

England trip 2025 - Day 16 - May 27th

Rain, Museums and Hakuna Matata: A Perfect Ending

Sixteen days filled with excitement, the history-charged Roman Baths, a spectacular hike along Tintagel's coast, the stunning cathedral in Exeter, fascinating marine life at Plymouth Aquarium and the exuberant flora in Eden Project's tropical dome, all of this combined with the unbelievably perfect weather had already made our trip an unforgettable experience. However, the final chapter of our trip to the southwest of England was yet to be written.

We had already seen most of London's major landmarks, but there was more to be discovered, still: London's outstanding museums and a few non-mainstream attractions. England also finally lived up to its reputation and, after 15 almost entirely dropless days, it started to rain. We were not discouraged, though, and carried on in true explorer fashion, diving into Metropolitan London one last time to visit its two most popular museums: the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum. Apart from their unique exhibits and architecture, they provided one vital and very welcome feature: shelter from the cats and dogs that came down outside.

London is more than its monarchy and museums, of course. It's a vibrant, modern city, constantly growing and evolving, and no matter how often you visit, you always discover something new. King's Cross Station with its symbiosis of modern steel and glass structure and classical Victorian redbrick design was just the beginning. With Platform 9¾ and its Harry Potter Store, the *House of MinaLima* (the creators of much of the artwork used in the Harry Potter series and other movies) in Regent Street, *Forbidden Planet*, a comic megastore, and the *Outernet*, an audiovisual art installation, we got to see London's younger face and, on the side, dozens of food stores offering traditional as well as exotic delicacies.

Eventually however, even this day came to a close with a fantastic performance of the Lion King in the Lyceum Theatre, one of the West End's most popular venues. The colourful and ingenious costumes, props and backdrops, the athletic performances of the dancers and the catchy rhythms of well-known tunes like Hakuna Matata and the Circle of Life made Simba's, Timon's and Pumba's adventure a night to remember and a worthy finale for our trip.

Tired but thrilled, we took on the final challenge of getting through the night and to our coach, which was waiting for us near the Millenium Dome. We made ourselves at home in our seats and some of us fell asleep pretty much instantly.

This could have been it, but our way back home, held one final adventure: a ride through the Channel Tunnel, hundreds of feet under the sea - another first for most of us. At about three in the morning we finally found some rest on mainland Europe, while Olaf, our reliable driver, steered us safely through the night and eventually back home to Schnepfenthal.

(The Educators)

