

Shopping

WATCH

The Essential Souvenir-Hunting Guide

If you didn't buy something while you were there, did you ever *really* go? We don't think so. Take these tips for snagging fab Caribbean mementos at the very best prices.
By Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon

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Don't Touch

THE FIRST RULE OF SHOPPING LOCAL food and craft markets: If you don't want it, don't touch it! You'll only get the vendor's hopes up and invite possible pressure to buy. But not touching also applies even when you *do* want that woodcarving or basket of spices, because every seller worth her salt knows that if you pick something up, you're much more likely to buy it. If you really want to win at the retail game, play it cool and be prepared to walk away; you'll likely score the best price.

Wheel and Deal

THINK HAGGLING WORKS ONLY AT THE market? Think again. Negotiating skills can come in handy in those fancy duty-free jewelry stores too. In our experience, the price on that diamond ring's tag is just a starting point, so don't hesitate to ask (respectfully) if the merchant can do any better. And before you start wheeling and dealing, make sure you know the item's MSRP where you live, because a duty-free price doesn't necessarily mean it's a deal; sometimes you can do just as well online or at the mall.

Go Local

TRUST US, NO ONE REALLY WANTS A made-in-China figurine or a "No Problem" shot glass. Think beyond the two-for-\$20 T-shirts and consider nontraditional items such as food, signs, art and books by local writers. Check out artisans' studios, browse roadside stands, and don't discount grocery stores and gas stations, which are excellent and inexpensive sources of authentic local snacks that make great gifts for foodies. And don't forget your hotel gift shop — some really do have merch worth buying.



Regret Nothing

LIKE IT? WANT IT? BUY IT! YOU'RE MUCH more likely to regret something you left behind than what you bought. And as far as we're concerned, it's far better to come back with something not quite right than to be sitting on the plane home kicking yourself because you didn't buy that watercolor that caught your eye. So what if you occasionally bring back a dud? That's what eBay's for.

MAKE A SPLASH ▶▶

Designer Trina Turk has created a capsule collection of leisure clothes and swimwear in a limited-edition print inspired by the colors and lifestyle of the Turks and Caicos Islands and one of Providenciales' premier resorts, Grace Bay Club. Snag yours at the hotel boutique or online at trinaturk.com.

