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## Lifeskills: Tipping for services

### A guide to when and how much to tip

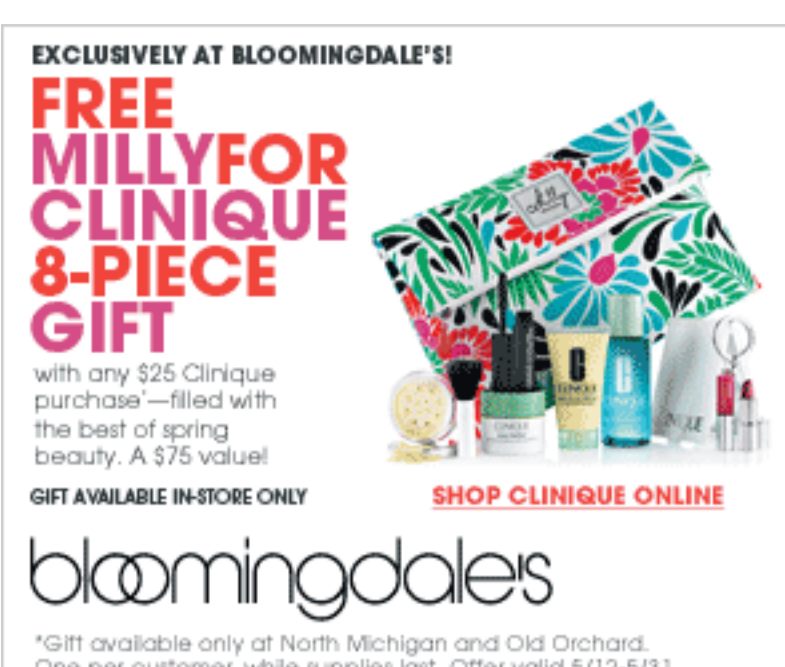
By Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz, Tribune newspapers

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Tipping is a favorite pastime in America, where nothing says "thank you" like a few dollar bills. But there is often a moment, after you get your car washed, or your furniture delivered, or your flat tire changed, when suddenly a wave of anxiety strikes. Are you supposed to tip? And if so, how much?

Here's a guide to what's customary for tipping in the U.S., compiled using information from the Emily Post Institute ([emilypost.com](http://emilypost.com)), The Original Tipping Page ([tipping.org](http://tipping.org)) and "The New Rules of Etiquette," by Curtrise Garner.

And remember: "The whole point is to thank the person," said Peggy Post, great-granddaughter-in-law of etiquette maven Emily Post and director of the Emily Post Institute. "Instead of just throwing a dollar bill at someone, the key thing is to say 'thank you.'"



#### Restaurants

Waiter: 15 percent to 20 percent (pre-tax)

Buffet: 10 percent

Bartender: \$1 per drink or 15 percent to 20 percent of the bar tab

Takeout: No need, but 10 percent for special favors

Host or maitre d': No need, but \$10-\$20 on occasion if you're a regular patron

Sommelier: 15 percent of the cost of the wine

Restroom attendant: 50 cents-\$3, depending on the service

Cloakroom attendant: \$1 per coat

Food delivery person: 10 percent of bill (pre-tax); \$2 minimum

Valet: \$2-\$5

#### Hotels

Doorman: \$1-\$2 for carrying luggage; \$1-\$2 for hailing a cab; \$1-\$4 for going beyond the call of duty

Bellhop: \$2 first bag, \$1 per additional bag

Housekeeper: \$2-\$5 per day, left daily in an envelope or with a note clearly marked for the maid

Concierge: \$5 for tickets or reservations, \$10 if they're hard to get

Room service: Check the bill to see if gratuity is included (delivery charge doesn't count); if not, tip 15 percent to 20 percent

#### Travel

Taxi driver: 15 percent, plus an extra \$1-2 if he/she helps with bags

Airport sky cap: \$2 first bag, \$1 per additional bag

Tour guide: 10 percent to 15 percent of tour cost

#### Salon

Hair dresser: 15 percent to 20 percent

Shampoo assistant: \$2.

Manicurist/Masseuse/Waxer: 15 percent to 20 percent

#### Miscellaneous

Car washer: \$2-\$5

Gas station attendant: \$1-\$2 (if they pump your gas), \$5 if they clean windshield and check fluids

Movers: Head mover is tipped \$25-\$50; crew members tipped \$15-\$30. Can do a lump sum to be split among the crew

Furniture delivery: \$5-\$20

Dog groomer: \$2-\$5

Shoe shiner: \$2-\$3

Tow truck operators (jump-start, tire change, tow): \$3-\$10

Grocery store bag loader: \$1-\$5

#### Annual tips

*For people with whom you have a regular and personal relationship*

Babysitter: One evening's pay and a small gift from your child

Live-in nanny: One week's pay and a gift from child

Doorman: \$15-\$80

Building superintendent: \$20-\$80

Yard/garden workers: \$20-\$50 each

Housecleaner: 1 week's pay

Dog walker: 1 week's pay

Mail carrier: Non-cash gift up to \$20 (Postal Service policy)

Hairdresser: Cost of one session

Personal trainer: Cost of one session

Newspaper delivery person: \$10-\$30 or a small gift

#### Caveats

Peggy Post's additional tips on tipping:

#### If the service is bad...

You tip based on quality of service – more if it's exceptional, less if it's terrible – but giving nothing is extreme. Especially at a restaurant, consider if it was really the server's fault.

#### If you don't have the right amount on you...

It's OK to ask the person for change to break a big bill. If you're not carrying enough cash, give what you have and assure them you'll tip them more later. If there will be no later, just thank profusely.

#### If you can't afford much...

Tip what you can, or give a non-monetary gift, such as a nice card or homemade cookies.

#### Going abroad?

Read up on tipping customs outside the U.S. Conde Nast Traveler published an excellent tipping guide at [conciierge.com/cntraveler/articles/500117](http://conciierge.com/cntraveler/articles/500117)

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