



Buying Local on Guam: Marketplaces of Memories

It's another Wednesday night on Guam. As the thick heat and smoke from fiery grills makes its wispy way into a moonlit sky before finally dissipating, small crowds of people become increasingly dense as they congregate and form lines full of anticipation next to open air stalls selling everything from jewelry, clothing, art, food, and an uncountable array of merchandise. The savory smell of spices and searing meat waft over a bustling marketplace full of life and energy. Kaleidoscopes of colors overwhelm senses as the visitor becomes engrossed in the thrill of the moment.

Once again, the Chamorro Village in central Hagåtña, a bustling traditional shopping center between Marine Corps Drive and the Paseo Loop, hosts its night market, and vendors from around the island are selling items that are imbued with

the skill, ingenuity and passion of their creators. Someone shouts, laughter ensues and a band strikes up a tune, filling the nighttime sky with sounds of amusement and festivity. For a few more hours, this scene continues, and as the shops and stands begin to close for the night, customers leave with precious items that are unique and will forever be repositories of timeless memories.

To be sure, Guam is a prime destination for a modern shopping experience replete with luxury goods, cutting edge fashion and duty free enjoyment, yet the island also presents excellent opportunities to purchase locally made goods that represent the best of the island experience. The beauty of our island may be unforgettable, but by purchasing an item made in Guam, the buyer ensures the memories are forever within a hand's reach.



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I Sengsong Chamorro Village: Made in Guam

Although the vendors and shops in the Chamorro Village sell a wide range of items both made in Guam and made off island, it is one of the best areas to find items crafted by the hands of our local retailers and artisans. In fact, all over the island, there is a movement to “buy local” and help foster the creativity and productivity of island producers and retailers, as well as to encourage the use of the Guam product seal that proudly labels an item as being made in Guam. A product may say “Guam” on the packaging, but the seal provides a stamp of authenticity and assurance. Of course, many of the arts, crafts and jewelry are typically sold by their makers, so oftentimes the buyer will be able to purchase an item directly from the person who made it and can explain the significance of the product.

Some Chamorro Village shops are dedicated to our master woodworkers, who make stunning artwork and functional pieces from the *tronkon ifit*—or ifil tree. This durable tree is a symbol of Guam and yields a rich, dark red wood, which in the hands of artisans can be made into everything from jewelry, art and even furniture.

The Village also has many shops selling smaller accessories and gifts, with island jewelry strongly represented at both the shops and markets across Guam.

Crescent shaped *sinahi* necklaces can be found nearly everywhere local jewelry is sold. The pendant comes in many sizes and can be made from a variety of different materials depending on the maker, including giant clamshell, whale bone and basalt.

Chamorro Village also has a blacksmith on premises and traditional Chamorro tools available that are used in places such as the kitchen, garden and field. Unique designs and patterns adorn the front of t-shirts, dresses and other clothing items that are locally designed and printed on Guam. Traditional artwork such as painting and photography showcase the beautiful scenery of the environment and the imagination of the artists.

Finally, any visitor to our island realizes quickly that the people of Guam love to eat, and our love for eating carries over into our local food products such as chocolates, pastries, cookies, jams and preserves, honey, sauces and spreads. Chamorro Village is full of such treats.

The Chamorro Village is not the only place to find locally made items. On Thursday nights, the village of Mangilao comes alive with its own night market. Located along Guam Route 10, it runs through the village near Saint Teresita Church. Many of the same arts, crafts, woodwork and food of Chamorro Village can be found in this market,



however many vendors are exclusive to these grounds, so further exploration of this market is warranted.

Beyond the night markets, morning is the best time to go to Dededo on Saturday and Sunday, as the Dededo flea market opens for business along Marine Corps Drive and again a wide range of goods are on offer. The market opens at 6:00 A.M. on both days, and vendors from around the island set up stalls and sell both local and off island items, and usually everything can be had for a great value.

Festivals and fairs happen throughout the year around the island, and these are also good places to grab a one of a kind item made only in Guam. The island has several art and photography galleries, especially in Hagåtña and Tumon, where traditional heritage designs and stunning nature photography may be found. Moreover, many retail stores commonly sell locally made products such as naturally made bath products, jewelry, sweets and pantry goods. Always look for the “Made in Guam” seal, and when in doubt, our friendly local retail staff will ensure all questions are answered and a piece of the island leaves with you. ■

For international press inquiries, please contact the GVB Marketing Department at marketing@visitguam.org.