How to Tip in France

Service Fee (Tax) and a Tip

Are different. Knowing about each is important so appropriate action can be taken to show appreciation of service received.

Service Fee (VAT)

- **Definition**: The Value Added Tax (VAT) is a consumption tax that is included in the price of goods and services. In the context of a restaurant, the VAT is a mandatory tax defined and imposed by the government. It is included in the bill.
- **Purpose**: The VAT goes to the government and is used to fund public services. It is not a substitute for a tip.
- **Inclusion**: In most European countries, the VAT is already included in the menu prices, so the price you see is the price you pay.

Tip

- **Definition**: A tip is an additional amount of money given to the service staff as a reward for good service. It is not mandatory but is appreciated.
- **Purpose**: The tip directly rewards the service staff for their performance and effort.
- **Inclusion**: Unlike the VAT, a tip is not included in the bill and is given at the discretion of the customer.

How Much to Tip and Under What Circumstances

France

- **Service Charge Included**: In France, a 15% service charge (`service compris`) is usually included in the bill.
- **Tipping**: While not obligatory, it is common to leave some small change or round up the bill as a gesture of appreciation.

General Guidelines

- **Good Service**: If you receive exceptional service, leaving a tip is a way to show your appreciation regardless of the local custom.
- **Checking the Bill**: Always check the bill to see if a service charge is included before deciding on the tip.
- **Small Change in Cash**: Service Staff always prefer cash tips. In casual dining settings, it is often appropriate to leave some small change as a tip rather than bills.
- **Rounding Up**: A common practice across many European countries in paying in cash is to round up the bill to the nearest convenient amount by a few euros.

Examples

- **Café** - Drinks and perhaps snacks. Pay the bill in cash or by bank card. VAT will already be included. Leave a few euros, about 10% of the total.
- **Grocery Store of Deli** - VAT will be included. Food is taxed at a different rate than wine. No tip.
- **Hair Dresser** - VAT will be included as service. Pay in cash or bank card. Round up the bill and give your server at least 10% in cash.
- **Taxi** - Drivers prefer cash but you can pay by bank card. Give a tip of about 10%.
    - Tip in cash
    - Ask the driver to add a couple or three euros to the credit card total ***before*** he rings up the total.

By understanding the difference between VAT and tipping, and following local customs, you can ensure that you show appreciation for good service appropriately.

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