

GARAGE SALES

A History of Garage Sales

Garage sales have lots of names: tag sale, moving sale, yard sale, rummage sale. All are terms for the sale of used goods by your average Joe, without collecting sales taxes or having to get a business license. These are usually sales of unwanted items for a little extra money. But how did they originate? Let's explore.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The term rummage sale is said to have originated at the docks where seagoing ships would sell unclaimed or damaged goods at a discounted rate.

The term came to encompass sales of used goods in a variety of settings, such as sales arranged by churches or charitable groups.

POPULARIZING GARAGE SALES

Garage sales didn't become popular until the 1950s and 1960s. Americans were becoming



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more affluent at the same time the garage was becoming a necessary (and often front-facing) part of the American home. It was easy for Americans to discard unused items through sales that took place in the shelter of their

garages or on their sprawling yards.

MODERN GARAGE SALES

Today's garage sale merchandise is just as varied as those early sales on international docks. They often feature used

home furnishing, games and toys, clothing and just about everything in between. They attract droves of bargain hunters looking for good deals on all sorts of goods. Some of the more popular items at garage sales tend to be furniture, toys,

jewelry, home décor, art work and sporting goods.

WHAT NOT TO SELL

There are also some things you shouldn't sell at a garage sale. Family Handyman advises the savvy shopper to steer clear of helmets, child car seats, wet suits and swimsuits, mattresses, computers and tablets, shoes, sheets and bedding, baby bottles, untested electronics, makeup, stuffed animals, paint and other household chemicals.

The reasons vary, but they all boil down to this – when you purchase these items used, you can't guarantee that they're safe for use. They may have cracks or come with a dose of free creepy crawlies. Consumer Reports also advises against selling very valuable or specialty items at a garage sale; they may fetch more at a shop designed to sell those kinds of goods.

KEEP VALUABLES SAFE

It may also be difficult to keep your valuables safe at a garage sale, which tends to attract crowds of shoppers.

Speaking of those strange crowds, the magazine also says to keep your home locked and don't let anyone inside for any reason.

It might also be a good idea to recruit friends and family to help you keep an eye on things.

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BUYER'S TIP

Know What You Purchase

Today's garage sales may have all kinds of merchandise in just about any condition under the sun, but know what you're getting into when you're making a purchase. That means trying out the merchandise to see that it works as advertised, including asking to plug in electronics to make sure they work before you hand over cash. The same goes for power tools and exercise equipment; make sure you're making an informed purchase, even when it's for pennies on the dollar.

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