Markets and Shopping

1. Chatuchak Weekend Market
   Every weekend, the mother of all Thai markets, Chatuchak, throngs with young people looking for fashion accessories, middle-aged Thais wanting to decorate their homes, and foreigners looking for souvenirs of their stay in Thailand (see pp22–3).

2. Pratunam Market
   Cluttering the sidewalk and spilling over into several small lanes, this bustling market is a source of cheap clothing. Shops are packed with seamstresses bent over sewing machines. The market is also a good place to buy discount toiletries, suitcases and bags, mobile phone accessories, electronic equipment, and cheap souvenirs.

3. Phahurat Market
   You would be forgiven for thinking you are in India when walking along the narrow streets of Phahurat Market. Shop after shop sells bolts of cloth, and there are plenty of cut-price travel agents and cheap cafés (see p73).

4. Sampeng Lane Market
   The market held on this narrow street is lined with shops selling household goods, fashion accessories, shoes, and clothing. Phahurat Road leads straight into Sampeng Lane, and walking from one to the other feels like hopping from India to China (see p75).

5. Siam Paragon
   This mall is one of the favorite hangouts of Bangkok’s more fussy shoppers. With six floors full of designer clothes, cosmetics, nail studios, hairdressers, restaurants, cinemas, and book and music shops, Siam Paragon shopping mall has something for everyone. The superb aquarium, Siam Ocean World (see p47), is located in the basement.

6. Mahboonkrong
   While most of Bangkok’s shopping malls have a clinical, international feel to them, Mahboonkrong is totally Thai. Also known as MBK, this shopping mall sprawls across six floors. It is packed with small stalls selling souvenirs and cheap clothes that include copies of designer brands. There are also bigger retail outlets selling jewelry as well as a branch of the Tokyo Department Store.

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Gaysorn Plaza
This shopping mall pitches itself at the upper classes with designer boutiques, beauty salons, exclusive craft outlets, and pricey restaurants. The second floor features “Urban Chic Street,” where several Thai fashion designers have a display. Gaysorn Lifestyle Consultants proactively advise shoppers. Map Q2 • (02) 656 1149 • Open 10am–8pm daily • www.gaysorn.com

Pantip Plaza
This is an IT mecca, selling all the latest computer programs and DVD movies, as well as digital cameras and other electronic equipment. Although it is crammed with new and used hardware and software, the mall is rife with counterfeit products. Despite regular police raids, vendors dealing in pirated goods seem to keep in business thanks to their customers’ huge appetite for such stuff. Map Q2 • (02) 250 1550 • Open 10am–10pm daily • www.pantipplaza.com

River City
The River City Shopping Complex is an upmarket shopping center selling antiques, crafts, and Thai silk, and is operated by Mandarin Oriental and the Italthai Group. Located on the banks of the Chao Phraya, it has several restaurants with river views where customers can relax after browsing the art and antique shops on the third and fourth floors. Map Q2 • (02) 237 0077 • Open 10am–10pm daily • www.rivercity.co.th

Narai Phand
If it is gifts for family and friends that you are looking for, head along to this shop that specializes in Thai handicrafts. The choice available ranges from Thai dolls to khon theatrical masks and brass statues, from lacquer ware and woodcarvings to silk clothing and silverware. However, unlike in almost all markets around Thailand, there is no bargaining here. Map Q2 • (02) 656 0292 • Open 10am–8pm daily • www.naraiphand.com