

VISA

Sea, Sun & Shopping

THE VISA GUIDE TO WHERE, WHEN AND HOW
TO SHOP ABROAD WITH SHOPPING EXPERT
HANNAH SANDLING



VISA

Sea, Sun & Shopping

The 2010 U.K. VISA guide to where, when and how to shop with shopping expert Hanna Sandling



Hannah's holiday shopping hot spots. Hannah's top tips on where to go to pick up gorgeous items from home wares, to clothes and jewellery.

1. Miami, Florida

Florida is my favourite destination for picking up designer clothes and state-of-the-art gadgets. It's possible to make some huge savings too with loads of discounted prices.

Top tips: **Sawgrass Mills Mall** in Florida is one of the biggest malls in America and is very wallet friendly! This mall is not for the faint hearted – but is pure heaven for the intrepid designer mad shopper with a passion for fashion. There are over 300 shops ranging from **Victoria's Secrets** and **Gap** to **Chanel** and **Salvatore Ferragamo** and even a **Saks Fifth Avenue**, with some fantastic discounts to be had. Not only that, they have many amazing stores where you can pick up cheap household appliances, phones and gym equipment. The great thing about this mall is that it not only caters for women brilliantly, but for men too.

2. Istanbul, Turkey

For stunning handmade Kilim carpets of cotton or wool, Turkey really is the place to go. Istanbul in particular is bursting with an array of exquisite carpet shops. Each region in Turkey has its own

colours and individual designs. With so many beautiful styles, you are bound to fall in love with something.

Top tips: If you want to find a really good Kilim bargain, it's worth venturing into villages a little off the beaten track such as **Cappadocia**, where all the carpets are handmade by the locals and you can pick up something for around half the price of those in Istanbul. That said, Istanbul is a real mecca for shoppers but you need your haggler's head on. **Istanbul's Grand Bazaar** can be a little daunting and the vendors are very good at persuading you to fork out for things you may not really want, so think carefully before buying.

3. Montevideo, Uruguay

This may sound like a surprising choice, but Uruguay is a must-visit for the more adventurous shopper. It is home to some incredible antique shops and you can find some really unusual things that will create real talking points back home – and come at a far cheaper price than what you'd pay in UK antique shops. If you are looking to kit your house out with some stunning pieces then this really is the place to go.

Top tips: **Tristan Narvaja** street in Montevideo is a beautiful street crammed with old antique shops and eclectic boutiques with ramshackle vintage delights. It's possible to find old Cartier jewels for US \$3,000, a set of Baccarat glasses for US \$400 and whole sets of

Limoges china for 16 people for only US \$500 (bearing in mind that it would set you back around £10,000 here in the UK). You can spend hours sifting through the mountains of genuine antiques. You also don't want to miss the **Mercado del Puerto**. It's one of the biggest BBQs in the world and is absolutely delicious!

4. Salta and Buenos Aires Argentina

All over Argentina you will find beautiful handicrafts made by local indigenous groups ranging from Alpaca silver to beautifully hand-crafted leather chairs or long leather boots. There are vast amounts of leather goods to buy in Argentina, and prices are very affordable. Both Buenos Aires and Salta are buzzing places where you can find dozens of incredible pieces for your home and for your wardrobe. My top tip is to arrive with a huge space to fill in your suitcase!

Top tips: **Cardon** is a chain that is found in both Buenos Aires and Salta and is well worth visiting. This elegant shop is famous for its soft leather, suede and silver products. They stock some beautiful equestrian – inspired belts and boots, gorgeous handbags, weekend bags, hats and footwear.

For those seeking pure luxury, head to **Marcela Calvet** (by appointment only) in the heart of Buenos Aires (www.marcelacalvet.com).

The **Mercado Artesanal** is located just outside the centre of Salta and is the place to go to for Alpaca silver. Alpaca silver is used to create all kinds of beautiful home accessories such as decorative bowls, jugs, salad servers and jewellery. Part of the design features llama rib bones and goat horns, making them really stand-out items. Alpaca silver is also far cheaper than normal silver and is less prone to tarnishing.

In the centre of Salta city, make sure you visit **Sol Plateria** with its beautiful silver jewellery and home accessories.

5. New York, USA

New York is famed for its incredible clothes and accessory shopping, but my absolute top tip is to pay a trip to the Big Apple if you're a bride-in-waiting. This is the place to find that dream wed-

ding dress. If you're hoping to get up the aisle, diamonds are aplenty here, so it can be a great destination for loved-up couples thinking of taking the plunge.

Top tips: Located on Madison Avenue, **Bohmans** stocks a vast array of fine watches, diamonds, furniture, pictures and decorative arts. Prices are pretty high but there are some incredible bargains to be found.

Macy's department store is a must-visit too. Better still, if you're around in August, the sales are excellent and you can pick up designer wedding dresses for as little as \$50 if you're so inclined.

For cutting edge, cool designs, check out **Morgane Le Fay**. Located on Wooster Street in Soho, there are some gorgeous dresses here. Greenwich Village also hosts a flea market every Sunday which is great for browsing around, and you can pick-up some wonderful items from up and coming designers. If you're after something a little cheaper than **Tiffany's**, take a stroll down 42nd street for an abundance of second hand jewelry stores where you'll find some unbelievable deals.

