

# Duty Free Paradise Can Be Very Hard to Find

Many travelers love to spend their time in duty free stores as they wait for their flights. Many tourists may often snatch up everything that they can see thinking that they save a lot of money anyway. However, it may not always be so.



The world's first-ever duty free shop opened at Shannon Airport in Ireland in 1947. The store still works today. Airport employees noticed that passengers of transit flights, who change planes on the way from Europe to the USA, were spending a lot of time at the airport, although they were not making an official entry to the country. The waiting room of the airport was legally a neutral territory, which did not belong to any country.

Ireland's Ministry for Finance allowed opening a store behind the passport control line. The prices there were lower because the goods had been relieved of taxes and customs fees since the goods did not cross the customs border of the state where they were sold. The simple and yet brilliant idea gained immense popularity all over the world soon afterwards.

Duty free shops can be found in any more or less respectable airport. One may visit such stores only after they have their plane tickets registered. Duty free stores, especially in large airports, sell any kinds of goods: from pens to fur coats. However, duty free shopping may not always be favorable.



Alcohol and tobacco products are the two most popular categories of goods sold at duty free stores. Perfumes and cosmetic products come third. These three types of goods have the highest taxes in conventional stores. Therefore, they are a lot cheaper in duty free stores. Purchasing all other goods may not be that favorable though.

As for the quality of duty free stores, the international airport of Dubai is obviously the leader at this

point. The duty free shop there is huge – it is a paradise for shoppers. Dubai’s duty free megamall sells practically everything, even luxury cars. The prices are rather encouraging too: some goods are sold 50 percent cheaper than in the city. Prices on Swiss watches, for example, are mysteriously 20 percent cheaper than in Switzerland’s duty free shops.

Other good duty free stores are located at London’s Heathrow and Singapore’s Changi. New collections of designer clothes arrive at Heathrow’s duty free boutiques earlier than they appear at London’s shopping malls. As for Changi, the duty free department store at this airport strikes imagination with its interior designs and amazing Oriental souvenirs.

As for European continental airports, the situation there is a lot worse. Duty free prices are mostly identical to the prices of city stores and can be even higher at times. It is recommended to buy there only alcohol, tobacco products and perfumes. There is a very good duty free store at the airport of Zurich, Switzerland: a large department for perfumes and cosmetics, several boutiques and, of course, a number of shops selling renowned watches.



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