

## Beware When Shopping Overseas.

### Wildlife Souvenirs

Be careful when you buy articles made from animals and plants or when you purchase live, wild animals to bring back as pets. Some items, such as those made from elephant ivory, sea turtles, crocodile leather, or fur from endangered cats, and many species of live animals cannot be brought legally into the United States. Your wildlife souvenirs could be confiscated by government inspectors, and you could face other penalties for attempting to bring them into the United States. Do not buy wildlife or wildlife products unless you are certain that they are legal for import into the United States.

### Glazed Ceramics

Beware of purchasing glazed ceramic ware abroad. It is possible to suffer lead poisoning, if you consume food or beverages that are stored or served in improperly glazed ceramics. Unless the ceramics are made by a firm with an international reputation, there is no immediate way to be certain that a particular item is safe. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends that ceramic tableware purchased abroad be tested for lead release by a commercial laboratory on your return or be used for decorative purposes only.

### Antiques

Certain countries consider antiques to be national treasures and the "inalienable property of the nation." In some countries, customs authorities seize illegally purchased antiques without compensation, and they may also levy fines on the purchaser. Americans have been arrested and prosecuted for purchasing antiques without a permit. Americans have even been arrested for purchasing reproductions of antiques from street vendors because a local authority believed the purchase was a national treasure.

### Protect yourself.

In countries where antiques are important, document your purchases as reproductions, if that is the case, or, if they are authentic, secure the necessary export permit. The documentation or export permit may be available through the country's national museum. A reputable dealer may provide the export permit or information on how to secure one. If you have questions about purchasing antiques, the country's tourist office can guide you. If you still have doubts, consult the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. In places where Americans have had problems because of purchasing antiques, the Consular Section is usually well aware of such situations. Consular officers can inform you about the local laws and the correct procedures to follow.