



## Bad-service dilemma: To tip or not to tip in a restaurant

**T**hinking of the awfulness of the service in degrees may help you decide:

**Uninspired:** Everyone is entitled to an off day (you probably have them, too, yet you still get paid). If the waitress is doing a decent job, leave an average tip.

**Slow, disorganized:** Complain to the waitress as soon as possible. If she has a good explanation (i.e., it's her first day, half the waitresses are out with the flu, etc.) and is friendly about it, leave an average tip, particularly if service improves. If you know it's not her fault, complain to the manager or maitre d'.

**Hostile:** Service is very slow, orders are wrong; the waitress gives you no explanation or is hostile or defensive. If 15 percent is your standard tip, go as low as 5 percent. Also, complain to the manager or maitre d'.

**Impossible:** Service is abusive—your complaints are met with anger, your dinner is taken back to be fixed and isn't back before everyone else has ordered dessert, etc. This is the time to stiff, but be careful; the waitress may run after you thinking you merely *forgot* to leave a tip; leaving a ridiculously low tip, such as a penny or a quarter, always gets the message across, but don't plan on eating there again.

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