

FORBIDDEN SOUVENIRS LIST

Vietnam • Thailand • Laos • Cambodia

Travel Sense Asia / Authentic Asia | Travelife Criterion 9.10

Introduction

This document lists souvenirs that are PROHIBITED for purchase and export under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), IUCN Red List regulations, and local laws. Our company does not promote, sell, or assist customers in purchasing any of these items.

⚠ WARNING: Violations can result in confiscation, heavy fines, and imprisonment up to 15 years.

1. Wildlife Products

✗ STRICTLY PROHIBITED IN ALL 4 COUNTRIES

1.1 Ivory & Elephant Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Why Prohibited
Ivory carvings	Figurines, jewelry, chopsticks, name seals, decorative items	CITES banned since 1989
Ivory jewelry	Bracelets, necklaces, rings, pendants, earrings	Elephant poaching crisis
Elephant skin products	Bags, wallets, belts, bracelets	Asian elephant endangered
Elephant hair jewelry	Bracelets, rings (sold as 'lucky charms')	Encourages poaching
Elephant bone products	Carvings, glue, traditional medicine	CITES protected

1.2 Tiger & Big Cat Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Commonly Sold In
Tiger bone products	Tiger bone glue/wine, traditional medicine, jewelry	Thailand, Laos, Vietnam
Tiger skin/fur	Rugs, wall hangings, clothing	All 4 countries
Tiger teeth & claws	Necklaces, pendants, keychains	Laos, Thailand
Leopard products	Skin, teeth, claws	All 4 countries
Lion products	Often sold as 'tiger' - bones, teeth, claws	Laos, Thailand

1.3 Bear Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Notes
Bear bile	Liquid, powder, pills, traditional medicine	Cruel farming practices
Bear gallbladder	Whole or dried	Illegal in all 4 countries
Bear paws	Food delicacy, traditional medicine	Sun bear & moon bear endangered
Bear claws & teeth	Jewelry, keychains	Sold in Laos markets

1.4 Rhinoceros & Pangolin Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Legal Consequence
Rhino horn	Whole, powder, carved items, glue, medicine	Up to 15 years prison
Rhino horn jewelry	Bracelets, beads, pendants	CITES Appendix I
Pangolin scales	Whole scales, powder, traditional medicine	Most trafficked mammal
Pangolin meat/wine	Restaurant dishes, whole in alcohol	All 8 species endangered

1.5 Marine Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Where Commonly Sold
Sea turtle products	Shell combs, fans, jewelry, stuffed turtles, eggs	Vietnam coast, Thailand
Coral	Raw coral, jewelry, decorative items	All coastal areas

Giant clam shells	Decorative items, carved jewelry	Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia
Seahorses	Dried (medicine), in alcohol	Vietnam, Thailand
Shark fins & teeth	Dried fins, tooth necklaces	Thailand, Vietnam

1.6 Other Wildlife Products

Product Type	Common Forms	Notes
Snake wine	Cobra, other snakes in alcohol	May contain protected species
Crocodile products	Skin bags, wallets, belts, teeth, skulls	Siamese croc endangered
Tortoise/turtle shells	Whole shells, combs, jewelry, medicine	Many critically endangered
Slow loris products	Live pets, teeth, traditional medicine	All species protected
Primate products	Skulls, hands, traditional medicine	Langurs, gibbons, macaques
Bird products	Hornbill casques, feathers, stuffed birds	Many species CITES-listed

2. Traditional Medicine with Wildlife Ingredients

✗ DO NOT PURCHASE - Many contain illegal wildlife ingredients

Medicine Type	Illegal Ingredients May Include
Tiger bone glue/wine	Tiger bones - banned under CITES
Bear bile products	Bear gallbladder, bile - cruel extraction
Rhino horn medicine	Rhino horn - no medicinal value proven
Pangolin scale medicine	Pangolin scales - critically endangered
Turtle/tortoise shell medicine	Turtle plastron - many species endangered
Saiga antelope horn	Often in traditional medicine - critically endangered
Musk deer products	Musk pods - endangered species

3. Protected Plant Products

Product Type	Details	Countries
Agarwood (Oud)	Requires CITES permit; often illegally harvested	Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia
Wild orchids	Many species CITES-listed	All 4 countries
Rosewood products	Dalbergia species - heavily restricted	All 4 countries
Cycads	All species CITES-listed	Vietnam, Thailand

4. Cultural & Archaeological Artifacts

⚠ Export restrictions apply - permits required

4.1 Vietnam

- Antiques over 100 years old - export permit required from Ministry of Culture
- Ceramics from shipwrecks or archaeological sites
- National treasures and cultural relics
- War memorabilia (weapons, military items)

4.2 Thailand

- Buddha images and statues (except medallions and statues under 13cm)
- Bodhisattva images and fragments
- Alms bowls (religious significance)
- Antiques and archaeological artifacts

4.3 Cambodia

- Angkor-era artifacts and stone carvings

- Buddha and Hindu deity statues
- Items from archaeological sites (Angkor, etc.)
- Ancient manuscripts and palm leaf texts

4.4 Laos

- Buddha images and religious artifacts
- Ancient textiles with cultural significance
- Items from Plain of Jars and other archaeological sites
- Traditional royal artifacts

5. Country-Specific Prohibited Items

5.1 Thailand

- Stuffed animals and mounted wildlife trophies
- Untreated crocodile leather (finished products may be allowed with permit)
- Live turtles and tortoise shell items
- Sand and soil (including from plant pots)
- Royal imagery used disrespectfully

5.2 Vietnam

- Monkey wine and wildlife liquors
- Products from Sao La (critically endangered)
- Delacour's langur and other primate products
- Currency and stamps (bulk export restricted)

5.3 Laos

- Products from tiger/bear farms (illegal under CITES sanctions)
- Golden Triangle SEZ wildlife products (illegal regardless of seller claims)
- Opium pipes and drug paraphernalia

5.4 Cambodia

- Tonle Sap turtle and fish products (unsustainable harvest)
- Cardamom Mountains wildlife products
- Irrawaddy dolphin products (critically endangered)

6. Ethical Alternatives

✓ RECOMMENDED SOUVENIRS

- Handwoven textiles and silk (support local artisans)
- Traditional ceramics and pottery
- Lacquerware (sustainable if legally produced)
- Local coffee, tea, and spices
- Handmade paper products
- Contemporary art by local artists
- Sustainable wooden crafts (with certification)
- Bamboo and rattan products
- Traditional musical instruments
- Local fashion and accessories

7. Guide Responsibilities

- Proactively inform customers about forbidden souvenirs BEFORE shopping
- Explain both ethical reasons and legal consequences
- Suggest ethical alternatives when customers ask about wildlife products
- Do NOT assist customers in purchasing forbidden items
- Do NOT take customers to shops known for selling illegal wildlife
- Report any suspicious wildlife trade activities to management