

Three Secret Goldmines for the Lucrative Traveler

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“Lucrative Travel”

Lucrative travel is the term we've coined to describe travel that doesn't just pay for itself, but can actually earn you \$100,000 or more a year...and deliver the flexibility you need to live anywhere in the world.

If you've ever come home from a trip and called a friend to tell him about your experiences or even scribbled an e-mail account of what you did...if you've ever taken snapshots to remember the monuments you've visited and the people you've met...if you've ever brought home souvenirs from your travels...

Then you're already halfway there.

It's just a matter of turning those habits into real, money-making tools that can fund a lifetime of travel.

This report highlights three top destinations with “goldmine potential.” That is...hot-spots where you can make serious money gathering article ideas, snapping photos to sell, and shopping for items that could yield serious profit back home.

Travel Goldmine #1—Thailand

In the heart of south-east Asia, Thailand is one of the most exotic nations on earth.

Imagine visiting gilded temples...exploring razzle-dazzle cities...riding an elephant down jungle trails. Or meeting hill-tribe villagers and treasure-hunting for hand-loomed silk, teakwood carvings, and exotic curios—all at a fraction of the price you'd pay back home.

Now picture salt-white sands, swaying coconut palms, and an evening chorus of cicadas. Rising from jade and turquoise waters is a myriad islands girdled by coral gardens...bizarre limestone outcrops smothered in spinach-green vegetation. Sunsets are incredible with the slow-burning sun dipping into the sea like a giant red lantern. Lamp-lit

fishing boats bob alongside little quays strewn with sun-dried shrimps. Restaurants serve crab, lobster, and tiger prawns the size of a toddler's fist.

Even if you're not a city person, you'll almost certainly want to visit Bangkok with its gleaming skyscrapers, girlie bars, and screaming tuk-tuks. A modern megalopolis cocooned in tradition, Bangkok delivers Buddhist temples and Chinese gold shops...long-tail boats on the Chao Phraya river and *muay thai* kick-boxing bouts...swish malls and the Sky Train. And, if you insist on walking the wild side, some decadent night-life, too.

Go north to Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai and you'll discover another kingdom entirely. A kingdom of misty mountains and paddy fields; of hill-tribe villages and hot springs; of dragon-necked temples, saffron-robed Buddhist monks, and night bazaars overflowing with curios; of elaborately-decorated spirit houses where the guardian spirits of the land reside.

What can you write about? The topics are endless—everything from bargain tailoring to appeasing homeless Thai spirits...from elephant-trekking to spa treatments.

The photo opportunities are also endless. And the import/export potential is extraordinary. Chiang Mai, in Northern Thailand, is the center of the country's arts and crafts tradition. Here you can find hand-loomed fabrics, teak furniture, silver-smithing, metalwork, woodcarving, lacquer ware, paper-making, and ceramics.

Travel Goldmine #2—China

China offers the travel writer/photographer a myriad sights and experiences.

Just for starters, there's the capital Beijing, host city of the 2008 Olympics. The capital is also home to the Forbidden City and part of the Great Wall of China. Then there's Shanghai with its louche past of gangsters and opium dens. Its population of 12.6 million makes it the largest and most densely populated city in all of China—and it's booming as the Asian center for economy and trade.

Then there's the terracotta army warriors of Xian...the willow pattern plate landscapes of Guilin...the far-flung regions of Tibet and Inner Mongolia...the salt-white beaches of Hainan Island, China's Hawaii. You'd need at least a couple of lifetimes to even scratch China's surface.

You don't need to work hard to find subjects to write about—they'll find you. Often when you're traveling, it's not always easy to come across things that are different to back home. Not so in China.

Stalls that sell dog-meat...hotels with a whole floor devoted to private karaoke rooms...taxi drivers that want to borrow your spectacles because they're too short-sighted to see where they're going... ordering a chicken dish and being presented with an entire chicken (bones, skin, head, the lot.)

And the most horrible bathrooms I've ever come across...

In terms of import/export opportunities—lacquered chopsticks and “Pet fragrances.” Jade carvings and toddlers’ rocking horses for just \$5.50. Radio-controlled dolls that zoom about on roller blades. Inflatable santas, inflatable penguins, and inflatable women. Practically anything that can be made (or copied) can be found in China.

Official government figures show that, in 2005, the U.S. imported almost 223 billion dollars worth of goods from China. Source: www.census.gov/foreign-trade.

Many of these goods are initially sourced at trade fairs. The Chinese Export Commodities Fair, also called the Canton Fair, is held twice a year in April and October. Held in Guangzhou (formerly known as Canton), it is China’s largest trade fair. The promoters of the next one indicate there will be more than 7,300 booths. Website: www.guangzhou-cantonfair.com.

The Canton Fair is by no means the only trade show held in China. For a calendar of upcoming fairs around the country, take a look at www.chinatradeshows.com.

If you already have an idea of the kind of product you’d like to import, one of the best websites for finding manufacturers and suppliers in China is www.alibaba.com.

Travel Goldmine #3—Morocco

Snake charmers, acrobats, and water sellers. Walled cities, the High Atlas Mountains, and blue-robed Berber tribespeople. The Todra and Dades gorges—great hiking and climbing country. Mint tea and couscous. The sign at Zagora on the edge of the Sahara Desert that points to Timbuktu—52 days away by camel. The Chellah Necropolis in Rabat where local women in search of fertility cures come to bathe in its sacred pools. The Valley of 1,000 Kasbahs (fortified settlements).

And you’ve never experienced retail therapy until you’ve been to the *souks* (markets) of Marrakech and Fez. Deep in the narrow streets of the medina—streets are so narrow that goods can only be transported by donkey—there still exists a medieval world of craftsmen straight out of the *Arabian Nights*.

In medieval times, leather from Morocco was so sought-after that the terms “Moroccan” and “leather” were one and the same. In Marrakech, bare-chested tanners have their own quarter, where they dye the hides by stomping on them in huge vats. It’s a scene from another age of the world.

In all Moroccan cities, most artisans usually have their own lane within the *souk*—there will be a street of goldsmiths, a street of silversmiths, a street of leather-workers and so on. While there are a few fixed-price outlets, haggling—usually over a glass of mint tea—is the norm. It’s not a skill for the faint-hearted.

Price tags are rarities. Merchants weigh up buyers, buyers weigh up merchants, and each tries to get the best price. You need to have your wits about you, but shopping in Morocco can be very rewarding.

For example, a 24-inch mosaic-topped table on a metal frame costs \$235 if bought from one American website showcasing Moroccan goods. Yet you can buy a far more attractive mosaic table—similar size and also mounted on a metal frame—for \$93.60 from Foukta, an export company based in the silver-smithing city of Tarroudant. Website: www.fouktaexport.com. Find the guys who actually make these tables and you should be able to get one for around \$50.

Other hot Moroccan items include ceramics...leather goods...metalwork...and wood-carving. For an idea of the kinds of crafts you'll find here, look at these two Internet sites: www.codexart.com and www.lumin.free.fr.

Further Resources

The Lucrative Traveler's Toolkit

To learn more about how you can vacation anywhere... anytime... and make a six-figure income while you're at it, go to: <http://www.thetravelwriterslife.com/toolkit/07>

IL's Complete Guide to Import/Export

WANTED: Adventurers Willing to Travel to Far Away Shores...

Hours--your choice; Money--as much as you can handle; Age—immaterial;

Qualifications--must enjoy shopping; Experience--none required. Learn how to make a profit from your next vacation. Read more about *IL's Complete Guide to Import/Export*:

<http://www.isecureonline.com/Reports/120SIMEX/W120FCUP/>

Passport to Romance: The Ultimate Travel Writer's Course

As a freelance writer, you have the opportunity to visit the world's most romantic, exciting, and offbeat destinations. This program has been put together by colleagues of *International Living* for people interested in taking up the travel writer life. Read more about *Passport to Romance: The Ultimate Travel Writer's Course*:

<http://www.thetravelwriterslife.com/il/up06/>