

MADE IN

the Indian Subcontinent

The Indian Subcontinent is a shopper's paradise. Vibrant textiles and handloomed silks shine out from the most simple stall, tea and spices perfume the many markets while gems, jewels, precious and semi-precious metals are fashioned into intricate jewellery in both India and Sri Lanka. A pair of 'chappals' or traditional leather sandals make a great souvenir, but make sure you get two of the same size!



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- 1 Polished Sri Lankan gems
- 2 Colourful local textiles
- 3 Traditional spice stall
- 4 Tea for tasting and grading

Tea

Tea makes a very popular souvenir, and India is the largest producer in the world. While cheaper loose tea is available from market stalls, it is often best to buy directly from a tea estate to be sure of good quality, and they are often pleasant places to visit in their own right. Glenburn is one of the most esteemed tea estates in Darjeeling and guests can take a guided walk through the plantations before visiting the factory to see how the leaves are processed. A tea tasting lesson will help you find your favourite brews before you buy.

Leather

The huge Indian leather industry is mainly made up of local artisans. One of the most noted leatherworking quarters is Dharavi in Mumbai, which has 125 shops and 3,000 single-room factories producing beautiful items of a very

high standard. Leather products are available throughout India, especially in the popular markets of Delhi and Rajasthan where you can find some great bargains.

Woodcarving

Sri Lanka is an excellent place to buy handcrafted wooden items, from a small carved elephant to a large colonial style cabinet. A distinctive speciality are painted, carved masks traditionally used in devil dances. These grotesque, demonic faces, often with snake or bird features, are surprisingly attractive and have become popular with foreign visitors. To find a really well-made mask, you may like to visit a workshop-showroom. Ambalangoda on the south-west coast is the centre of woodworking activity and is famed for its masks.

Spice

India's contrasts are most evident when you leave the hustle and bustle of the city for the fragrant tranquility of the spice plantations. India is the largest producer of spices in the world and Indians have harnessed these spices to create delicious dishes and healing remedies. The shaded Western Ghats of Kerala boast the finest quality cardamom and pepper, and during your visit to the region you may like to take a guided stroll through one of the many plantations.

Jewellery & Gems

In India, married women wear *thali* (gold pendants strung with beads). *Kundan* (gems set in intricate gold designs backed with enamelled *meenakari* pieces) and chunky silver tribal jewellery are also popular. Jaipur is renowned for jewellery workshops, and Hyderabad for pearls.



Sri Lanka has been called 'the island of gems'. Precious and semi-precious stones are mined in the Ratnapura region and faceted, polished and set in Kandy. Sapphires of all colours are popular, with blue prized above all. Other Sri Lankan stones include cat's eyes, amethyst and moonstone. The gems are still mined by families who have been employed in this industry for centuries.

Textiles

Old Delhi's markets are the place to find traditional textiles like appliqué or mirrored cloth for bed throws, or sari fabric for curtains. New Delhi has modern boutique malls, and Mumbai offers boutiques in the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels where fabulous crewel-work can be found. There are also old-fashioned haberdashers where you can find tablecloths and quilts in delicate silks or robust cottons.

Jaipur is famous for its block printed textiles in earthy shades and you can visit the printers' quarter at the nearby villages of Bagru or Sanganer to witness the fascinating hand printed dye techniques.

Indian Subcontinent Specialists
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