

Tipping Etiquette

Not knowing the proper tip or gratuity for a service can be very unsettling. The rest of your party might not know it, but inside you might feel highly stressed as you walk up to the coat check or curbside check-in. The challenge is not everyday situations, but when you are taken out of your normal environment. We are offering tipping guidelines to help you when you use services at the [airport](#), [hotel](#), [touring](#), [cruising](#), taking a [cab](#), or just [dining out](#).

[Return to top](#)

Have Mercy

Have you had a hard day traveling or at work? Do you feel a little grumpy? Were you sharp with someone? Well, guess what! People in service industries don't always have great days either. Show them a little mercy and assume the best about them. Maybe your waiter is a little absent-minded because his mother is sick in the hospital. Instead of skipping the tip, talk to the manager about poor service.

[Return to top](#)

At the Airport

The first opportunity to tip during travel is usually upon arriving at the airport or train station. Here are some tipping guidelines:

- Porter - \$1 per bag or more if the bags are heavy.
- Skycap - \$1 per bag or more if the bags are heavy. \$1-\$2 extra for curbside check-in is optional.
- Tip \$1 if the doorman hails you a cab. If he also carries your bags, tip the same \$1 per bag noted above.

[Return to top](#)

At the Hotel

Before you arrive at a nicer hotel or resort, inquire as to whether gratuities are included in the price of the room. Some hotels are now charging a daily fee that covers all tipping for hotel services. If there is not a daily fee, these rates are appropriate:

- Valet or parking attendant - \$1-2 is appropriate for parking or returning the car. It is not necessary to tip for parking, but always for returning the car.
- Doorman - If he hails you a cab, \$1-2. If he helps you with your bags in or out of the car, \$0.50-1 a bag. Use \$1-2 per bag if he carries them all the way to the room.
- Bellman - When he helps you with your bags, tip \$1-2 per bag. Give him the tip when he shows you your room. If he just carries the bags to the front desk and then disappears, save it for the person who carries the bags to your room. Upon checkout, tip a bellman who helps with your bags. Tip more for additional services.
- Concierge - \$5-10 for help with hard-to-get dinner reservations or theater tickets. Tipping is optional for just plain advice. Tipping can be done at the end of the trip or at the time of service, just keep is straight so that you are fair.
- Room Service - If gratuity is included, add nothing or \$1. Otherwise add 15-20% to the total charge.
- Delivery of special items - If you request extra pillows or an iron, tip \$1 per item received, minimum \$2.
- Maid service - \$1-3 per day. Tip daily because there might be a different maid each day. Leave the tip on your pillow. Err on the side of being generous, and tip on the last day also.
- Swimming pool or gym attendant - Nothing, unless you require special services such as extra seating or inflating pool toys.
- Hotel staff - Nothing to replace a light bulb, fix the air conditioning, etc.

[Return to top](#)

Touring

Check ahead. If the tip is not already included, give 10-15% of the tour price. No less than \$1-2 for a half-day tour, \$3-4 for a full-day tour, and \$5-10 for a week-long tour. This is a per-person rate. Tip private tour guides more.

[Return to top](#)

Cruise Ships

Tipping is purely a personal matter and completely up to the guest. Many cruise lines automatically add the gratuities for the dining and stateroom service to the guest's onboard charge account. It may range from \$10-\$12 per person per day. If you are not satisfied with the service you receive, you may contact guest services while on board to adjust the gratuities at any time.

The recommended guidelines are:

- \$3.50 per day : For the dining room waiter
- \$3.50 per day : For the cabin attendant
- \$1.50 per day : For the assistant waiter

- 15% is normally added to all bar service
- At your discretion : Any additional service you may want to recognize.

[Return to top](#)

Restaurants and Bars

If you are buying the meal and someone offers to get the tip, tell them they can buy next time, and you pay the whole thing. This prevents any uneasiness about them seeing the amount of the bill or worrying that they will be stingy on the tip. - Food server - 15-20%

- Cocktail server - 15-20%

- Bartender - 15-20%. If at the bar before a meal, settle up with the bartender before you go to your table.

- Wine steward - 10% of wine bill

- Busboys - Nothing, unless he did something extra special like cleaning up a huge mess. Then give him \$1-2.

- Maitre d' - Nothing, unless he gets you a special table or the restaurant is full and you had no reservation. Then give \$5-10 or more.

- Coat check - \$1

- Restroom attendant - \$1

- Separate checks - If you want separate checks, ask the server to go ahead and add 18% gratuity to each check.

- Musician in lounge - \$1-5

- Musician that visits table - \$2-3 if you make a special request. Optional if he just stops by and plays.

- Takeout - If you get good service, in other words, the waiter gets and packages the food, then tip \$1-2.

- Drive through - Nothing.

- Self-service restaurant or buffet - Nothing unless there is some service. Tip 10% if the server delivers all or part of your meal or keeps your drinks refilled.

- When breakfast is included in the price of the hotel room - Estimate the value of the meal by looking at a menu. If there is no breakfast menu, consider the quality of the hotel and the price of an evening meal, then make your best estimate. Your tip should be 15-20% of your estimate.

[Return to top](#)

Transportation

Whether you hail a cab or take a limousine, you best offer a gratuity between 10% to 15% of the fare. If the drivers are particularly rude or unhelpful, give them the minimum. But if they are attentive to your travel needs and help you in any way beyond the norm, remember and thank them with a 15% or larger gratuity. If you use valet service at a hotel, restaurant or shopping area, offer the driver 10% for the service, but never give change. Another guideline is simply offering the attendant a buck or two for the parking and retrieval of your car. And if you're traveling through an airport, and utilizing the aid of skycaps, offer a dollar per bag and up that amount if the bags are particularly heavy or large.

[Return to top](#)