

My Big Day Guide to: *Tipping Vendors at Weddings and Events*

Tips are never expected, but always appreciated. Tips are meant solely as an expression of appreciation for especially good service. Unless the service provided was less than satisfactory, it is customary to show your gratitude by tipping many of the people involved in making your event a success.

My Big Day Tipping Tips:

Check Your Contracts & Agreements

Many gratuities are built into quotes for major items, such as, catering. This will appear as a 'Service Fee,' a 'Service Charge,' or any amount that is approximately 15 - 20% of the total contract. Read your contract carefully to avoid unnecessarily double-tipping.

Don't Tip the Venue /Owners

If your photographer owns the studio, there's no need to tip them. The same goes for bands not booked through an agency, the owner of a wedding venue, and the beauty-shop owner who does your hair.

Reward Extraordinary Service

Beyond the customary tips, when someone goes out of their way for you—the DJ digs up that old recording that will make your Grammy misty-eyed... the florist finds you that rare flower not in season... the event planner goes above and beyond adding little touches not contracted, etc... consider thanking them with a gift certificate, a bottle of wine, or another thoughtful token.

Put Someone in Charge

Assign someone you can rely on... one of the fathers, the best man, your super-organized maid of honor - to hand out envelopes with the non-contract tips in cash, either at the time of service (hair and makeup people), at the end of the wedding (which allows you to adjust the size of the tips to reflect the service), or at the beginning.

Simple Tip Chart:

Bartenders: 10 percent of the total liquor bill (to be split among them)

Band or DJ: \$20 - \$25 per musician; \$50 - \$150 for DJs

Photographer/videographer: If you're paying a flat fee with no overtime, \$100

Catering manager: \$200+ or a personal gift

Makeup artist: 15 to 20 percent

Event/Wedding planner: 15 - 20 percent of fee

Hairstylist: 15 to 20 percent

Waiters: \$20 and up each (distributed by the catering manager or maitre d')

Wedding Musicians: 15 percent of fee for ceremony musicians; \$22 to \$25 per musician for reception

Delivery Staff: Cake, Flowers, Rentals, Etc. \$5 to \$10 per person

Bathroom attendants: \$1 to \$2 per guest

Chef: \$100+

Coat check attendants: \$1 to \$2 per guest

Hotel chambermaids: \$2 to \$5 per room; \$10 to \$15 if you used a suite as your dressing room

Limo or bus drivers: 15 percent

Valet or parking attendants: \$1 to \$2 per car; 15 percent for valet parking

Maitre d'hotel or headwaiter: 1 to 3 percent of food and beverage fees