the London Sky Garden or hop a ferry up the Thames to see the famed Cutty Sark? Just tap, tap tap!

Is it time for you to explore London? Even if you don't have the great excuse of visiting family or friends, it's a great first step back out into the world of travel.



The London Underground has been operational since 1890, but now entry/exit turnstiles use "tap and pay" credit cards. Tap in, tap out. Makes an already speedy trip even more efficient.

IF YOU GO

COVID requirements and restrictions dominate entry/re-entry to the UK and USA. Most importantly, they change – sometimes when you are abroad. Keep informed and stay safe.

Begin at www.uk.gov. Subscribe to their daily travel email well before you fly. All arriving passengers need a Passenger Locator Form, which specifies COVID testing within two days of your arrival. Have the tests delivered to your hotel, do the test on arrival, email the results to the testing. Watch the dates – timing is critical!

Pay close attention to airline requirements when booking. If they fly to the UK they will have a link to www.uk.gov. Be sure to fill out the passenger info completely.

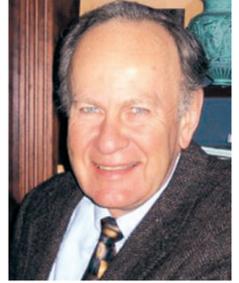
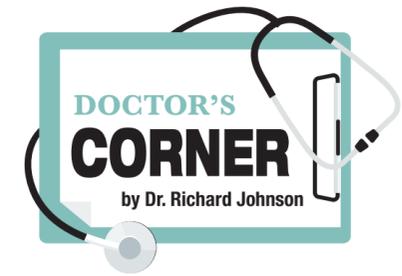
Sign up for VeriFly, a travel app that consolidates your identification and health information. Many airlines now have special online check-in and boarding lanes just for VeriFly users.

While in the UK, monitor your airline for re-entry requirements, especially regarding COVID testing and forms. Requirements changed while we were in London, and we had to scramble!

Consider Global Entry (www.cbp.gov) to speed your re-entry.

Bring your CDC vaccination card (plastic protectors work well) as well as a back-up copy. This is required for most venues and attractions. Get your booster listed.

Decide cell phone access before you go. Call your carrier. Xfinity Mobile has a Global Travel Pass program using your own phone and number. Some US phones accommodate a new SIM card you can buy in London. Or simply buy an inexpensive phone in London.



NATIVE AMERICAN MEDICINE

I am writing this piece in the month of November which is National Native American Heritage Month. I thought it would be interesting to think about the art of medicine when the Native American tribes were flourishing in NH. Before embarking on the medical story, I want to call to your attention to an article by M. Dionne and R. O'Rourke that appeared in the June 2017 issue of the New Hampshire Magazine. (<https://www.nhmagazine.com/paths-to-new-hampshires-native-past/>). This gives a very good survey of New Hampshire's Native history, and I recommend it to you. I learned that the first Native Americans were here about 11,000 years ago. There were several different tribes, but all spoke a form of the Abenaki language. By the late 1600s the Native American population in NH was shrinking because of illnesses such as smallpox and influenza for which the native population had no immunity or treatment.

I suspect that Native American medicine could have been both homeopathic and allopathic. The word Homeopathic has a German origin coming from the Greek homoios (like, of the same kind) and patheia (disease). Homeopathy is a form of complementary and alternative medicine that uses very small amounts of natural substances, which if used in higher quantities may cause disease or symptoms. Allopathic comes from the Greek allos (opposite), and pathos (to suffer). But I am getting off track!

What were the medical treatments available? This quote from Garlow, although somewhat obtuse, gives us some insight. "Healing practices ranged from one group to another tribe, involving numerous gatherings, rituals, and different knowledge of healing, including North America's more than 2,000 indigenous groups. While there were no absolute curing requirements, most tribes accepted that wellness was the manifestation of the spirit and a constant method of remaining strong emotionally, psychologically, and mentally. This power would hold sickness and harm away, preserving harmony with oneself, those nearest to them, the natural world, and the Maker as well." (Native American Herbal Apothecary, 2021, by Aponi Garlow). This work, by a Native American who has a degree in Naturopathy, outlines the use of more than 30 plants for medicinal and religious use.

The list includes such plants as sage, mint, sumac, rosemary, nettle, lavender, garlic, and St. John wort. You and I probably use some of these today! There are others that are less known (at least to me): ashwagandha, uva ursi, black cohosh and claw of the devil. Today we find medicinal application for the aloe vera, salicin from willow bark, (was used to make aspirin, now it is artificially created), morphine from the opium poppy, fox-glove from which digitalis is made, and the use of birch bark to prevent tooth decay and as a natural sweetener. There are many more that may or may not have benefit. Visit any health food store or search alternative medicine products on Amazon and you will be overwhelmed at the products for sale. Some may work but "buyer beware."

I suspect that the Native Americans, who had not yet encountered the diseases of European culture, were healed or cured from the treatments of the medicine man. Once the viruses, bacteria, and spirochetes were introduced by the Europeans there was devastating death wiping out whole tribes. A thought to ponder as we look at this lesson from history... are you content with using alternative medicine to protect you from today's mutant viruses?