

Tipping Guide

Tipping, gratuity, 'greasing the guide' or whatever you choose to call it, is one of the most difficult decisions guided hunters have to make when an outfitted hunt is considered. Most hunters have never been on a guided hunt and have no idea what the protocol is.

Hunters must remember that they are in the care of experienced professional guides whose skill and knowledge will most likely determine the success of their hunt. Tips are not an absolute necessity, but they are always greatly appreciated. The verbal acknowledgement of your efforts is just as important to a professional hunter as a monetary one, but it must be remembered that this is his way of paying the bills, not just a hobby which he does for fun. The main fact is that cash tips at the end of the hunt are a very important part of the professional guides' income. Most professional guides around the world consider it an insult to be offered a handshake at the end of the hunt, after putting in their best effort for their client. Being a professional he will shake your hand, congratulate on your trophy, thank you for hunting him with you and send you on your plane with a smile on his face. Truth be told, his last thought of you will be very much different to yours of him, if you slighted him at the end of the hunt.

Professional hunters' earning potential is limited to a few months of the year, during which they must make enough money to see themselves and their families through the rest of the year. They also share the same emotions as the rest of us, including disappointment.

Your guide's tip should be based on his effort and your overall enjoyment of your hunting experience with Martin Pieters Safaris. You should not reward bad service and lack of effort in the bush anymore than you should in a restaurant. If your safari was a well run and enjoyable experience and you wish to reward that with a gratuity please consult the sidebar for some guidelines.

You should consider the degree of difficulty in securing your trophy. Professional hunters, especially those who hunt dangerous game, face serious injury and possibly death as a regular part of their job. This should surely count for something. Also remember that the guide is not usually the outfitter.

Most professional hunters, who choose this as a career, enjoy the animals that they hunt, the country that they operate in, and in most cases, the clients with whom they join in a mutual adventure. Good ones are a lot of fun to be with, know their region, know their game, and are honest in their dealings and have the ability to make all hunters feel confident during the hunt, no matter what their level of hunting experience. They will always give a good effort and your satisfaction will always be the number one goal. True recognition of his effort is genuinely appreciated.

The determining factor should be your honest feeling for the guide, as well as your financial situation in deciding what to give as a tip.

SIDEBARS

Gear in Place of Cash

Sometimes a client may want to tip his guide with a piece of gear, instead of cash. A quality piece of gear will be a much appreciated gesture, although cash is preferable in most cases. If you decide to do this make sure that the item is of better quality than your guide already owns, not something you simply have no use for and are trying to get rid of. If you think of something he may need but don't have with you tell him to expect something in the mail, and make sure you follow through as soon as you get home. This act of etiquette will be much appreciated.

Camp Staff

The staffs in most African camps are quite large when compared to North American hunts. Tipping them can be a bit tricky as there are usually trackers, skimmers, kitchen staff, tent boys, laundry staff, and general workers that make up the staff body. Consulting your guide or camp manager on what would be appropriate for the staff is usually the best idea. Another option is to tip the staff through your guide, and allow him to tip the staff according to their pecking order. Remember that although you may not see each person that is working to make your experience unforgettable, you would certainly miss their services should they take a day off. Don't forget about these folks.

Trackers

A tracker holds without a doubt the most important staff position on most safaris. You will be with them all day, every day, and will form bonds and pleasant memories together. The best option is to ask your professional hunter his thoughts at the end of the hunt and he will give you an idea of what might be appropriate. It is customary to tip the trackers personally, away from the other staff. It should be preceded by a word of thanks and a handshake. Even if you do not speak the lingo, your P.H. can translate, but the trackers will know what you are saying and appreciate you all the more for it.

Game Scout

Here in Zimbabwe, a government game scout will accompany you on your hunt each day. He is there legally to observe and to make sure that all the rules are obeyed. Some simply observe the hunt and do little else. But there are a great many who become a very important part of the team by getting involved in the hunt, by tracking, changing flats, recovering game etc. Martin Pieters Safaris very much appreciates you tipping your game scout at the end of the hunt if you get a hard working one. His job is dangerous, and his pay checks pitifully small in relation. Remember him if he worked hard for you.

Your PH

Professional hunters and their staff usually work a lot harder than the average waiter who earn a 10%-15% tip, and earn far less. Remember this before your final handshake at the end of your next hunt.

Type of Safari	PH tip	Tracker Team	Camp Manager	Camp Staff
7 day plains game	400.00	50.00each	100.00	75.00
10 day plains game	500.00	75.00each	125.00	100.00
10 day buffalo/plains game	750.00	150.00each	125.00	300.00
14day buffalo/leopard/plains game	1,000.00	175.00each	150.00	400.00
18day buffalo/lion/plains game	1,500.00	200.00each	200.00	500.00
21 day big'4' hunt	2,000.00	250.00each	250.00	600.00

Please remember that the above is just a guide, and that tipping is always at the discretion of you, the client.

