



We've met 'em all in high- and low-class eateries around the world. Of course, most waiters are efficient, friendly and helpful. An annoying few are snooty, angry, lazy and/or slovenly.

There are effective ways for dealing with a rude waiter. However, even if you have the urge to do it, tripping him (or her) as he goes by with a full tray of food-filled dishes is not the best way. There are gentler strategies. For example...

First, give the guy the benefit of the doubt. He may be upset because he's having personal troubles that day. Also, he may have just served a table full of bratty kids who threw food all over the place, and then the family left without leaving any tip.

If you believe your waiter hasn't done his job with you, tell him politely you're unhappy with the service. This should work on most waiters, especially if they've just been stiffed with no tip.

If the waiter seems determined to be uncooperative, no matter how politely you at first asked for decent service, you could match the rudeness. Look very closely at the silverware, make a wry face and ask the waiter to immediately get you clean utensils. When the waiter serves you soup or a food platter, complain that the ingredients are too hot, too cold, too salty or too spicy. Cruel strategy, but could be effective. If you can't placate the rude guy, call over the manager and ask for a different waiter. If the manager has any sense about economics, he'll comply. He doesn't want angry you stomping out of the restaurant to spread the word about the poor service.

If you're not given another waiter and must suffer through the meal with the same one, you may decide to depart without leaving a tip. An even more cruel gesture would be to tip a penny.

Some strategies suggested here for dealing with a rude waiter are drastic. However, you've come to the restaurant expecting prompt service. If lacking, you have every right to fight back.