



### **Yankee Swap Official Rules and variations from YankeeSwap.com**

The most popular version of the White Elephant or Yankee Swap Rules say any number of people may participate, including children. However, the minimum number of participants should be at least four or else the game is not much fun. Each participant is asked to bring along a gift worth no more than a pre-agreed amount, generally around \$25.

Participants draw numbers from a hat to determine their swap order from one up to the total number of participants. Each person gets a crack at choosing a gift. The person who picks the first gift opens it and shows it to the rest of the company. Then the number two participant picks a gift and chooses to **either** unwrap it **or** swap it for an unwrapped gift. If the gift is swapped, the person who had their gift taken from them gets to unwrap the chosen gift and the turn passes.

When all the gifts have been opened, the game is over. Afterward, some trading should be expected and is perfectly acceptable so that, as much as possible, everyone goes home with a gift they are happy with.

### **There are many variations of the traditional Yankee Swap.**

Instead of picking names from a hat try using the Yankee Swap planner to get your personalized swap plan and random swap order on the Plan a Swap page at <http://www.yankeeswap.com/plan-a-yankee-swap.php>.

A common twist to the game is that after all gifts have been unwrapped to then allow the number one swapper to choose a gift from any of the unwrapped gifts.

Since items can be stolen, the item in your possession is not yours until the game is over. However, this is often amended with a rule declaring a gift "dead" or "safe" after it has been stolen a certain number of times (usually three). This helps the process go more smoothly (avoiding, for example, the hypothetical scenario of the same gift being stolen by every successive participant) and limits the disadvantage of being among the first to choose gifts.

A variation of the game that involves more stealing of gifts (and potentially more confusion) goes like this: The first participant unwraps a gift from the pile and then shows it to everyone. The next player can either "steal" an already opened gift or be adventurous and go for a wrapped gift from the pile. If the participant chooses to steal an unwrapped gift, the person whose gift is stolen now repeats his turn and either steals another person's gift (he cannot immediately steal back the gift that was just stolen from him) or unwraps a new gift. This cycle of stealing can sometimes continue for a long time, until a new gift is chosen, at which point the turn is passed to the next participant.

For another version of The Yankee Swap, instead of numbers from a hat two decks of cards are used. Each deck is shuffled individually and one of them is dealt to the players. One person flips the top card of the remaining deck, whoever has the matching card then takes a gift. The next card is flipped and that person takes a gift or takes someone else's unwrapped gift. This continues until everyone has had a chance.

Another variant extends the game further: after the last person's turn, the first person has the option of keeping their current gift (in which case the game ends), or swap with anyone else. If they choose to swap, the next person now has the option of either keeping the gift, or swapping. In this variant, the game only ends when either someone keeps the gift, or a gift has exceeded its trading limit.

One variation states that the gifts must not be purchased, but rather are items that one finds lying around the house or the garage, things that are valuable but for which you have found no use.

### **Do's**

Play the game with a sense of humor.

### **Don'ts**

Do not take the outcome too seriously. Do not bring gifts that are absolute junk and unlikely to be useful to anyone. Remember, The Yankee Swap is about all about giving.

### **Yankee Swap Gift Ideas and Tips**

The gift you bring should be something you would be happy to receive. Your gift doesn't necessarily have to appeal to the entire group, however, it should be appropriate for more than a few people or at least something that can be regifted, otherwise someone might get stuck with something they have absolutely no use for. Try not to bring something that is too gender specific, for example, don't bring a gift certificate to that chic designer had bag store unless you are sure nobody would mind getting it.