

## (Style on a Dime) Host A Party Part II: Recycle, Reduce, Reuse

Written by Marcia Humphrey  
Friday, 10 July 2009 11:54

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The summer sunshine has our family feeling pretty festive, so of course that puts me in the mood for another party. I have already decided my next party's theme and I am very excited about it. No offense fellas, but this particular party is more of a fun girlie gathering-perfect for around ten or so girlfriends.

There is one catch. The friends that you invite must be able to appreciate the green lifestyle, and I am not talking about having loads of money. It's quite the opposite. Y our guests must be able to get a thrill from acquiring items from sources other than Macy's, Nordstrom's, or Bloomingdale's. The ladies have to find pleasure and satisfaction in locating "nearly new" hidden treasures discovered in a friend's home.

I am inviting a few girlfriends over for what I am calling a Swap and Sweets Party. The idea is pretty simple. We all have things in our homes --clothes, accessories, home-goods, books, etc that are in great shape, but no longer serve the intended purpose, for one reason or another. At this swap party each guest will bring a predetermined number of nearly new and well-cared-for items, and then shop for that same amount of "almost new" items to take home. The best part is that this type of shopping costs no money- it's free (the second best part is that this type of recycling is also earth-friendly)!

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If this type of gig calls to your inner-thrifter, and you want an excuse to hang out with your girls (and eat a little of course), then here are few ideas for to throw a successful swap party of your own!

### ***No Junk Allowed***

To make this party really fun and functional, the guest list should include friends with similar standards of quality. In your invitation, let the ladies know that items must be in new condition-no necklaces with missing jewels or cracked dessert platters. Everything must look like new!

### ***Decide What's Swappable***

Be practical about it. For instance don't allow baby clothes if only one of the swappers has an infant. Select widely used items-clothes (if many of the people are in the same size range), accessories, books, CDs, and house wares i.e. vases, appliances, art, or pillows.

### ***Have A System***

To keep the swap orderly, upon each guest's arrival, the host can give one Monopoly dollar for each for each item donated. That way, the guest can "buy" the same number of items that she contributed. Another good idea is to have guests draw straws to determine the order in which each swapper shops. To make sure everyone gets a fair turn to shop you'll most likely you want to limit the number of items a shopper can choose at one time-maybe two or three.

### ***What to Serve***

Let's start with what not to serve-no fried chicken. We don't want the merchandise covered in

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grease stains!

My menu will be light for my

Swap and Sweets Party --a few bite-sized desserts and fresh fruit.

Since food is not the main attraction, keep it simple.

If possible, have your guests drop off the items in advance so that they can be properly arranged. Designate an area in your home to display all of the merchandise, placing like things together.

Create a boutique vibe by using the cleared-off coffee table, end tables, chairs, and bins to showcase all of the goodies.

Now let there be

shopping!

Question: Why have a Swap party? Answer: Why not? Good Friends+ Good Fellowship + Good Cause (to keep you in style on a dime-in this case for free!)=Good Idea!

Enjoy!

*Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.*