

My favourite things



Laura Mosedale

Raised in New York City, I worked there after college as a magazine editor and writer. My husband and I lived in Connecticut for six years before moving to London in 1998. We have three adult children, two now back in the US. For the past four years I've been the co-chair of voter registration for Democrats Abroad UK. I'm also on the London Committee of Human Rights Watch and a trustee of the Onslow Neighbourhood Association, an amenity society in South Kensington.

Your best advice to someone just arriving in the UK?

If you're in London, walk around as much as you can. There's no better way to get to know the city and it makes London feel more manageable. Now that we all have smart phones, it's hard to get lost. I used to spend hours wandering around with a dog-eared A-to-Z, asking everyone for directions.

The best place to meet people?

For us, initially, through the schools that our children attended. Some of our closest friends still date from those early days. The Kensington and Chelsea Women's Club was also a good place to start. I've met wonderful people through Human Rights Watch, Democrats Abroad UK, the Onslow Neighbourhood Association and a country walking group.

Your preferred pub, bar and/or restaurant?

Ceru on Bute Street for Levantine food, Patara for Thai on Sydney Street, and The Kensington Creperie on Exhibition Road. I hope they survive the pandemic.

Your favourite place for a UK weekend away?

We have good memories of Calcot Manor in Tetbury, Hotel Tresanton in Cornwall and Cameron House on Loch Lomond in Scotland. Not UK but close: Ballymaloe House near Cork.

The ultimate boutique or clothing store?

For someone who once worked on a fashion magazine, I'm not much of a shopper. But I've found some great pieces at Claudia Sebire on Fulham Road and Sign of the Times, a consignment store on Elystan Street.

The best ice-cream/coffee shop?

Oddono's on Bute Street for gelato.

Your favourite expression you have adopted since being here?

Gobsmacked.

What is London's best kept secret?

Not secrets exactly but often overlooked are the homes of famous Victorians that have been kept much as they were in the 19th century, such as the Carlyle's House, the Charles Dickens Museum, Sir John Soane's Museum and the Linley Sambourne House. I love to wander around these homes and think about the lives of their occupants.

Your most watched British TV show?

Besides David Attenborough's documentaries, I don't watch any regularly. But I'm addicted to Radio 4 Friday Night Comedy.

Your favourite park?

I love the London Wetland Center in Barnes. About 21 years ago, four disused Victorian reservoirs were transformed into a nature reserve and prime bird-watching spot.

Your favourite food to eat in the UK?

Good vegetarian food of any type. I am spoiled for choice!

Your favourite place to walk?

My walking group embarked on one particularly enjoyable long-distance walk: the Thames path, from the Thames Barrier all the way to the source in Kemble. We walked in five to ten-mile segments every two weeks or so, starting in January and ending in November. I often re-walk the stretches of the path near me.

Favourite place to go for some quiet?

St Luke's Gardens on Sydney Street, next to the church where Charles Dickens and Catherine Hogarth were married.

I felt settled when...

We stopped renting and bought our home.

