

## A lot of Americans are no longer tipping 20% — and inflation may be to blame



Still, some consumers say they will tip generously during the holidays

Are Americans reaching a tipping point when it comes to, well, tipping?

That could be the big takeaway from recent surveys that signal a possible shift in attitudes about gratuities. One survey, from Popmenu, a restaurant tech company, found a decline in the percentage of consumers who say they tip 20% or more in restaurants.

Another survey, from PlayUSA, a website that covers online gambling, found that 60% of Americans said they would like to do away with tipping altogether.

What's behind this sentiment? Inflation appears to be playing a role. The PlayUSA survey, based on responses from 1,006 people, noted that 17% of Americans said they were tipping less due to rising costs.

But other factors could be at work. During the height-of-the-pandemic period, consumers were apt to tip more generously in recognition of the difficulties restaurant

workers faced. Now people are not feeling like they're in savior mode all the time anymore.

Still, there were those who were more than willing to tip — and tip well — on certain occasions. The Popmenu survey found that 33% of consumers said they would tip restaurant staff 25% or more during the holiday season. Similarly, the PlayUSA survey noted that 23% of consumers planned to tip more during the holidays. People have a lot of complex feelings about tipping.

Arlene Spiegel, a New York-based restaurant-industry consultant, pointed to another reason some consumers may be tipping less generously. Namely, they may be finding the service lacking lately, especially in casual dining spots.

"Servers who show up for work, especially newbies, are not as well trained or motivated to go above and beyond to create a memorable guest experience," Spiegel said. ●