

Soccer World Cup fans struggle with tipping culture

2nd July 2026



Football supporters attending the World Cup are struggling with the tipping culture in the USA, Canada, and Mexico. Many fans come from countries where service charges are included in the price at restaurants and in taxis. However, in the World Cup host nations, tips of up to 20 per cent are expected. If restaurant diners do not leave a tip, the staff can be disappointed. Travelling fans say their budgets are being stretched. They have already spent a lot of money on going to the World Cup. They add that leaving tips makes already expensive food even costlier. Some fans have complained about "tipping fatigue". This is because they are being asked to leave a tip even when buying a bottle of water.

Restaurant staff in the US, Mexico and Canada are also struggling. Tips make up most of their wages. Workers at restaurants in the US can earn as little as \$2.13 per hour. They rely on diners to tip. Without tips, staff may not earn enough money to live on. A lot of staff say it is impossible to survive in the hospitality sector without tips. In many host cities, restaurants have automatically added tips to their bills. Restaurant owners say the problem is that many international visitors are unaware of the tipping custom. Some restaurants have asked staff to politely explain the reasons for tipping in North America.

Sources: kansascity.com / nypost.com / msn.com

Writing

Restaurants should pay staff enough so that tipping is unnecessary. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

football / football fans / tipping / service charges / restaurants / taxis / diners / staff / wages / survive / money / the hospitality sector / international visitors / custom

True / False

- 1) The article says football supporters are refusing to leave tips. T / F
- 2) In the USA, people leave tips of up to 20 per cent of their bill. T / F
- 3) The article says staff are angry if diners do not leave a tip. T / F
- 4) Some supporters said they are experiencing "tipping fatigue". T / F
- 5) In the USA, some workers get paid restaurant \$2.13 an hour. T / F
- 6) Many people say it's difficult to survive on restaurant wages. T / F
- 7) Restaurant owners said international visitors know all about tipping. T / F
- 8) Restaurant staff have been explaining tipping to diners. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. supporters | a. pay |
| 2. culture | b. be paid |
| 3. included | c. strained |
| 4. stretched | d. customs |
| 5. fatigue | e. employees |
| 6. wages | f. fans |
| 7. earn | g. entertainment |
| 8. hospitality | h. tiredness |
| 9. bills | i. added |
| 10. staff | j. checks |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Should the World Cup be in just one host country?
- c) What is the tipping culture in your country?
- d) Why is the hourly wage in restaurants so low in the US?
- e) What do you think of working in restaurants?
- f) Are you a big tipper?
- g) Should restaurants pay staff more so that tipping is unnecessary?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a US restaurant owner?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Football supporters | a. are being stretched |
| 2. service charges are included | b. on diners to tip |
| 3. tips of up to 20 per cent | c. tips to their bills |
| 4. fans say their budgets | d. are expected |
| 5. fans have complained about | e. attending the World Cup |
| 6. Tips make | f. sector without tips |
| 7. They rely | g. "tipping fatigue" |
| 8. impossible to survive in the hospitality | h. for tipping |
| 9. restaurants have automatically added | i. in the price |
| 10. politely explain the reasons | j. up most of their wages |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of the World Cup?
- What do you think of tipping?
- Is 20 per cent the right amount to tip?
- Is no tip OK if the service is bad?
- Should teachers be tipped?
- Should overseas visitors not have to tip?
- What do you think of 'tipping fatigue'?
- Should people tip when buying a bottle of water?

Spelling

- football poptreruss attending the World Cup
- service acqrhse are included in the price
- at ttrerasasnu and in taxis
- tips of up to 20 per cent are tdpeexce
- fans say their ugstdbe are being stretched
- fans have complained about tipping tfgeaiu
- Tips make up most of their egwsa
- rnae as little as \$2.13 per hour
- They rely on erdisn to tip
- impossible to ireusv in the hospitality sector
- earnawu of the tipping custom
- eotllpyi explain the reasons

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. c	5. h
6. a	7. b	8. g	9. j	10. e

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	In many countries what are service charges part of?
2.	How much of a tip might restaurant workers in the USA expect?
3.	How might staff feel if they don't get a tip?
4.	What have some fans complained about?
5.	What are fans not so happy about leaving a tip for?
6.	What makes up most of the wages of restaurant workers in the USA?
7.	Who do restaurant workers rely on for money?
8.	What does the article say is impossible to survive in without tips?
9.	What have some restaurants automatically added to their bills?
10.	Who is explaining about tipping to international visitors?

Speaking – Tips

Rank these with your partner. Put the people who most deserve a tip at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| • Waiters | • Teachers |
| • Police officers | • Presidents |
| • Shop assistants | • Chefs |
| • Refuse collectors | • Nurses |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	F	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.