

Restaurant Server

The fastest job in the country to get hired for, where tips decide what you actually take home.

TYPICAL PAY

\$38,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$31k to \$62k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 1 year

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Restaurants, pubs, hotels, banquet halls, golf and ski resorts

How you get there

- 1 Get your alcohol service certificate** 1 day
Legally required before you serve liquor. Smart Serve in Ontario, Serving It Right in British Columbia, ProServe in Alberta. Online, a few hours.
- 2 Start as a host or busser** 1 to 6 months
Most restaurants will not hand a section to someone with no floor experience. Hosting is the way in.
- 3 Take a small section** Months
Lunch shifts or a quiet patio first. You learn the menu, the point of sale system and how to carry three plates.
- 4 Move to the money shifts** 1 to 2 years
Friday and Saturday dinner in a busy room is where the income is, and it goes to whoever is fastest and most reliable.
- 5 Specialise or move up** 2 years and up
Fine dining, banquets, bartending, sommelier work, or assistant manager.

Pros and cons

- + Hired within days, almost anywhere in Canada
- + Tips paid out at the end of the night
- + Shifts that fit around school
- Income swings with the season and the weather
- Nights, weekends and holidays are the job
- Rude customers are part of it and you have to stay pleasant

Good to know

Ontario scrapped the server wage

Ontario used to pay people who serve alcohol a lower minimum wage than everyone else. That separate rate is gone, so servers there now start at the general minimum wage of \$17.60 an hour and keep their ti...

Job Bank files servers under beer

The national wage listing that covers restaurant servers is titled Beer Server. It pools waiters, waitresses, bartenders' helpers and food and beverage servers into one group, so the numbers cover a wide mix of...

Optional boosts

Wine knowledge. Bartending skills. Banquets and events. Fine dining experience.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Beer Server in Canada, wages (updated Nov 19, 2025)
Smart Serve Ontario: responsible alcohol service training
Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario: alcohol
Ontario: minimum wage

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/server>



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