

The global guide to tipping

The Men's Health guide to when and when not to reach into your pocket:

France

"By law, a 15 per cent service charge known as 'servis compris' is already included in your restaurant bill," says Tamiko Zablith, certified business etiquette consultant and managing director of the Minding Manners consultancy. No need for an encore then.

DO: Round up the bill to the nearest Euro. Despite the service charge, it is still customary to leave small change.

DON'T: Expect effusive "merci." Eating is an incredibly serious business across La Manche, so it's not always service with a smile.

Italy

Like moped riding and wolf whistling, tipping is customary in Italy – and a few Euros can make a lot happen.

DO: "Check if a service charge or 'coperto' is included. If it's not, 10% of the bill is acceptable in restaurants," says Zablith. "Hotels generally add a service charge of 15-18%, but it is customary to tip the service staff extra on top of this."

DON'T: Follow the lead of the tight-fisted locals who rarely tip taxi drivers; 5-10% is appropriate for visitors. Also, try to avoid offering large tips to referees.

Spain

"Locals don't tip in Spain - it's actually seen as bribery," says Helen Warburton, head of the Post Office Travel Services.

DO: Leave a small 5-10% tip for services if you're a visitor, although note that in many locations, a nominal service charge is already included. Just to keep things nicely above board

DON'T: Forget to slide your guide a bit extra if you're on a tour; 10 per cent should keep him waving his yellow flag high.

The United States

Ironically for the 'Land of the Free', tipping is customary and expected for nearly everything. "This is reflective of the underlying ultra-capitalist culture of the states," says Ian Strafford-Taylor of foreign exchange service, FairFX. And of the fact that most yanks obviously have more money than sense.

DO: As Mr Pink pointed out in *Reservoir Dogs*, waitresses are one of the many groups the US government "fucks in the ass on a regular basis". So tip, and tip generously, as failure to reward good table service with 15-20% is a no-no. "Only unsatisfactory service deserves 10%," says Strafford-Taylor. "And you are expected to tip anyone who does anything for you – ranging from the doorman at the hotel to the theatre usher."

DON'T: Leave coins instead of notes; it is considered rude. Basically, nickels and dimes equate to jack and shit. If it doesn't fold, don't leave it.

Japan

To avoid offence and embarrassment, not only should you never tip in Japan, you should also avoid counting your change after paying a bill in a store or restaurant.

DO: Keep your yen firmly in your wallet. One of the very few exceptions is if you find yourself at a first-class Ryokan (Japanese-style inn), where it is custom to give a tip to the room clerk, although still not mandatory.

DON'T: Try to give tips in any other scenario as it is considered rude. "Tipping is seen as almost patronising and somewhat vulgar," says Strafford-Taylor. "The proposed recipient can easily become offended: the culture is about respect for others, so every job is done with total focus and effort – from road sweeper right through to company director." Sadly, you do still have to pay for the stuff you buy though.

Egypt

The Western notion of tipping is a practice which resembles "baksheesh" in Egypt – a term used to describe everything from charitable giving to certain forms of political corruption and bribery across the Middle East. "Baksheesh is very much a way of life in Egypt," says Warburton. Not a type of oven-ready kebab then.

DO: Leave 10% of the meal value for most restaurant service; for other small services, a few Egyptian pounds will suffice.

DON'T: Tip for a taxi: the entire fee is generally negotiated as part of the upfront bargaining.

New Zealand

Fantastically, it is not customary to tip in New Zealand. No wonder those little guys with the hairy feet were so unwilling to leave.

DO: Tip if you receive truly exceptional service – especially with hotel concierges, or in restaurants or cafes. "The amount is at your discretion, but generally remains comfortably under 10%," says Zablith. Some people might call this tight. We call it a result.

DON'T: Feel obliged to tip your waiter, as even he won't give you an evil eye if you don't dig deep; it's just not expected. (Oh, and probably best not to make any bad Middle Earth gags either).

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