

SHOPPING

Cambodia has a wide range of souvenirs – colourful cotton and silk fabrics, wood and stone carvings, lacquerware, jewellery and much more. Local handicrafts have also been given a boost thanks to various local and NGO schemes set up to give Cambodia's large disabled population and other disadvantaged members of society a new source of income by training them in various traditional crafts. Local markets are often the best place to hunt for collectibles. In the capital, Psar Toul Tom Pong (Russian Market) is the acknowledged place to buy souvenirs, and there are also several excellent markets in Siem Reap. In both towns you'll also find plenty of specialist shops, galleries and hotel boutiques – usually more expensive, though quality is generally significantly higher.

Things to buy in Cambodia:

GOLD, SILVER AND GEMS



Jewelry tends to be simple and unsophisticated, and although locally mined precious stones, especially rubies, sapphires and emeralds, can be make excellent Gems, beware of the fakes. With Cambodia's tourism industry expanding, numerous silver shops have sprung up, selling carved decorative and practical items.

TRADITIONAL CAMBODIAN SCARVES (KNOWN AS 'KRAMAS')



The krama is the typical and ubiquitous locally worn chequered scarf. Krama are made from cotton or silk, are most commonly found in red-and-white or blue-and-white colours, and have a considerable variety of uses.

HAND-WOVEN BASKETS, RATTAN AND BAMBOO



A versatile fibre, rattan is used to produce furniture as well as household items such as baskets, bowls and place mats. Everyday items made from rattan and bamboo and available in the markets can also make interesting souvenirs, including noodle ladles and nested baskets; the latter are used to measure out portions of rice but are also useful back home for storing fruit and vegetables.

WOOD AND STONE CARVINGS



This is one of the handiworks in Cambodia. On a small wood or stone, the locals carved apsaras (nymphs), and a variety of other attractive and decorative items. Wood and stone carvings are available in a wide range of sizes, from small heads of Jayavarman VII, costing just a couple of dollars, to almost life-sized dancing apsaras costing hundreds of dollars.

WEAVING SILK



Weaving Silk, also named Khmer Silk, is sold “like hotcakes” around the country. Cambodia’s tradition of silk dates back to Angkor times, when the Khmer started to imitate imported cloth from India. The soft and beautiful weaving silk is still hand-made, using traditional methods with the pattern dyed into the threads before the silk is woven.