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The Tipping Quiz Tool

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The Tipping Quiz Tool

Abstract

National surveys indicate that about one-third of the adult population in this country is unaware that they are expected to tip 15 to 20 percent of the bill in restaurants. Knowledge about the restaurant tipping norm is even lower for some groups of people (such as foreigners and ethnic minorities) and in some geographic regions. This represents a problem for restaurant managers because people who are unaware of the restaurant tipping norm generally tip less than those who are familiar with it and the small tips left by the former group can lower server morale, discourage servers from giving good service to those customers, and increase server turnover. To avoid or reduce these problems, restaurant managers should educate their customers about appropriate tipping behavior, but must do so in a way that customers do not find irritating or threatening. To help managers accomplish this task, I have developed a short quiz about tipping that can be put on table tents or menu inserts. Questions designed to increase customers awareness of tipping norms and their importance are intermixed with other interesting and fun questions about tipping and the answers to all questions are provided. Thus, customers taking this quiz should learn about appropriate tipping behavior as natural consequence of having fun taking the quiz, checking their answers, and comparing their scores with others at the table.

Keywords

Cornell, tools, gratuity, tips, servers, sales

Disciplines

Food and Beverage Management | Hospitality Administration and Management

Comments

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Test Your Tipping Knowledge!

- Where and when did tipping originate?*
 - in Europe during the Middle Ages
 - in English pubs during the 17th Century
 - in China during the Tung dynasty (620 to 905 AD)
- When did tipping come to the U.S.?*
 - before 1776
 - around 1850
 - after 1901
- How much are people expected to tip for average or normal service in U.S. restaurants?*
 - a couple of dollars
 - at least 10%
 - at least 15%
 - at least 20%
- What percentage of people in the U.S. usually tip restaurant servers?*
 - 77 percent
 - 89 percent
 - 98 percent
- What is the average tip percentage left in U.S. restaurants?*
 - 7%
 - 11%
 - 15%
 - 18%
- What percentage of most waiters' and waitresses' take home pay comes from tips as opposed to hourly wages?*
 - less than 30 percent
 - about 50 percent
 - more than 90 percent
- What city in the U.S. has the highest average restaurant tip?*
 - Chicago
 - Houston
 - Los Angeles
 - Philadelphia
- Which of the following has the biggest effect on the size of restaurant tips?*
 - customers' ratings of the service
 - paying with credit as opposed to cash
 - alcohol consumption
 - server touching the customer
- In which of the following states was tipping outlawed for a brief time during the early 1900s?*
 - California
 - New York
 - Tennessee
 - Texas
- What does the word for tip in many languages mean when translated directly into English?*
 - bribe
 - gift
 - reward
 - drink money

(answers on back)

Tipping Knowledge Answers

- Q1: A.** Craftsman Albrecht Durer asked for a "trinkgeld," or tip, for his apprentice in a letter to a customer written in 1509. So tipping dates back at least that far.
- Q2: A.** Records dating back to 1772 indicate that Thomas Jefferson tipped and George Washington is known to have tipped his brother-in-law's slaves in 1768.
- Q3: C.** It is customary to tip 15% for acceptable, normal service and 20% or more for excellent service.
- Q4: C.** A national telephone survey found that only 2 percent of respondents said they do not tip waiters and waitresses.
- Q5: D.** According to Zagat Surveys, the average national tip is 18.6% of the bill.
- Q6: C.** Most servers make less than the minimum wage and tax withholding often eats up all of their wages. So tips represent 100 percent of many servers' take-home pay.
- Q7: D.** According to Zagat Surveys, Philadelphians lead the nation in tipping with an average tip of 19.2%.
- Q8: D.** The effects on tip size of the server touching his or her customer are more than 5 times as strong as the effects of customers' service ratings, payment with credit, or alcohol consumption.
- Q9: C.** In the early 1900s, not only Tennessee, but Arkansas, Iowa, Mississippi, and South Carolina all passed laws prohibiting tipping.
- Q10: D.** The word for tip translates to "drink money" or its equivalent in Austria, Belgium, Bosnia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, and Vietnam. The next most common meaning is "tea money."

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6. *What percentage of most waiters' and waitresses' take home pay comes from tips as opposed to hourly wages?*
 - (a) less than 30 percent
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7. *What city in the U.S. has the highest average restaurant tip?*
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8. *Which of the following has the biggest effect on the size of restaurant tips?*
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9. *In which of the following states was tipping outlawed for a brief time during the early 1900s?*
 - (a) California
 - (b) New York
 - (c) Tennessee
 - (d) Texas
10. *What does the word for tip in many languages mean when directly translated into English?*
 - (a) bribe
 - (b) gift
 - (c) reward
 - (d) drink money

(answers on back)

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