

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.
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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.
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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.
 - **Tip:** While not obligatory, it is common to leave some small change or round up the bill as a gesture of appreciation.
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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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