

Methodology:

Results are based on an online survey conducted from May 4 to May 6, 2025, among 1,001 adults in Canada. The data has been statistically weighted according to census figures for age, gender and region in Canada. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.1 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

What do you think is an acceptable tip for service at a sit-down restaurant in each of the following circumstances?

Average service in any environment

Nothing – 7%
1%-9% – 18%
10%-14% – 42%
15%-19% – 28%
20%-25% – 4%
25% or more – 1%

Exceptional service when restaurant is exceptionally busy

Nothing – 6%
1%-9% – 7%
10%-14% – 21%
15%-19% – 33%
20%-25% – 25%
25% or more – 8%

Canadians Irked by “Suggested Tips” at Sit-Down Restaurants

Majorities disapprove of prompts for tips at online retailers, coffee shops and when using a credit card.

Vancouver, BC [May 22, 2025] – Most Canadians say they always tip food servers at sit-down restaurants but dislike encountering recommendations about how much they should leave after a meal, a new Research Co. poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, more than half of Canadians (53%) say they leave a tip “all the time” after visiting a sit-down restaurant.

Fewer Canadians tip “all the time” at other venues, including a bar (37%), a restaurant where they buy food to go (15%), a coffee shop (14%), a cafeteria-style restaurant (12%) or a fast-food restaurant (10%).

Almost two thirds of Canadians aged 55 and over (64%) say they always tip after visiting a sit-down restaurant. The proportions are lower among Canadians aged 35-to-54 (56%) and aged 18-to-34 (41%).

Canadians were asked how much they would tip at a sit-down restaurant under nine different scenarios. Just under three-in-ten (28%, -3 [since December 2022](#)) say they would leave no tip at all if they experienced below average service when the server is clearly not busy.

The preferred size of a tip ranges from 10% to 14% on two instances: average service in any environment (42%) and below average service when the server is clearly working in an understaffed environment (36%).

Canadians gravitate towards a tip that ranges from 15% to 19% on three situations: good service when the restaurant is not busy (37%), good service when the restaurant is busy (40%) and good service when the restaurant is exceptionally busy (38%).

When asked what they would do after receiving exceptional service, Canadians are willing to leave bigger tips. More than a third (36%) are in the 15% to 19% range if a restaurant is not busy, while just under one-in-five (19%) would move to the 20% to 25% range.

Similar situations occur in cases of exceptional service when the restaurant is busy (35% in the 15% to 19% range, and 24% in the



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20% to 25% range) and when the restaurant is exceptionally busy (33% in the 15% to 19% range, and 25% in the 20% to 25% range).

More than half of Canadians think a tip is not necessary when picking up food themselves (57%) or when ordering goods online (also 57%).

About a third of Canadians think tips in the 10% to 14% range are acceptable in three situations: after a haircut or visit to the salon (35%), for food delivery managed by the restaurant (33%), for food delivery through a third-party app (30%) and after taking a taxi or rideshare vehicle (also 30%).

More than two thirds of Canadians believe that, if the salaries of food servers were better, there would be no need to tip them (69%, =) and that food servers cannot get by on their salaries alone, so it is important to tip them (68%, -2).

A slightly lower proportion of Canadians (65%, -2) say food servers nowadays simply expect a tip, but don't work hard to earn it, while more than a third (35%, +2) believe food servers deserve a tip in all circumstances, even if service was bad.

"More than two-in-five Canadians aged 18-to-34 (42%) think food servers deserve a tip, regardless of how the service went," says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. "Fewer of their counterparts aged 35-to-54 (36%) and aged 55 and over (26%) feel the same way."

Majorities of Canadians disapprove of four practices that have become more common in recent times: online retailers prompting for a suggested tip (71%), coffee shops prompting for a suggested tip when the customer uses a credit card (65%), sit-down restaurants providing a suggested tip printed on the bill (57%) and sit-down restaurants prompting for a suggested tip when the customer uses a credit card (53%).

Canadians are divided when pondering sit-down restaurants setting a minimum service charge for large parties, with 45% approving of this practice and 47% disapproving of it.

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About Research Co.

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it





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polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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