Damascus Shopping the Souq al-Hamidiyya by Lek Boonlert

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Hotel staff will quickly tell you that the ultimate shopping experience in the city is the Souq al-Hamidiyya. You enter a wide street of shops, all packed into the area like sardines in a can, through a columned portal of an ancient Roman temple which was constructed on the site of an older structure. The first thing that you will sense is that the air is thick with the aroma of cumin and other aromatic Middle Eastern spices.

There are numerous passages from the street which open up to shopping venues that sell everything you could possibly imagine, including copper goods, inlaid boxes, leather items, and some of the finest silk scarves in the world. Standing at the end of the Souq al-Hamidiyya is the great Umayyad mosque, a fabulous structure featuring three minarets; recognised as an architectural wonder.

Everywhere that you shop you will find sacks filled with soaps, spices, or sweets. Why not treat yourself to a special rose water and almond flavoured ice cream adorned with pistachio nuts and served up in Bakdash, the oldest ice cream parlour in the country. Make sure that you top off your shopping experience by enjoying this local delicacy before you leave the area.

Finally, most of the shopping venues are open from 9.30am until 9.00pm, although some will close during the summer months between 1.30pm and 4.00pm. The front desk of your Damascus accommodation can provide you with the latest information prior to setting out on your shopping adventure.

Whether you are looking for economy or five star hotels, Damascus provides a full range of accommodation options to suit all budgets.

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