



TRAVEL Shopping Tips

One of the joys of travel is finding special treasures that evoke vacation memories. But unfamiliar customs, currency, and language can dampen the fun. Some pre-travel preparation and shopping strategies will help you return home with wonderful items that remind you of your travels.

Before You Go:

Do your Homework: Research what your destination is known for and decide what items you'll look for. Find out what similar items sell for.

Go Prepared: If you plan on decorating your home with your travel finds, take measurements, then pop your tape-measure into your travel bag. Bring a fabric swatch, too. If you plan on having a garment custom-made in the Orient, pack a favorite item to copy.

Know the Rules: Consult your travel specialist about Customs, GST and VAT tax refunds, shipping large items, and other import rules. Thailand and China, for example, are known for antiques, but you'll need appropriate paperwork to bring them home.

Shopping Strategies

Local markets offer a rich travel experience, and a treasure trove of shopping options. Here are some bargaining tips to make that a more rewarding experience:



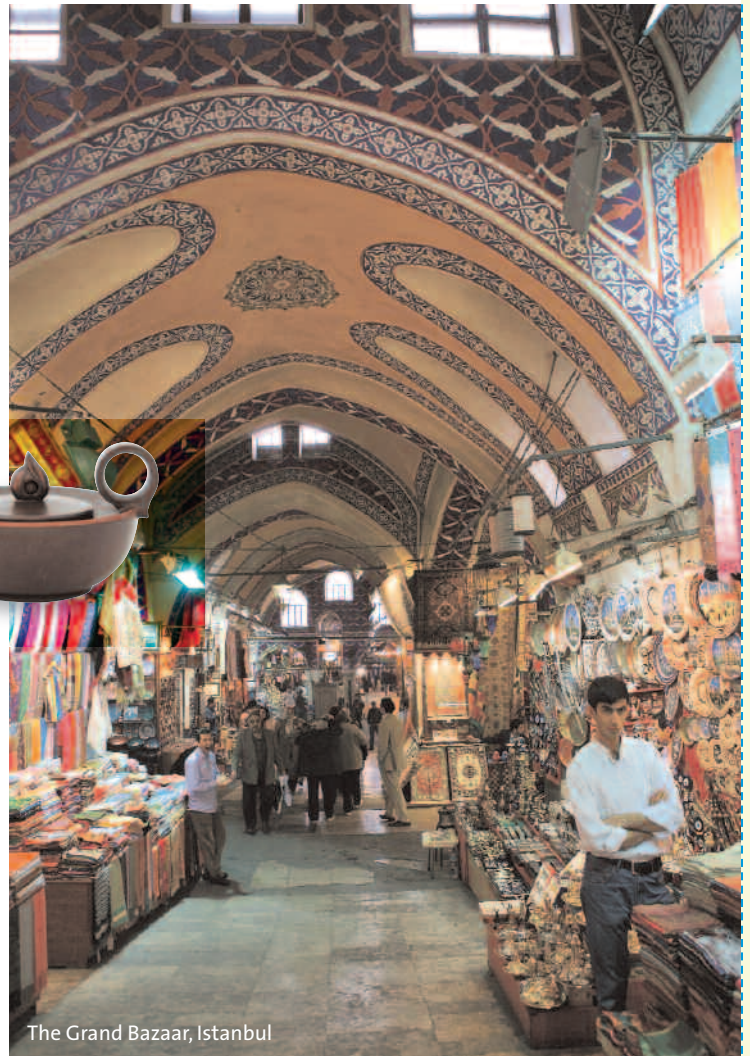
Get the Lay of the Land: Stroll around, take in the colors and the smells of the market – and check prices. Watch how merchants interact with their customers. In Italian markets you'll encounter a hard sell; merchants in Arab

markets often bargain after you've shared a cup of tea.

★ **The Art of the Deal:** Start by offering half the quoted price. Your merchant will tout the value of his handicrafts and bring the price back to almost the original. Split the difference. By the third round your price will likely be about 75% of the original. Instead of haggling again, count out your cash until you reach slightly less than his last price. You should have a deal.



And keep in mind, more important than the exact cost will be priceless travel memories derived from your new-found treasures.



The Grand Bazaar, Istanbul

If the merchant is aggressive, step away. Be respectful and honest by saying, "I like this, but it is not worth that much to me. Thank you for your time." You might find that as you walk away, the merchant has a new price for you.

