

# Bargain hunters

Abu Dhabi's malls boast a fantastic selection of shops, but where do you go if you're looking for really unique products? We've hit the streets to search for some of the capital's best bargains that will help you stand out from the crowd

## AL REEF CAR BOOT SALE

On hearing about the Al Reef car boot sale we were reminded of the saying 'one person's trash is another person's treasure' and we were eager to go along to see what treasures we could pick up.

Goods for sale include jewellery, toys, clothes, books, household items and other odds and ends. We bought a gorgeous landscape canvas for only AED 30. When you go, look out for the Al Reef resident who is selling her own hand-made soap.

The car boot sales take place on the first Friday of every month from 3pm to 5.30pm and the next one will take place on 1st March. From April onwards the car boot sale runs from 4pm to 6pm. Please note, everyone is welcome to come along to the event, but only Al Reef residents have permission to sell goods. It's located in Al Reef, next to the big mosque that's under construction.

**For more information contact: Mr Suico on 055 898 2497.**



## IRANIAN SOUK

Located in Mina Port, next to the plant souk, this outdoor market is a must see for tourists. Known for its local flair and odd-ends, this market features a little bit of everything - literally! When we stroll down the shops, we see row upon row of terracotta pots on sale, mirrors, furniture, plastic containers, kitchen accessories, cushions, shampoos and textiles next to old turntable radios.

Admittedly, you do have to search through piles of rubbish to get to the good stuff, but that seems to be part of this market's charm. We were particularly thrilled to see an entire shop filled with glazed tiles, hand painted textiles and Ottoman-inspired decorations.

**Open from 8am to 11pm, we suggest visiting on a weekend for the best selection of goods.**



## CHARITY FLEA MARKET AT SHERATON

Ever wanted to raid your neighbour's house for trinkets? Well, now you can! Residents and visitors alike are invited to sell and buy unused or unwanted items from private households for unbelievably low prices. Items range from electronics, clothing, accessories, furniture, toys, books, and arts and crafts. This is one market that actually encourages haggling, so bust out your bargaining skills to get some crave-worthy steals while supporting some truly outstanding charities in the UAE.

The third indoor flea market at Sheraton Abu Dhabi will be held on Saturday 3rd March from 9am onwards in the Arzanah Ballroom. Table fees from the market will go to support the Operation Smile charity organisation, which provides free-of-charge reconstructive surgeries to children born with a cleft lip or palate. **For more information or to book a table email: [martina.venus@sheraton.com](mailto:martina.venus@sheraton.com).**

## PLANT SOUK

What better way to enjoy the outdoor season than by surrounding yourself with lush green plants?

To make your very own oasis at home, head over to this outdoor market to spruce up your garden.

A one-stop shop, the market features a variety of plants, pottery, potting soil, landscaping decorations and services.

Plants come from Thailand, Holland, India, Pakistan and the UAE. We saw palm trees, shrubs, lemon trees, annuals, cactuses and fresh herbs all on offer. The variety and quality of goods means there are plenty of repeat customers - we have to wait minutes for a shop keeper and one of their customers to stop chatting before they attend to us. Be sure to check out the special refrigerated plant sections located in the back of most of the stores if you're looking for special orchids, blooms and other indoor species.

**Open every day from 8am to 10pm, at Mina Port.**



## ST ANDREW'S THRIFT SHOP

On arrival, we're struck by how busy this shop is, considering it's only 8.30am, surely a sign that there are plenty of bargains to be found. The shop has a range of used goods for sale including clothes, games, DVDs, toys, household goods and small furniture items. We are really impressed by the selection of books on offer. A combination of fiction, true life, children's titles, Arabic and books in other languages, are selling from as little as AED 3 per book. We snap up a couple of paperbacks and promise to tell all our friends about this hidden gem.

Shop volunteer, Youmna Bonnot, appeals for people not to simply throw away their unwanted goods but to donate them to the thrift shop instead. "Come and drop off your unused or old items but please make sure that they are clean and in good working order. While you are here take the time to browse. We have lots of great products including a boutique section that sells some designer goods, it's hit and miss but you never know what you will find."

**The thrift shop is open every Sunday from 8.30am to 12pm, Tuesday from 8.30am to 12pm and 3.30pm to 5.30pm, and Friday from 12pm to 2pm. It's located off 17th Street between Al Karamah and 2nd Street. Contact: 02 446 4193**



## CARPET SOUK

If you're in the mood to spruce up your floors, then check out the carpet souk on Mina Road to find some hidden gems that won't dent your wallet. Tucked away on the opposite side of the fish market, the souk has a massive selection of carpets, blankets, and covers sure to keep you occupied. The Carpet Souk or the Pathaan Market, as we're told it's locally called, is essentially a large square filled with shops lining the edges. Easily accessible from either side, we can't help but take a stroll down the block, popping in and out of shops to sample the variety of goods on offer.

Carpets come from Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Belgium and the UAE. There are handmade carpets, blankets, outdoor setting cushions, and all manner of textiles, pillow covers and quilts. Be prepared to bargain, as the prices listed on the tags are made with room to negotiate.

**Open every day from 9am to 11pm.**

## RIPE MARKET

Undoubtedly the Ripe Market is the place to go for organic, fresh fruit and vegetables but while you are there don't forget to check out the arts and crafts stalls.

We liked the stall of unusual African arts. Products for sale included beaded bracelets, hand-woven mud cloth tapestries, dolls, bags and jewellery, with prices starting from AED 30.

The hand-woven silver jewellery produced by Nadezda Kosheleva also impressed us. Nadezda uses semi-precious stones and Omani silver to create one-off jewellery items. Prices start from AED 55 for earrings and AED 100 for necklaces.

Before we left we stopped off at Adrian Watkin's photography stall to admire his cutting edge photographs of Sheikh Zayed Mosque and photographs of his baby son that made our heart melt.

**The Ripe Market takes place every Friday from 9.30am to 1pm at Khalifa Park's Desert Garden Centre. For more information contact Susan Cherrey on: 055 105 1393.**



## THE LITTLE FAIR TRADE SHOP

Sabeena Ahmed is trying to raise the profile of Fair Trade in the UAE by selling products made by disadvantaged people all over the world. She sells an assortment of goods such as handbags, toys, ornaments, jewellery and wall hangings. Prices start at AED 15 for wrist bands that are made by disadvantaged ladies in Guatemala.

Sabeena's handbag collection offers an unusual assortment made from recycled car parts such as seatbelts, rubber tubing and registration plates. These bags are made by a group in South Africa and cost AED 149.

"I try to price my products quite reasonably so that people don't find the goods too expensive and they are able to become more ethically conscious shoppers. No two products are the same and every product has a personal story behind it. I want to encourage people to come to my stall and hear the individual stories," Sabeena said.

**For more information contact Sabeena by e-mailing: [thelittlefairtradeshop@hotmail.com](mailto:thelittlefairtradeshop@hotmail.com) or visit her Fair Trade stall at the Ripe market. ✨**