

Restaurant

The Bill Standard

Five steps for the last thing the guest handles at the table. A correct bill brought quietly ends the meal; a wrong one becomes what they remember.

Who Servers, the head waiter and the restaurant cashier	When From the moment coffee is served until the guests stand	You need The POS, a clean bill folder, a charged card terminal, the in-house list
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Measured by Bill on the table within 2 min of asking · Every bill checked before it is presented · Card never leaves the guest's sight

1 Ready before asked

Once coffee is served, print the bill and check it, so it is in the folder before the guest asks. Acknowledge the signal at once, even across the room, and bring the bill within two minutes.

"T4 bill printed and checked 22:10, held at the station."

Common mistake Starting the bill only when the guest asks. Then the printer jams, and two minutes become ten.

2 Check every line

Read every line against the order before the bill goes in the folder: items, quantities, covers, service charge and the right table. Remove any dish sent back and anything the house offered.

"Dessert for seat 2 removed: offered by the house after the delay."

Common mistake Presenting the bill without reading it. The guest finds the replaced dish charged twice and checks every line after.

3 Present it

Present the folder closed to the person who asked for it, from their left; if you don't know who is paying, place it in the centre of the table. Never say the total aloud, then step away.

"Whenever you're ready, Mr Okafor."

Common mistake Handing the bill to the man at the table by default. The woman who invited everyone has to reach across for it.

4 Take payment

Bring the card terminal to the table; the card never leaves the guest's sight. For a room charge, hand the guest the pen to write the room number, check the name on the in-house list, and take a signature.

"Of course, Ms Rossi. Could you write your room number here for me?"

Common mistake Taking the card to the till to save time. The guest spends three minutes watching the door you left through.

5 Let them leave

Return the card and receipt in the folder and thank the guest by name. Do not clear the table, reset it or look at the tip while anyone is still seated; the meal ends when the guests stand.

"Thank you, Mr Okafor. We hope to see you again before you leave on Friday."

Common mistake Stripping the table the moment the payment clears. The guests finish talking in a room that has moved on.

Before the Folder Closes

Thirteen checks that take less than a minute and keep the last impression of the meal from being a discussion about one line.

- ☐ Bill printed once coffee is served
- ☐ Every line read against the order
- ☐ Dishes sent back removed
- ☐ Anything offered by the house removed
- ☐ Correct table and number of covers
- ☐ Service charge shown clearly
- ☐ Folder clean, pen that writes
- ☐ Presented closed to the person who asked
- ☐ Total never said aloud
- ☐ Terminal charged and brought to the table
- ☐ Room number written by the guest
- ☐ Name checked and signature taken
- ☐ Table left alone until the guests stand

How to use this with your team

Brief it at one line-up. Then the cashier checks three bills per service against the card before they go out, and any miss is read at the next briefing as a fact, never with a name.

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