



## How much do you tip a Paris waiter? Or a Tokyo cabbie? Don't globetrot without this handy guide

By Everett Potter

You're sitting in a hip Tokyo cafe, having a fish cake and sake. Your server has been especially attentive, so when the check arrives, you think nothing of pulling out some extra yen and leaving a healthy 20 percent tip. But suddenly things go horribly wrong: the server turns wide-eyed, becomes agitated, and walks away. What happened?!

Tipping in Japan and many other Asian countries is simply not a way of life. In fact, it's usually regarded as a vulgar display of wealth and a disregard for the culture. The same can be true in Europe and Latin America, though not always. And in the U.S. of course, tipping is expected (and sometimes demanded). With expectations all over the map, it's not surprising that anxiety and confusion about whom to tip and how much are commonplace for travelers.

So we've done the legwork for you, talking with concierges, tourist boards, and other travelers to find out the real protocol on when (and when not) to reach into your wallet and how much of a tip you should give to waiters, sky caps, maids, doormen, and cabbies all over the world.

See our guide to tipping around the world.

Of course, tipping is confusing enough for Americans traveling domestically. The expectation is to tip not only big but also often, from the kid handing you a Venti coffee at Starbucks to the multiple hotel hands that rush to open doors, carry bags, and offer an escort to the hotel room.

Go abroad and the situation changes. The legion of skycaps, cab drivers, bellboys, and waiters may perform the same services as their U.S. counterparts, but they often have radically different expectations of a tip. You can credit different customs, as well as a service industry with a different wage scale. In the U.S., tips usually abet low wages. In other parts of the world, service employees are often paid a living wage. If you're taking

a taxi in Chile or New Zealand, for example, the driver won't give you the evil eye if you don't tip it's not expected.

At a hotel, you'll encounter more people who potentially need to be tipped than anywhere else during your travels. In fact, there are so many people it can become confusing. If a doorman opens the door of your cab, another takes your bag, and a third delivers it to your room, who gets the tip? It should be the last person in the chain—the one who actually brings the bags to your room. And at checkout, only tip the one who loads your bags onto a cart and takes them out of the room.

Restaurants can be tricky, too: keep an eye out for the service charge. In many European countries, this charge averages 10 percent, but it's usually included in the price of a meal. If it is, then do as the Europeans do, and leave a few extra coins or round up the bill in cash, even if you've paid for the meal with a credit card. And if you're heading to Fiji, Malaysia, or South Korea, be aware that no tip is required in restaurants.

Here are some other scenarios:

**Spa Therapists:** Tipping 15 or 20 percent is common practice in the United States but rare at any spa abroad, where a service charge is typically added to the cost of the treatment.

**Concierges:** Situational. If a concierge gets you theater or train tickets, or has been especially helpful during the course of your stay, then a \$10 or \$20 tip (in local currency) is in order.

**Guides:** Booking a ski guide to take you off-piste in Switzerland, a golf pro in Scotland, or a fishing guide in Ireland? All should be compensated in the 10 to 15 percent range, as they would be in the U.S.

A good tip on tipping? Get small bills or coins from your hotel's front desk to make tipping easier. But if you have only large bills, it's perfectly acceptable to ask a hotel porter or even a skycap for change when you give them a tip. After all, tips are a part of their business. They're not embarrassed, and you needn't be either. And if you don't have local currency, U.S. greenbacks can work just as well as a "thank you" in London, Lombok, or Lahore.

## NEW YORK

Whether you're from Peoria or Paris, you'll probably be shocked by how much and how often New Yorkers tip.

**Waiter:** 20% **Doorman:** \$1 (if he's holding the door or flagging a cab) **Taxi Driver:** 20% **Maid:** \$5 per person, per day **Sky Cap:** \$2 per bag

## PARIS

You might get an occasional smile but don't expect effusive "merci's" in a town where tipping is expected but never discussed.

Waiter: Service is included. Round up to the nearest euro. Doorman: 1 euro Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest euro Maid: 1 to 2 euros per person, per day Sky Cap: 1 euro per bag

## ROME

Cash makes things happen in this city, and gratitude always seems to be genuine.

Waiter: 5-10%

Doorman: 1 euro Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest euro Maid: 1 to 2 euros per person, per day Sky Cap: 1 euro per bag

## LONDON

Locals tip begrudgingly, while Americans usually tip more than they have to.

Waiter: 10%

Doorman: 1 pound Taxi Driver: 10-15 % Maid: 1 to 2 pounds per person, per day Sky Cap: 1 pound per bag

## STOCKHOLM

This is a city where the tipping is as modest as the culture itself and seems to be almost an afterthought.

Waiter: 10% (unless service is included)

Doorman: 7-14 Swedish Kronor Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest Swedish Kronor Maid: 14 or more Swedish Kronor per person, per day Sky Cap: 7 Swedish Kronor per bag

## BUENOS AIRES

Cash is king in this economy, and tips are gratefully received.

Waiter: 10%

Doorman: 3 pesos Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest peso Maid: 3 to 6 pesos per person, per day Sky Cap: 3 pesos per bag

## BANGKOK AND TOKYO

Keep your baht or yen in your pocket; you'll only insult the Thais and Japanese by proffering a tip.

Waiter: none

Doorman: none Taxi Driver: none Maid: none Sky Cap: none

## HONG KONG

The percentages are lower than New York, but the tip is expected with the same sense of entitlement.

Waiter: 10%

Doorman: 8 HK Dollars Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest HK dollar Maid: 8 to 16 HK Dollars per person, per day Sky Cap: 8 HK

## SYDNEY

Tipping is as easygoing as the culture, so expect to tip only occasionally.

Waiter: 10%

Doorman: 1 Australian dollar Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest Australian dollar Maid: 1 Australian dollar per day Sky Cap: 1 Australian dollar

## DUBAI

They have six-star hotels, so it's little wonder that they're supported by a tipping system that is fast approaching Western standards.

Waiter: 10%

Doorman: 5 dirhams Taxi Driver: Round up to the nearest dirham Maid: 5 to 10 dirhams per person, per day Sky Cap: 5 dirhams