

## Shmanners 11: Tipping

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**Travis:**

Hey, Teresa. Can I give you a tip?

**Teresa:**

As long as it's 18% of your total bill.

**Travis:**

It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:**

Hello, internet. I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

**Teresa:**

And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

**Travis:**

And you're listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

It's extraordinary etiquette...

**Travis:**

...for ordinary occasions. Teresa, I'm so excited.

**Teresa:**

You are?

**Travis:**

I am.

**Teresa:**

You, you are.

**Travis:**

Actually, factually very excited. It's Max Fun Drive.

**Teresa:**

Yes, it is.

**Travis:**

This is our first Shmanners Max Fun Drive. For those of you who don't know, Max Fun is a listener donor supported network, which means that even though, occasionally, we will have advertisements on our show, the bulk of the support comes from listeners like you.

So, once a year, we have a two-week fun drive where we encourage people to go to [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate) and commit to a monthly donation. And they start as low as \$5 a month and you get to pick which shows you listen to and support the things that you love.

I have so many shows on the network. I love Max Fun. It's so unique to be able to support yourself doing the things you love and know that that money is coming directly from fans and listeners.

**Teresa:**

That does sound exciting.

**Travis:**

I mean, it's the whole reason Shmanners exists is because we knew that there was a network of people that love, you know, love things.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

And it's a, we want to make a new thing for them to love and we hope that you love it. So, if you're interested in becoming a donor, we'll tell you all about the different reward levels and they're pretty awesome.

Um, we'll tell you all about those. The main one you need to know about because for as low as \$5 a month, you get access to all kinds of bonus content that you'll only get as a Max Fun Drive donor. Um...

**Teresa:**

And our bonus episode? Got to tell ya. Pretty cool.

**Travis:**

It's pretty cool. It's pretty funny. I did the research. It's very silly. Let's just say that it's part of a thing we promised in one of our promos.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

So, you'll get to learn some pretty funny stuff. Um, but if you're interested, [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). And no matter what, if you donate, make sure that you tweet at us and let us know so we can say thank you.

**Teresa:**

I love writing those thank you tweets.

**Travis:**

You're good at them.

**Teresa:**

Well, thanks.

**Travis:**

Who'd have thunk it? My wife good at thank you's? Huh. And let me tell you. I'm also excited because this is a highly requested episode that I am also very much [laughs] looking forward to learning a little bit about and it's tipping.

**Teresa:**

I've seen a lot of people on the Facebook group especially, uh, request this topic and so, I'm happy to tell you all about it.

**Travis:**

It's one of those things that I oftentimes find baffling. It's one of, I always feel like just as I start to get a handle on tipping, when to tip, who to tip, what to tip, all of that, then I encounter a new... I remember when we went to Scotland for our honeymoon and we were baffled.

And luckily, there were lots of nice people, um, bartenders and waitstaff and other patrons that were incredibly gracious in explaining how the different tipping custom works. But it can be a bit of a minefield.

**Teresa:**

Well, the thing about tipping is the customs are extremely regional. So, even in different parts of the US, different parts in, of the UK, different parts of Asia and Africa and you know, even Australia, all, uh, all different regions have all different ways of tipping, how much you're supposed to tip for what and in what kind of currency.

**Travis:**

Well, so, how did tipping come to be? It seems like a crazy practice.

**Teresa:**

Well, it's not that crazy when you consider the probable origin. Um, back in the middle ages, we had the whole lord and serfdom type deal, right? And oftentimes, lords would give their serfs several coins as a way of expressing their gratitude and hopefully, buying their loyalty. Um, and so, that continued until about the 16th century, which is, like, Tudor England.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

If you need a reference for that. Um, where it had kind of really taken off as an established practice. It was actually called vail, right?

**Travis:**

Veil?

**Teresa:**

Vail. You would give someone vail. Um, and so like, if you were a guest at an English mansion, you were expected to give a vail or a small amount of money at the end of the visit to compensate the owner's servants who did work above and beyond their ordinary duties. So they took care of you and they were nice to you and you enjoyed your stay. So, you gave vail to those servants.

**Travis:**

Okay. That makes complete sense to me. They went above and beyond and you can't expect the lord of the manor to have to pay for that. So it balances it out. I get that, I like that.

**Teresa:**

Okay. So, let's fast forward to the 1760s, 1770s where at this point, footmen, valets and gentlemen servants all expected these vails.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

So, it really started to become less of a, "Oh, hey. Great job." And it was like, [clears throat pointedly].

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

"Can you, um, mm? Yes? Thank you." You get your— You hold out your hand until you get a little something in return.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um...

**Travis:**

Which seems to spoil the practice a little bit, doesn't it?

**Teresa:**

Yes. Uh, so there was an attempt to abolish these vails. So, like, outlaw them in London in, uh, 1764, but there were riots in the streets.

**Travis:**

Whoa.

**Teresa:**

Yeah. So people had really begun to, um, depend on these vails.

**Travis:**

Now, is that where the idea of, because I also saw there's a great episode. I've referenced it before and I will again. Great episode of How Adam Ruins Everything where they talk about tipping and they talk about restaurant tipping specifically.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

And they talk about when it became that basically, you were supplementing employees' wages with tips so that you didn't have to pay them you know, out of your own profit. Is that part of this? Was that part...

**Teresa:**

That-

**Travis:**

... of the reason that they were rioting in the streets?

**Teresa:**

No, not at this point. It does become later, especially in America, part of that reasoning.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, but okay. So let's just scoot a little bit to 1800. By 1800, it was common practice for these, um, vails to be in, uh, commercial establishments like hotels and pubs and restaurants. So, tipping as we know it, uh, happened around 1800. Um, and I want to discuss the change from the word vail to tip.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

As much evidence as I found for the origin of the word, tip, I also found people who said, "That's stupid. That's not real." [laughs]

**Travis:**

Fair enough.

**Teresa:**

According to several sources, [laughs] the origin of the word, tip is from to insure promptitude.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Um, so like...

**Travis:**

That is an acronym. Uh, for those of you who also listen to...

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... the same podcast episode, I was wrong. An acronym spells out a word.

**Teresa:**

Great. Um, so to insure promptitude is rumored to have been written on bowls that would be sat on tables in London coffee shops around 1800.

**Travis:**

Like a tip jar.

**Teresa:**

Like a tip jar. Right. And so, as you would get your coffee and you know, coffee would be brought to you, it wasn't counter service. Um, as you would get your coffee, you would put coins in the bowl as the server brought it to you. So that they would see, "Ah, this person is willing to pay me a little more. I'm going to be better at getting, at refilling their coffee."

**Travis:**

That, okay. I'm— I might be spoiling or jumping ahead when I say that is so much of a better system if you, okay.

If you're trying to ensure good service, giving it after the service is done seems to make less sense than having the money on the table being like, "You can see this, right? Like you know I'm giving this to you when you're done." That seems to me like that would insure better service way more than, "Well, okay. The interaction's done. I left some money for you."

**Teresa:**

Well, I think that it all goes into the idea of currency being discussed or brought out in plain view being kind of gauche.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

So, as, um, tipping evolved, I'm sure that someone was finally— was like, "Oh, this money. I didn't want it on the table." And so, it, it went back in the pockets until...

**Travis:**

I like that voice.



**Teresa:**

Well, thanks.

**Travis:**

That was a good voice.

**Teresa:**

It went back into your pockets until after the meal.

**Travis:**

Okay. I imagine also with credit cards and checks and stuff probably affected that, too, when you were lumping it in to like an electronic or pay, you know, weird kind of transaction instead of just money.

**Teresa:**

Right. Right. So, all the way up to 1840, the practice of tipping was not an American cultural institution.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

What happened was after the Civil War, the newly affluent class was able to travel on holiday to the UK. And they brought tipping back with them.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Kind of they started it just to flaunt how much money they have.

**Travis:**

Well, yeah. You have to imagine that if we weren't doing it here and then somebody comes back from vacation and they go to a bar and they hand someone, like, a dollar after getting a drink, that person must have been like, "Did you want another drink? Or what do you want with this?" And like, "That's a tip."

"A tip? Why would you give me more money?" [laughs]

**Teresa:**

"I'm just so affluent that I can afford to give everyone money."

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

That sort of thing, right?

**Travis:**

That is, I want to say, as an adult, it is how I feel when I tip. I do feel that way now.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Where I'll tip like 30% and I'm like, "Because I can."

**Teresa:**

Well, but, if that's how the person tipping feels, there was a little bit of contention about how the person receiving the tip feels.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

As apt as we are to take money that probably we don't deserve, at this point, people were like, "Ah, I don't need your charity."

**Travis:**

Interesting. That makes a lot of sense.

**Teresa:**

So it makes the donor feel superior and therefore, the person receiving the money feel inferior.

**Travis:**

I just want to jump in here and if any of our Max Fun donors want to feel superior to me by giving me their money...

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

... I'm 100% okay with that. You can treat me, uh, you, uh, you can be superior to me while giving me your \$5 a month and I'm totally okay with that. So then, as I said, the restaurant industry... This really took off. Right?

**Teresa:**

Right. But you're still, you're jumping ahead.

**Travis:**

Really?

**Teresa:**

I have, I have several other anecdotes...

**Travis:**

Keep going.

**Teresa:**

... before...

**Travis:**

Uh, spit them. Spit the truth, baby.

**Teresa:**

... before that happens. So, by the 1900s, tipping was totally common in America. If you had any kind of service at a restaurant with a valet, with, um, uh, you know, holiday bonuses, all that kind of stuff was completely, uh, culturally ingrained by 1900.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

And so much so that Englishmen like from the UK complained that Americans were liberal and misguided and overtipped, making them feel shortchanged by the British.

So if there were Americans tipping and the Brits came and they tipped, but the Americans overtipped, it made the British feel inferior. Oh, man. It just, like, created this hierarchy amongst Americans and British and even people who suggested that the idea of tipping is completely un-American.

**Travis:**

Interesting.

**Teresa:**

Because tipping and the aristocratic idea it exemplifies is what people left Europe to escape. So it created this, this hierarchy of social class, the people thought didn't exist in America before then.

**Travis:**

But it seems to me like the problem is, like, there— It sounds like there are two forms of tipping. That there's the one where it started as the above and beyond. So say for example, if you're at a bar that doesn't have table service, but it's slow and the bartender were to, like, bring you your food or your drinks without you having to go up to the bar.

They don't have to do it. They did it because they want to take care of the few customers that are there. That's above and beyond. You would tip for that. Versus, like, at a restaurant with a waiter whose job it is to come to your table and get your order. That's their job.

So it seems like tipping, that's not really above and beyond serving. So it seems like it's two different ideas that I agree that the second form of, like, tipping someone for doing their job seems weird.

**Teresa:**

Well, but I don't think that it evolved into that. I think it was more, at this point of history, it was not so much about compensating for excellent service as it was for the tipping person to feel superior.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

And to show off their affluency.

**Travis:**

Okay. And I want to make it clear because I just realized I haven't yet. I worked in the service industry. I was, uh, both at a coffee shop and as, like, a waiter/server person at a restaurant. So like, I'm in favor of tipping because I liked being tipped. Um, but it's a crazy practice. [laughs]

**Teresa:**

So, I mean, a lot of people felt that way even back in the 1900s. So much so that in 1904, an anti-tipping society of America sprang up in Georgia. And it had over 100,000 members. And they all signed pledges not to tip anyone for an entire year.

**Travis:**

Huh.

**Teresa:**

So this resulted in some legislation of anti-tipping legislation. And it was actually passed in about six to seven states.

**Travis:**

Wow.

**Teresa:**

But all of that legislation was repealed by 1926.

**Travis:**

It seems like it would also be tough because in, uh, if, if the management of the organization, like if the management of the restaurant or whatever shop

you're frequenting isn't on board with the anti-tipping thing, it's the person in the middle who gets caught and kind of gets hurt by it.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Because they're the ones not getting the money that they need to survive.

**Teresa:**

Some very famous anti-tippers were Leon Trotsky, William Howard Taft.

**Travis:**

Wow. Really?

**Teresa:**

And Mark Twain.

**Travis:**

Really?

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Huh. Now, was this like...

**Teresa:**

Oh, uh, also, millionaires, uh, John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie.

**Travis:**

Now, I assume that part of this, too, was like, "I don't tip. You should just pay your employees."

**Teresa:**

Yes. So in the 1960s, Congress agreed that workers who receive tips would be eligible for a lower minimum wage. Right? So as long as their tips

equaled up to a certain a, uh, let's see. As long as those tips equaled up to 7.25 an hour.

**Travis:**

But how do you gauge that? Because, uh, what if it's a slow day? Or someone's not tipping? Or?

**Teresa:**

You really can't.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

So, this is where your point comes in where the idea of tipping began to allow business owners to pay their employees less.

**Travis:**

Okay. Especially, this is a huge problem when you think about how from, like, an early age, we're taught that tipping is, like, a bonus that you give someone for good service. So I have, especially older generation people heard them talk about like, "I'm not going to tip them 20%. They were slow and it took forever to get my food. They'll be lucky if they get 5% from me."

And it's like, "Yeah, but this isn't on top of a minimum wage that they're getting paid." I had a roommate once where she, like worked at a restaurant. And her paycheck after, like, taxes withheld and everything was, like, cents.

Like 23 cents and all of her money came from tips. So that idea of, "I was unhappy with my service. They don't get this bonus for me," doesn't really work because they weren't... They're not getting regular money.

**Teresa:**

Exactly. Um, and the idea of making it so that their tipped wages plus their minimum wage was a certain standard was actually even released in 1991.

**Travis:**

Wow. Really?

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

They just let go of that?

**Teresa:**

Yup. Pretty much. Um, it uncoupled the idea that it should be combined and it's just been frozen at 2.13 an hour under federal law ever since.

**Travis:**

Oof.

**Teresa:**

So, there's no way to really...

**Travis:**

2.13?

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Wow.

**Teresa:**

On the upswing.

**Travis:**

Okay. Thank you.

**Teresa:**



There—

**Travis:**

I was getting very bummed out.

**Teresa:**

[laughs] There are now restaurant owners and a whole, like, groups of people who are introducing back again the idea of fully compensated workers and no tipping at their restaurants. And this has happened, um, at a couple of different chains of restaurants owned by single people. Owned by, uh, single business owners.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

But, um, it's really starting to catch on. Like here...

**Travis:**

As well it should, yeah.

**Teresa:**

... here in California, um, all servers are paid at minimum wage instead of that 2.13.

**Travis:**

Excellent.

**Teresa:**

So, that legislation has been, has been really great for those industries. And it hasn't raised the cost, uh, on to the consumer very much at all. I mean, it does just a little bit.

**Travis:**

But it's still better than tipping. Still better than having to give 20% of your, okay. I just want to make it clear. When I talk about that I'm not for tipping, I'm for tipping when people depend on it. But if someone was like, "Hey. Right now, do you want to flip the switch? And make it so everybody just

gets paid the minimum wage and tipping is completely, uh, non-mandatory? That it's completely optional?"

Like, "Yeah, definitely." But the idea of tipping or not tipping people who need it, that's upsetting to me. Also, as I said before, it seems like there's two different forms.

And like if I go to a hotel and a, you know, bellhop carries my bags, I'm going to tip that guy. You know? Or when the, you know, room service cleans my room, I'm going to tip room service.

**Teresa:**

Right. I think that it all goes back to the idea of elitism. And people feeling like the payment is enough for the rendered service when it may not even be enough.

**Travis:**

Well, speaking of payment, it's the Max Fun Drive. We talked about it at the top of the show. Um, Max Fun Drive is not only a chance for you to support the shows that you love. It's also a chance to be a part of the magic. If you've been paying attention to the #MaxFunDrive, you will see all kinds of people talking about not only why they love the shows, but what they love about the shows.

You know, there's exciting giveaways. There is all kinds of like just a lot of buzz around Max Fun Drive. Uh, and we want you to be a part of it. Not only because we want your support, but because we want you to feel ownership in maximumfun.org. And there's a bunch of different levels you can give back.

As I mentioned before, the \$5 level. You're going to get access to all kinds of donors-only bonus content. We've got the, um, the Shmanners episodes that you'll only get as a donor. And this is no exaggeration. There's about 75 hours of bonus content because it's not just this year. It's every year of Max Fun Drive before this.

So there's multiple episodes of My Brother, My Brother and Me. There's multiple episodes of Judge John Hodgman. There's all kinds of stuff. There's videos. There's all of that. And that's just for \$5 a month. Teresa, what can they get for \$10 a month?

**Teresa:**

At \$10 a month, you will of course still receive that wonderful bonus content, but you will get a special gift of a bandana of your choosing.

**Travis:**

And they're gorgeous.

**Teresa:**

They are very cute. Uh, they are all designed specifically to reflect the shows. And so, you can go through and pick out your favorite bandana. And ours is so super cute. It has little knives and forks on it. No. Forks and spoons.

**Travis:**

I'm not going to say that ours is the best, but ours is the best.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

And you should get it. It's adorable. Picture yourself having afternoon tea dabbing the corners of your mouth with your very own Shmanners bandanners.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

That's what we should call them from now on. If you get one, you have a Shmanners bandanners.

**Teresa:**

And then, at the \$20 a month level, you receive as your very special gift a Max Fun adventure necessity collection. So, that is a multi-tool, a hot chocolate packet, a paracord bracelet and some camping toilet paper.

**Travis:**

And you get the bandana and you get the bonus content. It all stacks up and it's awesome.

**Teresa:**

Stacks on stacks on stacks.

**Travis:**

Stacks on stacks on stacks and you get a heaping helping of warm fuzzies for supporting the shows you love. If you are willing to bump that up a little bit, say a \$35 a month level, you get all that stuff, the bandana, the adventure necessities kit, the bonus content. You also get a Max Fun vacuum thermos and it's pretty cool. We've been collecting. We might have to like bump up to get this one because—

**Teresa:**

It's very shiny.

**Travis:**

We've been collecting our Max Fun emblazoned stuff. We have the Max Fun tumbler. Um, we have the Max— What else do we have? We have the Max Fun tumbler. We got the Max Fun, oh, the water bottle, the carry-along water bottle. So now we're going to have to get that thermos, too.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

Got to complete that collection.

**Teresa:**

We've got so much Max Fun stuff to put our drinks in.

**Travis:**

Yeah. And here's the thing. Like, as I said before, it's not just about the material goods, though they are excellent. You also get the knowledge that you support the things that you love. And when you listen to episodes of Shmanners throughout the rest of the year, you'll know that part of the reason we exist is because you donated.

You can go on Twitter and say, "Hey, Shmanners. @shmannerscast. I donated to #MaxFunDrive to support you." And we'll say thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you because we would not exist if it weren't for you.

**Teresa:**

And we really appreciate you taking that time out of your busy schedules to do that in the next two weeks. And we're going to keep reminding you.

**Travis:**

And if you're listening to this and you're thinking, "Oh, man. I really wish I could. I love Max Fun and I love my Max Fun shows, but I just can't afford to donate." I totally understand that. I think we've all been there at some point.

But if you want to help out, you still can by going on Twitter, going on Facebook, whatever you can do and saying, "Hey, friends. It's Max Fun Drive, #MaxFunDrive. Go support these awesome shows. Give them a listen. Check them out." I can't, but I want you to. [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate)."

The last thing I'll say before we get back to the show, it is important that you do it while you're thinking about it. Because maybe you're sitting there going, "Okay, great. Yeah. Totally. I'll do this later on today." And then it slips out of your head as you think about all the other stuff you have to do.

And then pretty soon, the two weeks have gone by. Max Fun Drive is over and you didn't get any of this awesome swag because you forgot about it. So do it now while you're thinking about it. Trust me. It's worth it. You're going to love it. All right. So, Teresa.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

Back to tipping.

**Teresa:**

Back to tipping. Um, so, Emily Post has...

**Travis:**

Emily who now?

**Teresa:**

Uh, Emily Post.

**Travis:**

Emily Post. Emily Post. Emily Post. Emily Post. Oh, yes. Emily Post, of course. Go on.

**Teresa:**

She's my girl.

**Travis:**

Uh-huh.

**Teresa:**

Um, she has on her website a wonderful list. What?

**Travis:**

I love how you said that like Emily Post made her website on the first place.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Like she just constantly posts that on blogs. Like, "What up, posters?"

**Teresa:**

[laughs] Well, um, Emily Post is no longer with us.

**Travis:**

No.

**Teresa:**

But her family maintains her empire and included in that is a website.

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

Um, on her website, she has some great articles about tipping. And that is what I am going to refer to when, um, to answer your questions, listeners, about who receives what tip.

**Travis:**

Okay. Speaking of which, I have a bunch of questions here. May I ask you some?

**Teresa:**

Great.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

Oh, but I would like to put a small caveat on this. And remember that tipping is extremely regional. These are general guidelines, but if you ever have any questions about what to tip at a specific place, you're best off speaking to the receptionist.

**Travis:**

Mm-hmm.

**Teresa:**

Or to, um, to a friend who frequents that establishment and ask them what it is that they do.

**Travis:**

And you've mentioned earlier, uh, I will also throw in a caveat here, an interjection. Interjection with the motion, um, you mentioned earlier that, like, kind of gaucheness of money.

**Teresa:**

Yes.

**Travis:**

I know that I have this hang-up like when I... That I feel weird asking should, like, is it appropriate to tip? Like there's something about that question that makes me feel awkward asking the person that I would be tipping. I've never once asked that question and then met with anything, but, like, very polite like, "Oh, well, here is the deal. Here's how it works."

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Uh, we do, like, so, if all else fails, ask. Don't be awkward. Just ask.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

So, when we do an episode, we go to Twitter. We go to Facebook. We ask for your questions so we can help answer them. This first one is from Susan Marie. Um, "covering options for tipping in different sorts of places, when to tip a hairstylist? Tip all year versus end of the year? Or do both?"

**Teresa:**

Um, it is normal practice in most salons. And like I said, you can ask the receptionist about what they expect. That you tip, uh, 10 to 20% on your haircut, but ask the pers- ask the receptionist or the desk clerk, uh, to divide that between the people who serviced you. So if a different person washed



your hair, they should receive some of that tip. Um, but it varies from salon to salon.

**Travis:**

I will also say that, like, if you're the type of person who may suddenly need a haircut, it's the last minute for a thing, then this is one of those circumstances where tipping, you really build a relationship with your stylist. And maybe they'll squeeze you on in on a day that they don't normally work. Or they'll come in early to cut your hair or that...

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... something like that.

**Teresa:**

And so, that is why it is also recommended that during the holiday season, you give them a small token of your appreciation. It should be something that, um, is less than the value of a single service. So don't, like, blow your budget, but something that is very small. Just a little token to let them know that you appreciate their personal relationship with you.

**Travis:**

Um, I think as far as bartender goes, I think a pretty standard rule that I've always heard of is like the \$1 a drink. Um, which I think is good, um, but Peter asks, um, "what about tipping a bartender who is making a \$10 fancy cocktail? Does the \$1 per drink still apply? If not, if not, what's an alternate percent plan perhaps?"

**Teresa:**

Uh, the same restaurant percent plan applies. 15 to 20, um, but if you feel like if, if the fancy cocktail is something you really appreciated, um, you can give up to 40%.

**Travis:**

If you order a mint julep, don't get me wrong, it's delicious. I get it or a mojito, you best tip at least \$2. It's a very labor-intensive drink. It takes a

lot of muddling. There's a lot of time. It's way different than grabbing a beer. I think it should be like \$1 a drink for a beer and like \$2 a drink for a mixed cocktail with more than two ingredients.

**Teresa:**

I think that that's a good thing. So if they had, if it was just a grab and pour, then \$1. But if it was like a shake, shake, shake, stir, stir, stir, pony up two.

**Travis:**

Two. Especially think about it this way. If you went to the bar to order drinks for everybody and you, like, ordered six drinks at a time, you've just taken them away from, like, covering the whole bar. And you might have hurt their tips from other people. So maybe just keep that in mind. If you're ordering big bulk drinks, tip accordingly. Okay. This is our elbows on the table question. This is the question everyone wanted to know about.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

Takeout.

**Teresa:**

Emily Post says you are under no obligation to tip takeout. Especially if you go into the restaurant and pick it out, pick it up from the hostess table yourself. If they offer curbside service and it is given to your car, 10% is pretty good.

Or if it's a very large and complicated order, you know, like, "Oh, can we have mustard instead of mayonnaise? And put the dressing on the side? And, um, I want this sandwich on sourdough instead of rye." You know, all that kind of stuff? Then they deserve a tip. Um, but if you go into the restaurant and you pick it up from the hostess' station, you can, you only have to tip if you want to.

**Travis:**

I will also say, to that point though, especially if it's something that you're doing on a regular basis, like say it's your favorite takeout restaurant. And you're going there a bunch, um, there's a big difference between say, like, an Applebee's or Chili's or where there's, like, a waitstaff and like servers and hostesses and a cook staff versus like your local coffee sandwich shop where there's only...

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

... ever two people working and like, they're both being paid tip wages. And someone had to, like, go back and make your sandwich and, like, box it up and everything. Kind of get to know the situation and if it's like, "Oh, this server is, you know, the waitstaff also makes the food," keep that in mind when you're picking it up. Because that's how it was at the coffee shop that I worked at where it's like, if someone called in a to-go order, I had to, like, to go back and make the sandwich...

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

... for them to pick up. So, just, especially if you're a regular. Get to know the situation, but no. It's not necessarily...

**Teresa:**

Very thoughtful of you, Travis.

**Travis:**

Thank you. Well, as I said, I've been waitstaff before. Um, what about just in general, like a delivery, right? So someone's delivering pizza because I also did this. I worked at a Jimmy John's where there was a delivery charge automatically added to every order.

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

And also, the option to tip the driver.

**Teresa:**

Right. That delivery charge isn't often going directly to the driver. It's usually going to, uh, a company car, right? Um, or it's going to, maybe their, their gas allowance, but it is not going directly into their pocket.

So, for pizza, two to five bucks does, depending on the size of the order. And you know, if they had to go up six flights of stairs and buzzing and do all that kind of stuff. The more complicated it is to get to your door, I recommend, the more that you give them. Um, but for general home delivery, 10, 15% is fine.

**Travis:**

Shannon wanted to know. How should my tipping change if at all if I'm friends with the server/bartender?

**Teresa:**

Um, that idea of familiarity, I think actually should increase your tipping.

**Travis:**

Yes. You are...

**Teresa:**

Um...

**Travis:**

You're correct.

**Teresa:**

Because you're adding a degree of personal recognition and you're becoming a regular and, uh, you, if you want to continue the same level of service, you really should be a good customer.

**Travis:**

Especially if it's the kind of place where you, like, split tips or that kind of thing. But I will also say this. If your friend knows that you're going through, like, financial straits, I don't think there's been a friend in life who's like, "I can't believe Diane didn't tip me." Like, listen. We get it. Like if you can't afford to do it...

**Teresa:**

There are extenuating circumstances and, and hopefully, you can explain that if, if that does happen to you.

**Travis:**

But I think that inherently, if family members, you know, friends, they're probably going to spend a little bit more time hanging out at your table. And so, yeah. A little bit of increase in tip is probably a good way to go.

Um, okay. So this is from Drew. If you usually tip for simple orders, cup of tea, coffee, not espresso. Um, with the change, at what point is it better to leave nothing? I know it all adds up, but I feel like a jerk tipping only 10 cents. But I'm also not flush enough to tip a dollar or a \$2 cup of coffee.

**Teresa:**

Um, if you are a repeat customer and they have a tip jar, feel free to just throw in that change.

**Travis:**

That's what the tip jar is for.

**Teresa:**

That's what it's for. Um, uh, typically, with things like coffee, it's counter service. Um, so you don't have to give the 10 to 20%. Um...

**Travis:**

And most coffee shops don't exist on the, you know, 2.13 minimum wage. Most of them are and I'm not saying all of them. So like, don't, uh, don't, if you're jumping to tweet at me, I know that that's not universally true.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

But if you're at, like, a Starbucks, you're probably fine not worrying about tipping if it's, like, 2 cents left.

**Teresa:**

Right. And in, actually, some countries, that is the general practice for a lot of tipping. You either round up to the nearest euro or you, um, you tell the, the service to keep the change.

**Travis:**

So this is from Ashley. "I know you should tip hotel house cleaners each time they clean the room for you. But if you're only staying for one night, do you still tip? It seems different because they're cleaning your room for the hotel at that point. You know what? Honestly, to jump in here in Ashley's question, I've never tipped per cleaning. I always tip a big tip at the end when I'm leaving. So whether I'm there for like, well, it increases, but whether I'm there for one day or five days, I just always tip at the end. Is that not okay?"

**Teresa:**

That's a little problematic. Um, because oftentimes, there is a rotation of staff.

**Travis:**

Oh.

**Teresa:**

And so, the person who cleans your room on the last day isn't necessarily the person who's been cleaning your room the entire stay. So you really should break that larger tip down into smaller tips, leaving nightly.

**Travis:**

Okay. Um, David asks, who should we tip that we might not know about? I don't think I've ever actually had a bag handler until recently, but all they did was move my bag from a taxi to the sidewalk three feet away.

**Teresa:**

Well, bag handlers, skycaps, doormen, bellhops, restroom attendants, all of those people, um, if they perform a service for you should probably tip them. Um, and it varies, uh, skycap is probably like per bag. If you had lots of heavy bags, you should tip them accordingly.

Uh, the doormen, if they are carrying your luggage or hailing a cab or I mean, especially if it's raining, they deserve some money, too. Uh, bellhops like you said, uh, like a dollar a bag is pretty customary. And it was, if it was a short trip [laughs] like the three foot one that that guy took, uh, maybe just a dollar. Even if you had several bags.

**Travis:**

Across the board, I would say the thing to take away from this whole, um, answer is in this day and age where everyone gets so used to like having a debit card in their pocket, if you're traveling and you're going to stay at a hotel, nicer, like, a little bit more of a luxury hotel, you need to have like of, some one's and some five's in your pocket.

Because while I don't know that there's ever been a scenario in which someone has failed to tip and they've said, "Okay. Well, I'm taking your bags back outside. You can carry them yourself." Um, but you should expect to tip a bellhop, tip a doorman, tip a concierge if they give you, like, good advice on where to go for dinner or something to do. It's part of the experience.

**Teresa:**

Uh, concierge especially, if they procure a service for you, like if they make the reservations or if they get you tickets to a show, um, like in New York, you're expected to tip them on the value of those reservations or tickets.

**Travis:**

Because that's their job.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

That's what they're doing as part of the job. And so, just make sure that you have that with you and that you're ready to do it. Um, I remember pretty early on in my young man adult days going to stay at an upper end hotel and I was prepared to load my own bags onto the, like, the luggage cart and the guy was like, "We actually can't let guests use the luggage cart without a bellhop." I was like, "Oh, okay. Uh, all right."

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

And it was that weird— That makes, I was about to say weird dad thing because it's what I think of in movies and TV. But that, like, "I'll take care of it. I don't need... Because I don't want to tip." Just be ready to do it. Be cool about it. It's like a buck. It's going to be cool.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

Speaking of being cool about it...

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

[laughs] It's Max Fun Drive.

**Teresa:**

Let's be little Fonzies and be cool.

**Travis:**

Let's all be little Fonzies, 'eyyy. You're so...

**Teresa:**

'Eyyy.

**Travis:**



I am the Fonz. Um, so, Max Fun Drive, we've talked about it up to this point. But let me say and I kind of hinted at it. Let me just be blatant. Teresa and I are not only creators. We're consumers.

**Teresa:**

We love Max Fun shows. And let me tell you, we are donors and we feel like we're little Fonzie's listening to that...

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

...bonus content.

**Travis:**

We are balling 24/7 with that Max Fun bonus content. And I also want to say this. We were Max Fun listeners before I ever had a show on the network. I started— Like, I think the second podcast I ever listened to in my entire life was, uh, was Jordan, Jesse, Go! Uh, Griffin turned me onto it. We started listening to it. It was a big inspiration for My Brother, My Brother and Me.

And as I've grown as a podcaster, we've grown right along with the network. We feel very connected to Max Fun. And it's been wonderful to see so many new people becoming Max Fun listeners.

**Teresa:**

Yeah, it is. I love seeing those tweets.

**Travis:**

Some of my best friends are Max Fun creators, Max Fun producers, and Max Fun listeners. So, thank you everyone who's a part of the Max Fun Drive past and present and future.

Um, we talked about the \$5 level where you get all of the bonus content. We talked about the \$10 level where you get the Shmammers bandannas. And you get the \$5 bonus content. We talked about the \$20 level where you get the bandana, you get the bonus content. You get the adventure kit and then

the \$35 level where you get all of that stuff and you get the rocket thermos. Teresa, what if I'm ready to take it to the next level?

**Teresa:**

Well, if you're ready to pledge \$100 a month, you are now a member of the inner circle. A monthly culture club where different Max Fun personalities select maybe reading material or maybe music or any other kind of culturally significant item to send to you.

**Travis:**

And you get to be a part of that with all that other stuff, plus you get to kind of expand your worldview a little bit.

**Teresa:**

And if you can manage \$200 a month, you get automatic free registration for Max Fun Con 2017.

**Travis:**

You get all that stuff we talked and Max Fun Con? Let me tell you something. One. Max Fun Con sells out super quick. Two. Max Fun Con is the most fun you as an adult will ever have. Teresa and I have been to a bunch of them. It's a weekend long adventure party with some of your favorite comedians, some of your favorite content creators.

There's classes. There's parties. There's, you get to, like, one time, we had lunch with, like, John Hodgman and Paul F. Tompkins and then we had dinner with Maria Bamford. Like, that's the life you could be living at Max Fun Con and you get free registration to that at \$200 a month.

**Teresa:**

So all of this stuff is really great. So if you're already a donor, now is the time to consider upping your monthly pledge. Because now is the time you get all this sweet stuff.

**Travis:**

And not only that. This year, 2015 to 2016, we added Shmanners, which you're listening to right now. We added Can I Pet Your Dog? We added

Trends Like These. We added We Got This. We added Getting Curious. Like, we've added a bunch of stuff to the network and, and we want you to increase your donation to help support that if you can.

If you can't, I totally get it and we don't begrudge that at all. But if you can't, then do your part by tweeting the link, [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). Tweet the hashtag, #MaxFunDrive. Also, here's what you can do.

You can enter in to win one of John Hodgman's favorite Breville products. Breville is the kitchen appliance maker. By tweeting one, why you donate, why other people should donate, why other people should support, something along those lines. Here is why you should support Max Fun. Here's why Max Fun is awesome. Something like that with the link [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate) and the #ToastToMaxFun. And you'll be entered in that drawing.

**Teresa:**

Is it a toaster?

**Travis:**

It might be a toaster. I don't think we can commit to it at this point.

**Teresa:**

Is it a toaster oven?

**Travis:**

It might be a toaster oven. It might be a blender.

**Teresa:**

Ah.

**Travis:**

But Blend to Max Fun doesn't have the same...

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

... ring to it.

**Teresa:**

That's right.

**Travis:**

I also want to say, as a personal goal that I've set, if we hit 5,000 new and upgrading donors, I'm going to get a Maximum Fun tattoo in support of my podcast, The Adventure Zone. I'm going to get a tattoo if we hit that 5,000 new and upgrading donors.

Um, and there's a bunch of other stuff. A bunch of other people have made commitments and a bunch of other people are giving stuff away. And you could be a part of it by going to [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). Don't wait. Go now.

Uh, we have a couple other things we'll tell you about at the end of the show, but I want to get back to the episode. What else, Teresa?

**Teresa:**

So now that we've gone over some of the specific circumstances that you want to tip in, I want to give some general tipping advice.

**Travis:**

Okay.

**Teresa:**

So, just because it is more of an obligation these days to tip doesn't mean that you get to treat your servers and the people who are rendering your services poorly.

**Travis:**

Preach it.

**Teresa:**

Um, and you should always be discreet with your money. Flashing it around maybe as they did, uh, [laughs] in the post Civil War era America is not really a good thing these days.

**Travis:**

I still want to say, keep, okay. When I worked in a restaurant, oh, the most frustrated I ever got as the waitstaff was when people failed to take into account the circumstances of the situation. If you're in a packed restaurant, service is going to be a little bit slower.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

And you know, like I once saw this very sweet 18-year-old woman burst into tears because someone left her a 2-cent tip.

**Teresa:**

Oh.

**Travis:**

Because the kitchen got the order wrong. She didn't make the food. She just brought it out to them. And they left a little note complaining to her and it had nothing to do with her.

**Teresa:**

Can I just say that at that point, if you find that your food is sub par, it's, uh, I know that waitstaff and kitchen staff would much rather remake the order and get a chance to make it right...

**Travis:**

Yes.

**Teresa:**

... than have some, uh, passive-aggressive note written like that.

**Travis:**

Yes. Um, tip 20%. Always. If something goes bad and you don't like it, the lowest I would ever go is 15%.

**Teresa:**

And if something goes poorly, um, it may not be the person that came to your table just like you said earlier. But if something goes poorly, you should still tip because those tips are often divided between the entire front house staff and the back house staff. Um, and then, you should talk to a manager about your situation.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

Because maybe it was out of the server's control, but the manager will be able to relay the problem back to where it needs to go.

**Travis:**

Yes. Just keep into account, you're dealing with another human being. Like that's the thing that whenever I hear those stories, the horror stories of dealing with customers that like, just, "Blah, blah, blah-hah." It always seems to me that it boils down to they were treating that person like a robot there to bring them and serve them and failed to take into account that that's a human being who may be having the worst day of their entire life.

**Teresa:**

Yeah.

**Travis:**

You know? And they still had to come to work because they still have to pay rent. And they still have to like, make ends meet and they don't get to stay home after having a huge fight with their parents or something. You don't know what's going on.

**Teresa:**

And you know, I'm not going to harp on anyone who fundamentally disagrees with tipping. I believe that it is a social norm and it's a construct

that we have set. Uh, and, um, at this point, most people are taken advantage of because of this construct.

And we really do, uh, it's important for society, I think that we follow it. But if you don't follow it, um, I hope that your motives are true. And that you, um, you work to change the establishment.

**Travis:**

While not punishing the people that still rely on tips. Um, I have a couple questions before we wrap up.

**Teresa:**

Okay.

**Travis:**

Um, this is from Ranium on Twitter. "If someone else in my party picks up the bill at a restaurant and doesn't tip the server well, what can I do?"

**Teresa:**

I have been in this situation myself. And I think that it is perfectly appropriate for you to leave what you feel is an appropriate compensation on the table.

**Travis:**

I thought you're going to say my favorite move that you do.

**Teresa:**

Oh, what's that?

**Travis:**

You insist. Okay. Well, if you're going to cover dinner, I insist on covering the tip. And that way, you can always ensure that that person doesn't get screwed over.

**Teresa:**

It is a good move, isn't it?

**Travis:**

It's a great move.

**Teresa:**

Well, but I suppose if you were, uh, they didn't give the particulars of this situation. Perhaps each person was responsible for their own dinner and you feel like the other party is not tipping appropriately. You can leave a little extra on the table. Um, and maybe approach that subject a little later outside of the restaurant. You shouldn't make a scene.

**Travis:**

Um, especially if it's a big party. Though usually, in parties, like six, eight, anything above that, there is sometimes gratuity included. So that's definitely something you want to pay attention to. Know what gratuity is already included in the bill. Um, it's usually written on the menus or somewhere where it will say, "For parties of X or more, gratuity is included."

**Teresa:**

Mm-hmm.

**Travis:**

And if that's the case, please do not argue that. Because when it comes down to that, at that point, it has nothing to do with the service. That has to do with a huge amount of time is going to be taken up by a party that size. It just is. Even if you're the best, most polite customers in the world, it's going to take a lot of that server's time. And it might be that they're dealing with that one table instead of four tables they could be dealing with.

**Teresa:**

Right. And you can always tip over top of that as well.

**Travis:**

Yes. Where if they're above and beyond, you should go above and beyond, too. Um, a couple more questions. Oh, this is a good one. This is from James. How bad does the service have to be before it's reasonable to not tip?

**Teresa:**



Um, I don't know of a real life circumstance wherein the service has been that poor.

**Travis:**

Yeah.

**Teresa:**

That you should not tip. That's the point where you can like maybe 15, maybe 10%. But you do need to still tip and that's when you should get a manager or a supervisor. And explain what it is that was so poor that happened to you.

**Travis:**

I think it would require someone being actively combative to me. Like refusing to take my order, like coming back and going, "No. I know you've been waiting. I don't care." That might, it might be like, prank show level service [laughs] before I'm willing to just straight up not tip.

**Teresa:**

Like I said, no real world scenario.

**Travis:**

Yes. Oh, this is a good one. This is from Jim. "Supposedly, tipping on the tax is a contentious question. But I didn't hear about it until recently. I feel like it's probably too minuscule to matter either way. Thoughts on that? "

**Teresa:**

Um, I did see several sources that said that you are fine tipping on the pre-tax amount. Um, but, but like the question asker says, it's often negligible. So if it is easier on your math skills to tip on the post tax amount, go ahead and do it. If it's easier on your math skills to tip on the pre-tax amount, do that.

**Travis:**

And if it gets upwards of like a \$300 meal or something and you don't want them on tax, I think that's cool.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

I've also seen before tipping on alcohol. Um, where like, you know at your table and you order a bottle of wine and they bring you a bottle of wine. Like nobody prepared it, that kind of thing. But I still stand by that if they had to go somewhere and come back with the thing, that's part of it. Like...

**Teresa:**

Right. It is, um, it is customary to tip a sommelier on the value of the wine that you order.

**Travis:**

Yeah. So, pay attention to that. And you know what? In this day and age, we have such a resource at our fingertips with the internet.

That if you're, feel like you're going to be going into a situation where you might be expected to tip, I mean, we got a lot of questions about what about other cultures? You know what I mean? Like, one, read a Rick Steves book. Dude is thorough and he'll tell you where to tip, when to tip, what to tip, how to tip, all that stuff.

**Teresa:**

And there's some great online resources. If I may, I would like to suggest [cntraveler.com](http://cntraveler.com). They have a really wonderful article about etiquette. Um, An Etiquette Guide to Tipping in 50 Different Countries. So it's quite a comprehensive list.

They go through and break it down into what situations you are expected to tip in. So, like hotels, restaurants, guides, um, what currency is expected. So if they'll take American dollars or if they won't and, uh, some of them even have little, little footnotes and PS's about special things.

**Travis:**

Well, there you go. So, do that.

**Teresa:**

Right.

**Travis:**

That's going to do it for us. We're going to wrap up there. Um, we want to thank you one, for listening to the show and two, for supporting us during the Max Fun Drive. If you're able to, we really appreciate it. You can go to [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). Do it now. Don't wait. It's going to slip out of your head. We want you to do it while you're thinking about it. If you're driving, don't do it while you're driving.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

If you can, pull over the side of the road, then do it, then get back on the road and then drive home. Um, but yeah. If you get, if you have \$5 a month to spare, you could be a Max Fun donor. Um, and if you have more, that's great. If not, that's great. I totally understand one way or the other.

But if you can, go to [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). Support Shmanners. Support all your favorite shows. And when you do, make sure that you tweet either @shmannerscast, @travismcelroy or @teresamcelroy and let us know so we can say thank you.

**Teresa:**

I love writing those thank you tweets.

**Travis:**

I know you do, baby. And make sure you tweet with the #MaxFunDrive, that you share the link. You can do, you know, the Toast to Max Fun tweets. Get entered into that drawing.

Also, on March 22nd, we're trying to have kind of a universal worldwide Max Fun meetup. So at 7PM local time, at a bunch of different places, there's going to be a meetup. Maybe there's one in your town. You can go to [maximumfun.org/meetups](http://maximumfun.org/meetups) to see a list of where one is scheduled right now.

If there's not one listed in your area, you can email Stacey, S-T-A-C-E-Y @maximumfun.org and see about maybe organizing one in your town. Teresa and I are going to be at one at Club Tee Gee here in Los Angeles on the 22nd and we'd love to see you there.

Um, also, we've got challenge donors. So no matter what level you give at, for every new and upgrading donor, they are committed to giving anywhere from like one penny to a dollar per donor. So every little bit helps. Even if you're only doing \$5 a month, you're giving even more than you thought you were.

Um, also, to end the Max Fun Drive, on the 25th, there's going to be a live Jordan, Jesse, Go! Teresa and I will be there and maybe we'll be on the show. But you should watch one way or the other. Stay tuned for more details about that. I think that's everything. I can't think of anything else.

**Teresa:**

[laughs]

**Travis:**

Thank you for your support. One last time, [maximumfun.org/donate](http://maximumfun.org/donate). That's going to do it for us this week. Join us again next time.

**Teresa:**

No RSVP required.

**Travis:**

You've been listening to Shmanners.

**Teresa:**

Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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