

# GARAGE SALES

## Shopping at a Flea Market

Flea markets or swap meets are large, often open-air markets full of all kinds of goods for sale. They're like giant yard sales, all lined up and ready for shopping. But there are some things you should know before hitting the flea market or swap meet.

### MAKE AN IMPRESSION

There can be hundreds of vendors at a flea market, or even more. It's important that you make an impression on these seasoned sellers. That doesn't start the way you think it does. First of all, you need to dress down. Don't wear any expensive clothing or jewelry. Not only might you work up a sweat shopping, but you also don't want to tip sellers off that you have money to spend. Appear frugal and leave the brand names at home. Haggling is the usual process at flea markets, and looking like you've got money is a tip off to a seller.

### BRING YOUR CASH, FOOD AND WATER

While contactless sales are becoming more and more the



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norm during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the flea market, cash is still king. You should bring a variety of bills, but only as much as you're willing to spend that day. Carry small bills. Most vendors can't make change for larger ones.

You should also bring your own snacks and water. These markets can be enormous and may or may not offer concessions to keep fueling

your shopping trip. Bring your own water and easy-to-carry snacks, like granola or protein bars, to keep you going.

### GET THERE EARLY, STAY LATE

The best times to snag a great deal is early, before the masses, or later, when vendors are looking at packing up their goods to take home without a profit. There's a

case to be made either way. Shopping earlier means that you get your pick of the goods on offer, but you may have to haggle more for it. Shopping later means you may get a better price, but less of a choice. It's up to you to decide which strategy would work best for you. Much depends on the type of flea market and what you're looking for.

### COME PREPARED

Cash and comfortable shoes aren't the only things you need to make sure you bring. You also need to plan for carting your purchases around and getting them home. That may mean bringing a pickup truck for larger finds, like home furnishings, or a bag for lots of smaller purchases, like jewelry and other items.

You should also bring a notebook to make notes on items you spot, including measurements and the like, and so that you know where to go back if something catches your eye that you initially pass up.

### BE READY TO THINK FAST

Plan ahead for your purchases carefully. Make lists of what you're looking for before you go. Take measurements of spaces for furniture or artwork before you leave the house. All that prep means that, once you're there, you can think quickly on your feet. When you see an item, make a decision quickly and move on. Lingering may mean missing other opportunities in the market, but passing up that item at that time may set you up for disappointment later. Be ready to act quickly and decisively once you're on the ground at the market.



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### SELLER'S TIP

#### Spice Up your Display

Flat is boring. Spice up your display with various heights, levels and dimensions, say experts at Shipshewana Trading Place, the Midwest's largest flea market. Use tables and floor displays and create height on your tables with different sized crates.

## AD SPACE