Do you leave a tip when you pay for a meal? And how much do you tip?

Michael Lynn from Cornell University thinks that tipping is worth about $40bn each year. That's more than twice the budget of NASA.

Indeed, many people say America is the most 'tip-friendly' country on earth. In New York, leaving a tip of around 20% in restaurants is normal. This compares to around 11% in London.

Why is it so much higher? Mainly because the wages of restaurant workers in the US are usually lower, so the tip is a very important part of their income.

But now some restaurants are trying something different. Sushi Yasuda restaurant in New York has banned tips because they say their staff are already well-paid, and because it makes the dining experience simpler for customers.

And which countries don't expect tips at all? In Singapore tipping is very rare, and in Fiji, Iceland and Japan, it can cause embarrassment and offence.

**Vocabulary**

tip
small amount of money that you give to a person who gives you a service

budget
the amount of money you can spend on something

wages
money you earn from working

income
money people receive, usually from working
banned
officially not allowed

dining
eating a meal

embarrassment
feeling shy

offence
feeling upset, hurt or annoyed

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