



## Seattle Restaurant Week Diner Survey Results on Restaurant Industry November 2024

Below is an excerpt from a survey conducted by [Seattle Good Business Network](https://seattlegood.org) of Seattle Restaurant Week diners between 11/10/24-11/24/24. For questions about the survey, please contact [srw@seattlegood.org](mailto:srw@seattlegood.org).

### Industry Feedback from Diner Survey:

**We asked, “What are your thoughts about dining out in the Seattle area in general right now? Do you do it more or less than you used to? How would you describe your general experience?”**

*“It can be very hit or miss. The extra charges can be hard to swallow, esp when service or quality isn’t what it used to be. However, I understand and support the increased costs... It just means I’m pickier about when and where I go out.”*

*“I’ve been going out a lot more since I found rest that are organic and locally sourced.”*

*“Do it more. Experiences have been great.”*

*“Unfortunately prices being what they are, it’s difficult to justify except for special occasions.”*

*“Service and value, food quality/test are not always consistent or meeting my expectations but this does not deter me from trying new restaurants. I have not returned to restaurants that were not favorable for another chance, so first impressions are important in my opinion.”*

*“I do it way less now because of all the drug activities in the city. I have 2 little kids, and I cannot take them out to certain neighborhoods anymore. The world got exceptionally convenient with the delivery apps after the pandemic as well. We now cook a lot at home, or order in. I wish the city was cleaner and safer so we could take our little ones out with less anxiety.”*

*“I dine out as much as I can afford to now. So happy we got through the pandemic and there are still wonderful, affordable, interesting places to dine out in Seattle.”*

*"We do it more often to support local businesses especially for work meals."*

*"I do it a lot more and try to focus on locally owned and places that highlight seasonality."*

*"Dining can be hit or miss lately. With the social media booms some restaurants get, often I find favorite restaurants difficult to get into due to influencers and trends. I dine out a little more than I used to, and I generally really enjoy trying new and favorite restaurants- especially with tasting menu and limited specials like during SRW."*

*"Some neighborhoods feel hard to get to or I don't feel comfortable going myself at night so I couldn't try certain places since they were only available during lunch time when I work."*

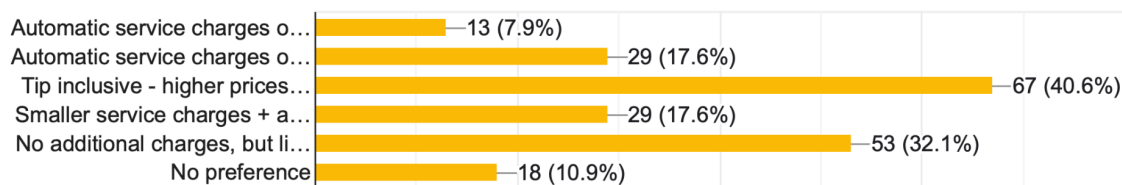
*"Pretty expensive, especially tipping culture (has moved from 10-15-20% to 18-20-23-25%). I also enjoy Seattle restaurants less, and find that there is often more of a focus on drinks and atmosphere than food quality. I still dine out a few times a month, but not usually trying new places (except for SRW)."*

*"I do not eat out much in Seattle (it has always been expensive) but I enjoy trying Seattle Restaurant Week to explore new neighborhoods and restaurants. I eat out about the same as pre pandemic."*

**We also asked, "In January, the minimum wage for tipped workers of small and independent restaurants will increase by \$3.51/hr, which will likely lead to menu price increases. Many businesses are working through different models for how to adapt while best serving their employees and guests. Do you have any preferences of the below options, or other models you'd be comfortable with as a diner?"**

In January, the minimum wage for tipped workers of small and independent restaurants will increase by \$3.51/hr, which will likely lead to men... other models you'd be comfortable with as a diner?

165 responses

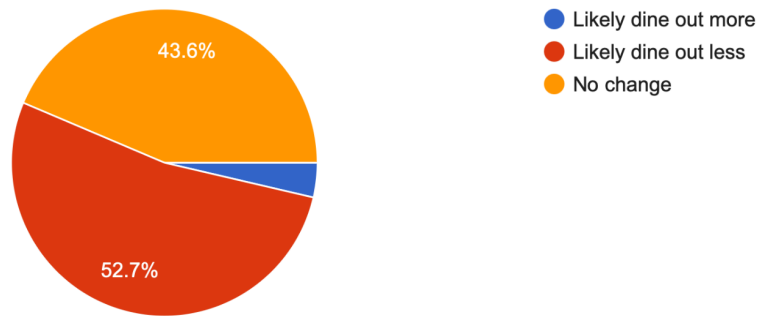


1. Automatic service charges on all checks, retained by the business, with additional tip line = 7.9%
2. Automatic service charges on all checks, retained by the business. No additional tip line = 17.6%
3. Tip inclusive - higher prices across the board with no tip line = 40.6%
4. Smaller service charges + additional tip line with lower tip % recommendations = 17.6%

5. No additional charges, but likely higher prices on the menu + additional tip line = 32.1%
6. No preference = 10.9%
7. Other - 10.9%

What impact do you anticipate these changes may have in your dining out?

165 responses



#### Diner comments:

*"It's really hard to understand what's going to employees and how much is appropriate to tip."*

*"I'm leaning towards no more tipping since prices have gone up so much."*

*"Restaurant owners should be able to pay their employees a fair wage without hiding service fees in the check. Higher menu prices and lower fees/tip expectations are much preferred over fees and the expectation that the service quality should determine if someone makes enough money to live off of."*

*"Service charge and a tip line is confusing."*

*"I don't know how much my restaurant pays for water, electricity, supplies - I don't want to be involved with the decisions on how much to pay staff. Please pay as generous a living wage as possible and make some money for yourself - if I feel any person has gone above and beyond I would like to leave an additional tip. But I eat, and sleep, easier when I know folks are earning a living wage."*

*"I believe the American tipping system should be completely eliminated."*

*"Prefer transparent pricing up-front instead of add-on charges unless service charge is used totally to provide employee benefits."*

*"I wish they did away with the tip system. For most takeout spots or places where almost no service is rendered they ask for 18% tip and we think it's kind of outrageous. Much rather just include tip in the check and do away with the tip line / awkward encounters about tipping culture."*

*"Tipping is an option for exception service not mandatory"*

*"Service charge and small tip % included in the charge. I want to know how much I'm paying when I walk into the door. Tip can be optional at the end since it was already included."*

*"I would rather not have automatic service charges where I'm not sure beyond what the restaurant says is done with the tips. I would rather personally tip the server."*

*"Increase the price on the menu. Anything else is sketchy. I shouldn't have to find out about a 30% service charge when I'm sitting looking at the menu"*

*"No preference but each establishment should very clearly communicate their model."*

*"Anything but sneaky fees/service charges. If the revenue goes to the business then just increase the menu price, not a fee that makes you question if it goes to the business or the server"*

*"The restaurant owners should pay workers adequately and not rely on customers"*

*"Just increase prices and pay normal salary so the tipping culture does not exist"*

*"I'm European and I find the effectively compulsory tipping in the US appalling."*