

## Waiters reveal what they really think about tipping

### Level 1 • Elementary

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Guardian readers & Sarah Marsh

11 May, 2016

#### Introduction

Did you know that, in the UK, there is no law that says restaurants have to pass on tips to staff?

A new government report asked workers, employers and customers what they thought about tipping. After reading the report, the UK government says it wants to change the rules to make sure that low-paid workers get the tips that customers leave for them.

The report said that some waiters are made to pay a 15% administration fee on tips that customers pay by credit or debit card.

The government said that it wants customers to know that tips are voluntary. They want the tipping process to be made clearer so that everyone can understand it.

We asked waiters around the UK what they think of tipping, including how much money they get from tips and if it's fair.

#### 1. Rodri, 37, London: 'Around 50% of a waiter's income is tips'

**Average tips:** £60 per eight-hour shift

**I think they treat waiters best in ...** the US

Everything has got fairer since the tipping scandal in the summer of 2015. This is when lots of restaurants were taking money from tips for administration fees. But you still hear horror stories from new employees at some chains.

I get about £60 in tips per shift. On a good night, this goes up to over £100 and, on a poor night, it's around £40. Around 50% of a waiter's income is tips. All restaurants should have to tell customers what they do with tips. American waiters are lucky – everyone tips in America.

#### 2. Elle, 22, Edinburgh: 'We never know whether it's fair'

**Average tips:** £20 per eight-hour shift

**I think they treat waiters best in ...** France

I have three part-time jobs. My day job is in a café where the staff work both in the café and in the kitchen so all our tips go in a pot and we all get the same. My evening job is at a restaurant where we

don't get our tips but we get the minimum wage plus an extra £2.50 per hour. My third job is events catering and nobody ever tips.

In restaurants, because a lot of customers add tips by card, the staff never see how much the tip is – so we don't know if what we get is fair or not. The system seems better in France, where they don't tip much but being a waiter is seen as a proper job with job security and good wages.

#### 3. Ashley, 22, London: 'Tips go towards customer breakages'

**Average tips:** £10-15 per eight-hour shift

**I think they treat waiters best in ...** Australia

I work in a London pub in the evenings and I do day shifts at a local restaurant. In both places, all the tips are collected and shared out at the end of the night. Money is taken from the tips to pay for breakages by staff and customers.

It is very unfair that our tips are shared out, especially when one member of the team doesn't work hard enough. It's really unfair that money from our tips is taken for breakages by customers. The managers should have ways to pay for broken glasses and plates without taking our tips. I make around £20 a shift in tips but often I only get £10-15 of that money.

I really need tips because I am only paid £7 an hour. I'd prefer to get a good basic wage (like in Australia) and not have to rely on tips.

#### 4. Tom, Manchester: 'A big night of tips can help pay the rent'

**Average tips:** £40 per eight-hour shift

**I think they treat waiters best in ...** Italy

Where I used to work, waiters kept 80% of cash tips and 40% of card tips. The rest went to the other staff in the restaurant.

It's hard to say how much I earn in a shift; maybe about £40. It can make a big difference. Sometimes, waiters need a good night to be able to pay their rent.

They have got tipping right in Italy, where customers don't add a big tip but usually round up their bill so, if their meal is €19, they leave a €20 note and don't ask for change.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

Answer each question with either R (Rodri), E (Elle), A (Ashley) or T (Tom).

1. Who gets the most tips?
2. Who says money is taken from the tips when a customer breaks something?
3. Who works in a catering job where no one ever leaves a tip?
4. Who needs their tips because they are only paid £7 per hour?
5. Who gets the minimum wage plus an extra £2.50 per hour but no tips?
6. Who says waiters sometimes need their tips to pay the rent?
7. Who says that about 50% of a waiter's income comes from tips?
8. Who says that waiters do not know if the tips they get by card are fair?

#### 4 Phrasal verbs

a. Join the words to make phrasal verbs from the article.

- |          |        |
|----------|--------|
| 1. pass  | a. up  |
| 2. go    | b. out |
| 3. share | c. up  |
| 4. round | d. on  |

b. Match each phrasal verb with the correct definition.

1. increase; get larger
2. increase a number to the nearest whole number or the nearest number ending in zero
3. give something that you have received to someone else
4. give a part of something to different people

c. Use the phrasal verbs to complete the sentences about the article.

1. On good nights in London, tips can \_\_\_\_\_ to over £100.
2. Some restaurants \_\_\_\_\_ tips so that all the staff get something.
3. In Italy, customers usually don't give a large tip but they \_\_\_\_\_ the bill.
4. In the UK, restaurants do not legally have to \_\_\_\_\_ tips to staff.



# **The menu: the world's favourite piece of paper**

October 28, 2016

by: Nicholas Lander

The menu is the single piece of paper that gives the world the most pleasure. To date, nobody has successfully challenged me when faced with this bold statement.

Bank statements are only cheering if you are in credit. A peace treaty implies that one side has lost. A marriage or birth certificate is pored over only very infrequently. And, of course, in a few years' time these sorts of documents might not exist in a physical form at all.

Menus do appear on the internet — although I try never to look at them before going to a restaurant so as not to spoil the surprise — but they will have to continue in physical form as an ingredient in the make-up of every restaurant, one of the very few businesses that can never move entirely into cyberspace.

Indeed, a common reaction from those I have spoken to about my book has been: "I wish you'd told me a few weeks ago. I had an enormous pile of old menus which I've only just thrown out." Further proof that menus fulfil a role that no other piece of paper can match as a memento of a celebration or an exceptionally good meal.

Certain menus remain the closest we can get to what it must have been like to live through the siege of Paris in 1870, for example, or to face the havoc inflicted on your profession as a restaurateur in the US on the eve of Prohibition in 1920.

The slow evolution of the menu since it first appeared in the Paris restaurants of the early 19th century is a remarkable thing: a wonderful way to travel across time and place. But as with anything there are improvements to be made, in imagination and design, that will give restaurant-goers even greater pleasure.

As long as we have the appetite, the menu is here to stay.

## **An Italian odyssey: The menu at Osteria Francescana**

Massimo Bottura agreed to meet and talk menus with me at 6pm on a Saturday evening in the Champagne Room of the Connaught Hotel, Mayfair, London, because there they make the very best Bloody Mary, in his opinion.