Souvenirs to avoid in Albania

Visitor information | Travelife criterion 10.20 | Purchasing, selling, importing and exporting

Our commitment: Albania2Go does not promote or allow the purchase of souvenirs made from threatened wildlife or plants, illegally obtained historic or religious artefacts, or illegal substances. A souvenir offered for sale is not automatically legal to take home.

1 Do not buy or take home

Archaeological finds	Ancient coins, excavated pottery, statues, mosaic pieces, inscriptions, or fragments removed from archaeological sites. Never buy items presented as genuine excavated finds without lawful provenance.
Stolen cultural or religious objects	Icons, manuscripts, old books, religious artefacts, church or mosque fittings, carved stones, or museum objects obtained illegally.
Protected animal products	Sea turtle shell objects; ivory; protected bird feathers or eggs; skins, teeth or claws of protected animals; protected coral or other wildlife-derived ornaments.
Protected plants or wild specimens	Wild-collected protected orchids, bulbs, seeds, roots, rare plants and items made from protected flora without lawful origin and required permits.
Illegal substances	Cannabis and other narcotic or psychotropic drugs and preparations. Do not purchase or transport controlled substances as souvenirs.

Important distinction: Some objects are prohibited because of their unlawful origin; others can be traded or exported only with proper permits. Albania2Go advises guests not to purchase items of uncertain origin or documentation.

2 Items that may require documentation

- Authentic art and cultural objects: Export may require customs declaration, an object passport and relevant cultural-authority permits. This may include historic paintings, books, manuscripts, ethnographic objects and religious artworks.
- CITES-listed species and products: Import, export or re-export may require a valid CITES permit and customs declaration, even for a small ornament or gift.
- Plants, seeds, foods and animal products: Additional phytosanitary, veterinary or destination-country import rules may apply. Check before travel.

PLEASE HELP PROTECT ALBANIA

“Please help protect Albania’s wildlife and heritage. Do not buy protected animal or plant products, archaeological finds, unlawfully obtained religious or historic objects, or illegal drugs. Certain artworks and wildlife products require official export permits. If a souvenir’s origin or paperwork is unclear, please ask your guide before buying.”

Make a responsible purchase

A quick reference for guests, families and tour groups

3 Five checks before you pay

- Ask whether the item is modern-made or genuinely historic, excavated or old.
- Ask what materials are used: animal shell, horn, coral, feathers, rare wood or wild plants?
- Request a receipt, provenance and any official permits where relevant. A shop receipt alone is not an export permit.
- Check both Albanian export rules and your next/final destination’s import rules.
- When uncertain, leave the item and ask your Albania2Go guide or the competent authority.

4 Choose safer, locally made alternatives

Modern handmade ceramics and reproductions; new textile work and embroidery; contemporary local artwork; legally sourced woodcraft; and packaged food products where permitted by the traveller’s destination-country rules. Keep proof of purchase.

5 What the law means in practice

Wildlife / plants	Law No. 9867/2008 and CITES-related rules regulate listed flora and fauna. Certain trade is prohibited; cross-border movement of listed species requires the appropriate permit presented to Albanian Customs.
Cultural heritage	Law No. 27/2018 on Cultural Heritage and applicable customs rules protect cultural property. Relevant art and heritage objects must be declared for export and require documentation/authorization.
Narcotics	Albanian Customs identifies import, export and transit of narcotic and psychotropic substances as prohibited under applicable legislation.
Your home country	Legal purchase in Albania does not ensure legal entry into another country. Import restrictions and declarations may also apply on arrival.

6 When something looks suspicious

Do not buy, transport or attempt to conceal it. Tell your Albania2Go guide privately. If necessary, request advice from Albanian Customs or the relevant cultural or environmental authority. If there is immediate danger, contact the authorities.

Official information for travellers

Albanian Customs – CITES: dogana.gov.al / CITES

Albanian Customs – Cultural heritage: dogana.gov.al / Cultural heritage articles

Albanian Customs – Narcotics: dogana.gov.al / Prohibitions

Protected species lookup: speciesplus.net (species-specific permits and restrictions must be checked).