

Famous restaurateur getting rid of tipping

By Jordan Weissmann, Slate

Forcing waiters and waitresses to survive on tips from customers rather than normal wages is a pointless, gross, and uniquely American custom that, in the past several years, a handful of progressive restaurant owners have attempted to do away with, often with positive results.

On Wednesday, one of the most famous names in the dining business says he's about to join their ranks. Danny Meyer, CEO of Union Square Hospitality Group, has announced that he plans to gradually eliminate tipping at the company's 13 restaurants and charge higher menu prices in order to pay staff fairly. Diners won't simply be discouraged from leaving a gratuity; their checks won't even include a line to write one in.

What, exactly, is wrong with tipping? As Brian Palmer has explained at *Slate*, more or less everything. To start, leaving a waiter's pay in the hands of fickle customers reeks of classism. But in theory, handing restaurant patrons the power to tip is at least supposed to motivate better, more attentive service. This fails in practice because humans turn out to be pretty arbitrary about their tipping behavior.

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