

INSIDER ITINERARY

WHY DO IT YOURSELF?

Sure, you could spend hours researching, planning, and booking a trip – or you could just call in the pros.

On the eve of her 50th birthday, a veteran travel writer hands over the reins to a Virtuoso travel advisor. The trip? A nine-day celebratory London getaway, full of fun indulgences necessary to mark a milestone of this magnitude – and all the details and insights only a Virtuoso advisor can provide.



AIRFARE

A round-trip ticket — in first class, of course — from Atlanta to London via American Airlines. **COST:** 100,000 frequent flyer miles, including 40,000 purchased miles at a cost of \$1,105

ADVISOR SAYS: “For most international flights, we suggest buying coach tickets and using miles for upgrades. It’s normally a better use of your miles, and you’re still earning miles when you fly.”



TRANSPORTATION

Round-trip transport for two from the airport to the hotel in a Mercedes E class. No ordinary taxis here; this trip calls for a sweet ride in a top-of-the-line sedan. **COST:** \$218

Ask your advisor about being met by a chauffeur as you exit the plane; for more, turn to **page 33**.



ACCOMMODATIONS



A deluxe room at the **InterContinental Park Lane**. A former royal residence, it’s certainly fit for a queen on her big day. The trip begins with drinks in the newly refurbished lobby bar. **COST:** \$367 per night

VIRTUOSO VALUE: With a Virtuoso advisor, the hotel will upgrade your room at the time of booking, subject to availability – no hoping for an upgrade at check-in. Plus: Virtuoso guests receive welcome amenities, access to the club lounge, complimentary Internet access, and full breakfast daily.



INSIDER'S TOURS

The trip includes three privately guided tours: a complete overview of London proper, including a Thames River cruise; an in-depth look at Windsor Castle, England’s largest inhabited royal residence; and a walking tour of Oxford, with lunch at a local pub. **COST:** City tour \$451, Windsor Castle \$669, Oxford \$700



Taking tea is a tradition at London’s most iconic hotel, which just reopened after a three-year, \$342 million makeover.



LOCAL FLAVOR



Afternoon tea at **The Savoy** hotel. For this occasion, we upgraded to Champagne tea service featuring a glass of Louis Roederer Brut. **COST:** \$72 per person

ADVISOR SAYS: “I timed the reservation so that the trip would be taken right as the sun is setting.”



A KILLER VIEW

A champagne “flight” on the London Eye, a 40-story-tall observation wheel offering 25-mile views. Package includes priority boarding, a glass of bubbly, and a knowledgeable host to point out all of the sights. **COST:** \$51 per person



PLANNING TIME

A 20-minute visit with our advisor, and a couple of e-mails to finalize the details.



GRAND TOTAL

\$6,202, plus frequent flyer miles. Totally worth every penny and pound.



BOTTOM LINE

The best birthday present of all? Having a skilled advisor handle the logistics of planning the trip.



(WINDSOR CASTLE) JAN SHAW/ALAMY. (LONDON EYE) DON HENRY/ALAMY. (SOLDIER) PETER GREENHALGH (UKPIX.COM)/ALAMY