

To tip or not to tip

1. Look at the photos of different professions and say if it's expected to tip these people in your country. Share your personal experience with tipping in these situations and suggest other jobs where tipping is usually customary.



2. Discuss the questions.

- What motivates people to tip?
- If or when you tip, how do you decide the amount? Do you follow a percentage, give a flat rate or adjust your tip based on the situation?
- What do you know about tipping in other countries?
- Do people often tip with cash? Can you think of alternative ways to leave a tip?

3. Complete the gaps with the correct forms of the words in the boxes to create idioms.

break

hand

hole

nose

save

stay

- A. To _____ **afloat** as a waiter, you need to make good tips. This means having to keep a positive and friendly attitude all the time, even if it doesn't come naturally.
- B. Customers **living** _____ **to mouth** shouldn't feel obligated to leave a tip, especially when every penny counts for their own needs.
- C. If you're **scrimping and** _____ as a waiter, you should consider working in a location that attracts more tourists, where tipping tends to be more generous and frequent.

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- D. I suppose waiters prefer a higher salary because cash tips might often **burn a** _____ **in their pocket**, making it harder to resist spending money right away.
- E. If you can afford to eat out, leaving a tip usually won't _____ **the bank**, as it's a small extra cost compared to the overall expense of dining out.
- F. Including tips on the bill as a mandatory service fee might leave customers feeling like they're **paying through the** _____, especially when they don't believe the service justified the extra cost.

4. Look at the statements in ex. 3 again and say if you agree or disagree, explaining your reasoning.

5. Look at the phrase in the box and say what you think it means. Then, watch the first part of a **video** [<https://youtu.be/xgwRAjmARZc>] (to 00:49) to verify your idea.

tipping fatigue

6. Some of the following sentences contain mistakes. Watch the second part of the **video** (from 00:49) and correct them.

- A. Nearly half of American consumers now tip servers around 10%.
- B. A waiter's base pay in the US can be as low as \$5.17 per hour.
- C. 61% of American consumers say they would prefer tipping instead of being charged more.
- D. During COVID-19, people in the US tipped an average of 40% because they were grateful to service workers.
- E. Tipping in Washington D.C. will be eliminated altogether in ten years.

7. Look at the information from the video and compare the situation in the US to that in your country.

- A waiter's base pay can be below the minimum wage.
- Customers don't like to be asked to leave tips when they have to self-serve.
- More than half of people would prefer to pay higher prices with tips included.
- Businesses often guilt customers into tipping by using tipping screens.



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- The bill includes a lot of additional charges (e.g. a service charge), so it might be confusing for people whether they still need to tip.
- The survey shows that people want to tip less and less these days.

8. Read about an idea mentioned in the video and discuss the questions.

In the US, some politicians have proposed to eliminate taxes on tipping, particularly for service and hospitality workers. The idea aims to support tipped workers by allowing them to keep more of their earnings, but it also raises questions about fairness and economic impact.

- Why might politicians emphasize this issue in their campaigns?
- Is eliminating taxes on tips a good idea? Consider the perspectives of servers, employers and the government.
- What potential outcomes could result from this change? Will the effects vary across regions or industries?
- Is it fair to workers in professions that don't typically receive tips?
- Would this policy make tipping more attractive or less attractive for customers, or would it make little difference to their behaviour?

9. Choose the correct words in the sentences.

- A. Tipping can enable workers to earn more, but cash tips often allow for tax **avoidance/dodging/evasion**, which reduces government revenue.
- B. Having to suppress your emotions because your **bring-home/take-home/get-home** pay relies on how you communicate with others can put a strain on your mental health.
- C. Tipping contributes to **economic/economy/economical** growth by encouraging customer spending in the service industry.
- D. Workers who have to **hasten/dash/hustle** for tips to increase their income often face financial insecurity during slower business periods.
- E. Tipping creates opportunities for workers to increase their **disposable/available/expendable** income, lowering the pressure on businesses to provide higher fixed wages.
- F. Customers often feel obliged to leave a tip to **top-up/supplement/balance** a worker's low wage but this shifts the responsibility of fair wages away from employers.

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10. Summarize the lesson using some of the points below and the vocabulary in the box.

- something new you learnt
- one thing that surprised you
- your stance on tipping after completing the lesson
- one argument for tipping and one argument against tipping that you find most convincing
- something you would like others to know about tipping systems after the lesson

break the bank

burn a hole in someone's pocket

disposable income

economic growth

hustle for tips

live hand to mouth

pay through the nose

scrimp and save

stay afloat

supplement a low wage

take-home pay

tax evasion