

FYI SHOW ME THE MONEY

Mainland Chinese represent 78% (or 47 million) of the visitor arrivals to Hong Kong. Shopping is one of the major motivation factors for mainland Chinese to visit Hong Kong, which positions itself as a shopping paradise.

The per capita spending of Chinese visitors is around \$1,100, of which \$800 is spent on shopping. What do they buy? The top five categories are jewelry and watches, clothing, leather (e.g., purses), cosmetics, and electronics and

cameras. In fact, retailers of jewelry and luxury brand goods reported that 80%–90% of their sales come from mainland visitors.

Source: Based on data from a *Statistical Review of Hong Kong Tourism 2011, 2014*.

But as successful as the retailing and attraction mix is at the Mall of America, management is not counting on its past decisions for future success. Additions like Underwater World, a 1.2-million-gallon walk-through aquarium, provide just one more reason for shoppers to plan a trip to experience a unique mall environment.

Other malls, such as Woodfield Mall in Schaumburg, Illinois, and Gurnee Mills Mall in Gurnee, Illinois, do not rely on added attractions to draw in visitors, just good, solid shopping opportunities. And does this work? The answer is a definite yes, as these two malls are Illinois' number-one and two tourist attractions, drawing in over 28 million visitors a year. Marketing efforts that provide incentives to tour operators and support from tourist bureaus keep the shoppers coming back in record numbers.

All of these malls pale in comparison to the roster of megamalls that dot the Asian continent. Nine of the ten largest malls can be found on this continent. Based on leasable space, only the West Edmonton Mall can be found in the top ten. The others are located in China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Turkey. In addition to shopping, foodservice, and theaters, these attractions include everything from ski slopes, casinos and human-made beaches to aquariums, theme parks, spas, hotels, performing arts venues, and IMAX theaters.

When you think of a trip to the Big Apple you probably imagine visiting its famous sites, such as the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty. But international visitors think of New York City as a shoppers' paradise. Shopping is the number-one activity for overseas visitors to New York City, who account for over 70% of visitor retail sales.³³ In fact, Bloomingdale's claims that it is the city's third largest tourist attraction.³⁴

When it comes to shopping, the motto "build it and they will come" works! Ontario Mills Mall, located 60 miles east of Los Angeles, California, attracts over 20 million shoppers each year. About 40% of these shoppers are tourists, coming from as far away as Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines, while tour buses, approximately 2,000 a year, bring in the not-so-distant tourists. All of this tourist traffic doesn't just happen by accident. The mall has an office of tourism and marketing staff targeting not only countries but also tour operators, airlines, and other travel industry representatives.³⁵

The importance of shopping to tourism has become so significant in recent years that it has given rise to a distinct category of travel with a purpose: **shopping tourism**. Although the activity is distinct and growing, there is still some disagreement on how it should be defined. Even though there may be some disagreement as to a common definition, there seems to be one common theme; shopping is the main purpose of the trip. "Studies on the role of shopping in tourist destination choice and experience identify four types of tourists (i.e., serious shoppers, non-shoppers, arts-and-crafts shoppers, and not-so-serious shoppers) based on a combination of the importance of shopping in destination choice and actual participation in shopping activities" (p. S14).³⁶