

INSIDER GUIDE TO SOUVENIR SHOPPING

By thinking a little about your holiday shopping before you travel, you can help to make a difference. Thinking about your choice of holiday souvenir can help to support destination communities and reduce negative impacts on the environment...and you are more likely to choose a unique souvenir that will be valued when you get home!

BEST BUYS...

– HANDCRAFTED JEWELLERY

There are some very on-trend items available overseas that are made by local people, particularly in West African countries like the Gambia. Look out for items made from recycled materials and try to buy directly from craftspeople.

– OIL AND VINE

Look out for small producers who make wines, oils or vinegars, and many other fantastic gifts. Not only will you be supporting the local community, but you'll get a true taste of the country you're visiting that you won't get in your local supermarket.

– ARTS AND CRAFTS

Wood carvings, traditional paintings and handicrafts all make great keepsakes and gifts. Make sure you avoid goods that are made from protected species (e.g. tropical hardwoods) and think about what they will look like on display when you get home.

BEST AVOIDED...

– IVORY GOODS

International trade in ivory is illegal but unfortunately it is a growing problem. Ivory goods are often for sale in many parts of Africa and Asia.

– SEA TURTLE AND SHELL PRODUCTS

Turtle and other shells are often made into jewellery and sold on beaches throughout the Caribbean and other tropical beach resorts.

– T-SHIRTS

These are often imported and will not offer a significant benefit to the local economy. If you do buy a t-shirt, choose one you will wear often, preferably made from organic cotton and one which will benefit a local cause.

– PLASTIC GOODS

Plastics (e.g. key-rings, badges, snow-domes) take millions of years to break down and are a threat to our entire ecosystem. Plus, most plastic souvenirs aren't manufactured locally, they're imported from factories elsewhere.

SAVVY SHOPPING TIPS

– SHOP LOCAL

Seek out the local producers and artisans at markets, villages or even road-side stalls. Many tour operators offer excursions to meet them and see how their goods are made.

– HAGGLE FAIR

Haggling can be fun and part of the culture but just remember, a few pence to us can mean a lot to someone in a destination, so only 'bid to buy'. Think carefully about how much you want the item and would be prepared to pay for it at home.

– BE INFORMED

Don't be afraid to ask questions about where, how and by whom an item was made.

– FIND OUT MORE

You can find destination specific shopping tips within in each of our destination guides. If you're unsure about souvenir specialities in the destination you are visiting, do a little research before you go, or ask around in resort when you arrive.