

Hosting a Christmas Cookie Swap

I enjoy hosting an annual Christmas cookie swap typically on the second Saturday in December depending on the way the dates fall on the calendar. I want to have it early enough in the month that guests aren't too busy and already overwhelmed. Friends, family and neighbors are invited and are encouraged to bring anyone who wants to attend. I ask guests to come at 10:00 AM.

Those who cannot come, but want to swap, may bring their "goods" prior to the event, and pick up the swapped items later in the day. Cookie swaps are an efficient way to spend less preparation time and have a variety of baked goods.

Each guest is asked to bring ten dozen homemade cookies packaged separately by the dozen. Cello bags, plates, decorative boxes or tins make a nice presentation. (Savvy "swappers" purchase containers on clearance the year before.) Food gifts such as: jars of homemade salsa, savory party mix, cookie mix in a jar, and homemade candies are comparable to a dozen cookies.

Swap items are placed on the dining table and we enjoy refreshments and holiday music while waiting for everyone to arrive. Then we gather around all of the beautifully packaged items for a group photo and the swap begins!

After the swap, those who don't need to leave immediately can continue to visit and enjoy refreshments.

I usually put an assortment of swapped items in a freezer-safe container to serve on Christmas Day. Then I use the remaining items to as gifts such as: for church staff, school administrators, a friend in a nursing home resident, etc. Holidays can be an emotionally difficult time for those grieving a loss or who are lonely. A cookie swap is an opportunity to be an encouragement to others.

Refreshment Ideas:

Hot apple cider	Coffee	Fruit	fruit dip
Baked breads	mini muffins	scones	
Mini quiche	sausage balls	pigs in the blanket	

Note:

You may want to provide a temporary container such as trays, baskets, or large bags for guests to collect their ten selected items.