

Among Your Souvenirs...Happy Honeymoon Memories

By Maureen Hart

Some travelers find souvenir shopping one of the highlights of any trip, while others are loathe to waste time or money looking for mementoes for themselves or the folks back home.

There are many different kinds of souvenirs, of course, ranging from kitschy ashtrays emblazoned with “Grand Canyon,” to one-of-a-kind crafts made by local artists.

There are also different kinds of souvenir shopping—that you do for yourself, and the things you try to tuck into your suitcase for family members or the neighbor who watered your plants while you were sunning on a tropical beach.

I am one of those tourists who enjoys poking about in bazaars, boutiques, and beach emporiums, and my home reflects a lifetime of travel. Here are some hints I am happy to impart to the shopping-challenged traveler:

1. Collect art. My walls have etchings, watercolors, and framed photographs from such disparate places as Toledo, Spain; The Vatican; Boston’s Old North Church, and the bridges of Prague. It’s a fabulous way to remember a special place, and if you have the wall space, it’s also a great way to display a souvenir without taking up space that could be used for other things.
2. Buy food. There’s nothing like Scottish shortbread, Belgian chocolate, or Kona coffee. Just be certain that your choice is in compliance with customs regulations. Usually it is only fresh fruit and vegetables, meats and fish that would cause a problem—packaged foods are usually okay. Along the same lines, you can also bring your friends a bottle of the local wine or brandy. The advantage to an edible souvenir is that it need only be stored until someone drinks it or eats it!
3. Splurge on jewelry. Almost every vacation destination has shops or bazaars featuring handmade bracelets, necklaces and earrings which do not cost an arm and a leg. I have bought seashell jewelry in Hawaii and the Caribbean, and blown glass earrings in Stratford-Upon-Avon. In Prague, it got pricier when I fell in love with garnets, the national gemstone, but I still treasure the pendant and earrings I selected. Or, you can go for the really big time and pick up something sparkly at Tiffany’s in New York or Cartier in Paris!
4. Try on clothing. Bring back a fringed shawl from Spain, a sarong from the South Pacific to use as a bathing suit cover up, or a leather bag from Florence. Men can order a tailored suit in Hong Kong. Again, this is a practical souvenir that adds to your wardrobe and does not call for special display space.
5. Stock the kitchen. Buy a pasta server in Siena, a julienne slicer in Lyons, and a paella dish in Seville. Use them over and over to remind you of the



- great meals you had abroad. For even more fun, buy a small cookbook at each stop of your trip.
6. Decorate your house. In addition to art, consider a Turkish rug, a small inlaid wood table from Sorrento, a Murano paperweight from Venice, a ceramic plate from Portugal, or a wooden sculpture from Kenya. Before long, your guests will be asking about all of the interesting mementos which give your home such a worldly atmosphere.
 7. Collect something. I buy Christmas ornaments during my travels—a hula dancer from Honolulu, a Bohemian crystal bell, a Beefeater figure from London, a small Eiffel Tower from Paris. They don't take up a lot of storage space and I take them out once a year and remember the wonderful places I've been. You can collect anything—shot glasses, match covers, spoons, mugs (I collect them, too), CDs of local music, menus, postcards, wine...you name it. Some of these items don't even cost any money. Just select something that you truly like, have room to display, and small enough to pack into your suitcase.
 8. Take pictures. Don't buy anything at all—just aim your camera at scenes that bring you delight. When you come home, transfer them into an online album, print them out for a regular album, or put together a scrapbook including match covers, train ticket stubs, and other paraphernalia collected during your trip.