

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TIPS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK 😊

Why tip?

Recently, I stayed at a hotel in downtown Montréal. When I arrived, the room was sparkling clean and the bed ready with a nice chocolate on top of the bedcover. Around 8 p.m. the housekeeper knocked at my door. She asked whether I needed anything and handed me two bottles of water then told me goodnight. What a nice way to start my stay!

The next morning, I was attending a conference, so I had to leave in a rush. As I did not have cash with me, I was unable to tip the housekeeper although God knows she deserved it! Had I had access to electronic tipping like **Tip&Go** this would not have been an issue.

What's the true origin of the tip?

There is no consensus on the origins of the word 'tip'¹. Some say that in England, it goes back to the second half of 17th Century, when London pubs for aristocrats kept a metallic can on their counters where those who were rushed could throw a coin to draw the attention of waiters. According to this version, the acronym 'TIP' would stand for 'To Insure Promptness'.

However, this is likely fiction as 'TIP' used as an acronym was first seen in a book published in 1909. Rather, tip would come from Latin word 'stips' which means gift, or from 'tip me', an outdated English expression that meant 'give me'. Others argue that 'tip' is a distortion of the word 'tap', i.e. to strike or hit smartly but lightly with one's hand, which may have derived from the Low German 'tippen'. Tipping was imported from Europe to the United States by American travelers eager to seem sophisticated.

In France, tip translates to *pourboire*, which means 'to drink'. A tip, usually a glass of wine, was provided by house masters to thank their staff or good work. This interpretation is similar to those used in other countries: the German word *trinkgeld* means 'money to drink', the Swedish word *dricks* 'to drink', the Portuguese/Spanish word *propina* 'to drink to one's health', while the Polish word *napiwek* means 'for the beer' and the Russian word *chayeviyе* 'for the tea'.

Tipping culture

Tipping etiquette varies widely by country². Whereas in America tipping is commonly used to reward good service in many industries, in most Asian countries it is not expected. In fact, tipping is mostly considered rude in Japan, China and South Korea. In China, gratuity is even illegal in airports and some establishments!

¹ Sources: <https://cariboumag.com/2022/05/une-breve-histoire-du-pourboire/>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gratuity#Etymology_and_history, <https://www.liseantunessimoes.com/petite-histoire-du-pourboire-chez-les-domestiques/>

² <https://www.starttravel.co.uk/news/did-you-know-tipping-is-rude-in-japan-and-china#:~:text=Tipping%20in%20Asia&text=in%20most%20Asian%20countries%20tipping,find%20this%20to%20be%20appreciated>

A 2023 survey³ conducted by Forbes on tipping culture in the US found that a vast majority of respondents report leaving a tip at least 11% higher when they tip digitally compared with tipping in cash. Quality of service affects tip amount the most, followed by personal budget. A bit over one in five respondents thought they should not have to leave a tip for hotel services.

The invisible hands that make our world cozy and safe

Coming back to my own experience, while I had the chance to meet my hotel housekeeper in Montreal, this is not a common experience. Contrary to restaurants where we interact with waiters throughout the meal, in hotels we rarely meet those that clean our rooms. Housekeepers are the ‘invisible hands’ that make our world cozy and safe. Because we don’t see them, we may not tip them as much. According to a US survey⁴, while about six in ten hotel guests report leaving a tip at their most recent hotel stay, hotel workers say that only 30%(half as much) actually tip staff members.

The Hotel Industry is currently experiencing serious staff shortages. Knowing that a third of hotel workers won’t be returning to the industry because they want higher pay and that a mobile payment option increases tips significantly, then it flows that offering a solution like **Tip&Go** makes a lot of sense.

The more so as **Tip&Go** associates a face to each housekeeper, therefore personalizing clients’ experience. According to a UK survey, over four in ten consumers say that knowing their tip goes directly to the staff would prompt them to leave one⁵.

Tip&Go may not solve the hotel labour shortage issue but could go a long way in reducing it.

Francis Léonard, CEO



www.tip-go.com

³<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/digital-tipping-culture/>

⁴<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/canary-technologies-survey-finds-wide-discrepancies-in-national-hotel-tipping-habits-301760388.html>

⁵<https://www.waretipjar.com/unternehmen/tipping-data/>