



The Tipping Cheat Sheet

Who gets tipped, how much, and when it's genuinely optional — U.S. norms, so you can stop doing panicked math at the counter.

🍴 Food & drinks

Sit-down restaurant	18–20% of pre-tax bill
Exceptional service	22–25%
Bartender	\$1–2 per drink or 18–20% of the tab
Food delivery (apps too)	15–20% , \$3–5 minimum
Pizza delivery	\$3–5 , more in bad weather
Takeout you pick up	Optional — 0–10% for big/complex orders
Counter service / coffee shop	Optional — \$1 or round up if they made you something real
Buffet	~10% (someone's clearing those plates)

🚗 Getting around & travel

Rideshare / taxi	15–20%
Hotel housekeeping	\$2–5 per night , left daily with a note
Bellhop	\$1–2 per bag
Valet	\$2–5 when they bring the car
Movers	\$20–40 per mover for a full day (+ cold drinks)

👨‍💼 Services

Haircut / barber / salon	15–20%
Nail tech, massage, tattoo artist	15–20%
Dog groomer	15–20%

🧮 The 3-second math trick

- 1 Move the decimal one spot left → that's 10%. (\$42.00 → \$4.20)
- 2 Double it → that's 20%. (\$4.20 → \$8.40)
- 3 Round up to a clean number. Done. (\$8.40 → \$9)

Tip on the pre-tax amount if you're being precise; on the total if you're being generous. Both are fine.

🤔 The gray areas, settled

- ☐ **The iPad swiveled at you** for a muffin you grabbed yourself? Tipping is optional. Really. Hit "no tip" without guilt or pick a small custom amount
- ☐ **Bad service?** Tip 10–15% at a restaurant and mention it to a manager — servers often make ~\$2–3/hr before tips, so zero hurts the wrong person
- ☐ **Cash vs. card:** cash is always appreciated (they get it same day)
- ☐ **Group auto-gratuity** (usually 6+ people): check the bill — if 18% is already added, you're done

🚫 No tip needed

- ☐ Doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists
- ☐ Teachers, coaches, government workers (a thank-you note wins)
- ☐ Mechanics, plumbers, cable techs — skilled trades bill their worth
- ☐ Fast-food drive-through
- ☐ Store employees who help you find something

🎓 **Dad's Quick Take:** When you're truly unsure: 20% for service at a table, a couple bucks for a delivery or a favor, nothing for a transaction. If it would feel weird to hand your dentist five dollars, that's your answer.