



Shop smart at a thrift store with these 11 tips

By Kat McNabb, Guadalupe Resale Shop

Anyone who's walked into the supermarket hungry knows the importance of carrying a shopping list. If not, your cart might be overflowing with potato chips, cookies and ice cream, and your grocery bill almost certainly will be higher than anticipated.

The same phenomenon occurs at a department store. While you might not have found the right slacks to complement your new blouse, you did stumble upon a splendid pair of high heels that go perfect with... well, you're not quite sure, but they are exquisite!

No matter where you shop, it's important to stick to a plan.

At Guadalupe Resale Shop, we carry a wide assortment of items: like-new furniture, home décor, kitchenware, artwork, lamps, linens, DVDs and CDs, books and all types of ladies and men's clothing, including accessories such as jewelry, purses and nearly new shoes. That's why we also encourage customers to come with a plan – not necessarily a shopping list, but general needs or wants for particular types of items.

Below are 11 tips for effectively shopping at a thrift store:

- (1) Take measurements at home. That solid oak armoire with ornate brass handles is a fantastic find, so you buy it, only to find out later that it's an inch too big for the space. Always take measurements prior to browsing for furniture, or even living room accessories like lamps and artwork.
- (2) Know the cause. Many thrift stores, including Guadalupe Resale Shop, support a nonprofit organization, but for-profit thrift stores are out there. Proceeds at Guadalupe Resale Shop support Guadalupe Center's mission of breaking the cycle of poverty through education for the children of Immokalee.
- (3) Check everywhere. Many thrift stores don't have floorplans laid out like a big-box store with long, numbered aisles categorized by product types. Get a lay of the land before browsing so you know where to find different types of merchandise.

- (4) Consider alternate uses. A porcelain vase, for example, might have been manufactured to hold flowers, but an artist in the family could easily hand-paint the container as a standalone piece of art. Items often can be repurposed to create one-of-a-kind statement pieces for a home or patio.
- (5) Think about others. Even if your home is complete, chances are you have a friend or family member who might welcome a table decoration, desk clock or piece of ornamental art. Resale shops offer both bargains and one-of-a-kind presents ideal for gift-giving.
- (6) Look at labels. Clothing displayed on sales racks represents a variety of original price points, but we often see designer labels, some of which are brand new with price tags still attached.
- (7) Know what day to shop. Stores often have discounts and promotions for different days of the week. Guadalupe Resale Shop offers a senior discount of 25 percent off one item on Wednesdays, for example, so that's a prime opportunity to shop if you're 55 and over. Check for holiday specials as well.
- (8) Check a store's location. Residents often drop off donations at the nearest resale shop, so inventory at stores in affluent neighborhoods can reflect those demographics. Since moving to its North Naples location, Guadalupe Resale Shop has become a favorite donation spot for residents of Pelican Bay, Collier's Reserve and Audubon Country Club.
- (9) Connect with the store digitally. Join the resale shop's email distribution list to receive special offers and promotions, and follow the store on social media to stay in the loop.
- (10) Come back. While department stores receive new merchandise shipments on large box trucks once or twice a week, resale stores process donations throughout the day and staff are continuously restocking shelves with new inventory.
- (11) Donate first. Clear room for new purchases by donating your surplus items to Guadalupe Resale Shop. Volunteers process donations from the back of the store, and customers can then drive around to the front and start shopping!

About the Author

Kat McNabb is manager of [Guadalupe Resale Shop](#), a boutique that sells like-new furniture, home décor, kitchenware, artwork, lamps, linens, DVDs and CDs, books and all types of ladies and men's clothing, including accessories such as jewelry, purses and nearly new shoes. Donations are tax-deductible, and proceeds directly benefit Guadalupe Center's educational programs.