

Tipping in the U.S.A.

The minimum wage for tipped employees varies from State to State, from an unusual high of \$8.67 an hour in Washington, down to a low of \$2.13 an hour in 14 States. To check the rate for the State(s) you are visiting, visit the [U.S.A. Department of Labor](http://www.dol.gov) website. The suggestions given below are based on lower wage rates – you can adjust them as you think applicable for higher-waged States such as Washington and California.

RESTAURANTS WITH TABLE SERVICE:

- Tip 15% of the bill, based on the quality of service. If you receive exceptional service, 25% is customary.
- If you're with a large group be sure to check your bill – the gratuity is often added for groups of six or more onto the bill.
- It is worth mentioning that New York restaurants have started adding automatic gratuity even though the number of people eating is far less than six. Even with a group of three, gratuity of 20% seems to be automatic both in restaurants and in 'pubs'. It is important to always check the bill.
- At very fancy restaurants, you should tip the sommelier (wine waiter) separately, at your discretion.

BUFFET RESTAURANTS WITH LIMITED TABLE SERVICE:

- A tip of 10% to 15% of the bill is still recommended because the servers typically work harder keeping the buffet line stocked and clean, and often provide table service for drinks. Also, the minimum tip should be \$1 per person, do not leave only 75 cents for a \$5.00 buffet.
- As always, if you feel you have not been well-served, adjust the gratuity down. If a tip has been added to your bill beforehand because your party was 6 or more, but the server was inadequate or rude, inform the manager immediately before you pay your bill that you want the tip adjusted.

COUNTER SERVICE/FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS:

- These establishments often have tip jars out, but you are not required to tip. If the service is exemplary or unusual requests are made, then tips are appropriate.

BARTENDERS:

- \$1 - \$2 per drink, or 15-20% of the total bill.

HOTELS AND CASINOS:

- **Hotel housekeeping/maid service:** \$2-3 per night up to \$5, more in high-end hotels. Also more if there are more than 3 people in a room or suite. Leave the tip on your pillow or in a similar obvious place with a note that says thank you. Leave the tip each day when you leave the room, rather than at the end of your stay, because your room might get cleaned

by different people each day, depending on staff schedules. If you have additional items delivered to your room, such as extra pillows, hangers, luggage racks, tip the person who brings them \$2 or \$3.

- **Concierge:** Tipping is never expected, but always appreciated. The more difficult the request, the higher the tip. \$5.00 and up per request is good.
- **In-suite dining waiter:** Always read the bill, if there is a tip included, it will be on the bill breakdown. Ask the server. The policy of having the gratuity included in the bill is not the norm anymore. A service charge or convenience fee goes to the hotel, not the server. If there is no gratuity added, tip the server 15% - 20%.
- **Bellman/porter:** \$1-2 per bag.
- **Taxi driver:** 10-15% of fare, based on service.
- **Hotel limo driver:** For a free ride from the airport, \$10 - \$20, less according to the number of people sharing.
- **Drink Server in a casino or bar:** \$1-\$2 per drink. Some tip \$5 for the first drink to make sure the waitress "remembers" them and returns often.
- **Valet Parkers:** \$2 - \$5 (when picking up car).
- **Dealers at Table Games in the Casinos:** 5% of bet amount at end of session, or occasional bet for dealer in amount of your normal wager – the dealer can show you where to place bet. You could announce "I have a \$xx bet for the dealers, where do you want it?". The bet is usually placed in front of the player's bet
- **Slot machines host:** \$10-20 if they make a hand payout (over \$1000).
- **Spa:** For a massage or other treatment, 10% - 20%. Ask if the tip has been included, some spas will include a gratuity on your final bill.
- **Hairdresser/manicurist:** 10% - 20%.
- **Showroom captains:** \$1-2 for the person who seats you, more if you asked for "special" seating - \$20 for a requested booth or table, more for one up front.
- **Tour Guides:** 15% - 20% + depending on quality (knowledge, friendliness, etc).

Urban myths persist that "TIPS" is an acronym for a phrase such as "To Insure Prompt Service", "To Insure Proper Service", "To Improve Performance", "To Inspire Promptness" or "To Insure Promptness." While none of these can be proven to be true as far as the origin of the expression goes, in reality good tipping does, indeed, go a long way towards guaranteeing good service.