



English and Culture Tutoring Services

English Lessons Designed for You

How to Leave a Tip in an American Restaurant

Listening Script

L: All right, so um one more thing, um, so a lot of people are always asking, ya know, this whole thing of leaving a tip in restaurants in the US 'cause it's different in different parts of the world so how, like, how much tip to leave and when to leave a tip, how do we decide?

M: Um, well the first thing...you have to remember that waiters and servers in the US don't get paid by the hour really, they get less than minimum wage so they depend on the tips...umm...if they're like a decent server....

L: So how much do they get per hour mostly...what's...?

M: Um usually anywhere between two and three dollars an hour.

L: Is it that low?

M: It's very, very low, much lower than minimum wage, so they're not making money from the restaurant they're making money from your tips

L: Even at the really nice places?

M: Even at the really nice places, um, because... so it depends on their service, so if you feel that they were really attentive, and they did a great job, and they were friendly and they just, ya know, were, like, clean-cut or whatever you like, you

usually leave 20%. Um if there was something wrong that *they* did specifically you could go down to 15, if they were just really, really awful, then that's when we would typically leave 10%.

L: Ok, but you would never just leave nothing and walk out right?

M: No, you would, like, you really should, like 10% let's a server know that they didn't do a good job and maybe they'll think about it later.

L: They should do better later.

M: But you just don't ever wanna, like, penalize them for food being bad or something like that because they don't have control over that.

L: Yeah, exactly. But you've worked as a server, off and on, yeah, is it a tough job?

M: Um yeah, it's pretty difficult, like, so, I mean if they're trying their best, you give 'em 20%, you know, if they do what they can, if they're really, really awful, like even I would leave 10% so...

L: Absolutely and then the other question I get sometimes is how do you know when a restaurant is gonna give you free re-fills on soda.

M: Well, ha, that's tricky because sometimes they say it on the menu, sometimes they don't.

L: So what if they don't say it on the menu.

M: If they don't say it, you can either ask, like before your next re-fill or whatever or if the server just brings you your drink, again, without asking, then it's a free re-fill. If they ask you if you want another one then you can...that's like a perfect time to say, "oh is it a free re-fill?" and that's no problem.

L: Ok so that's a good rule of thumb so if they're asking you, they're charging you.

M: Possibly.

L: Most of the time.

M: but if they just bring it, then they're not charging you.

L: ok, cool.