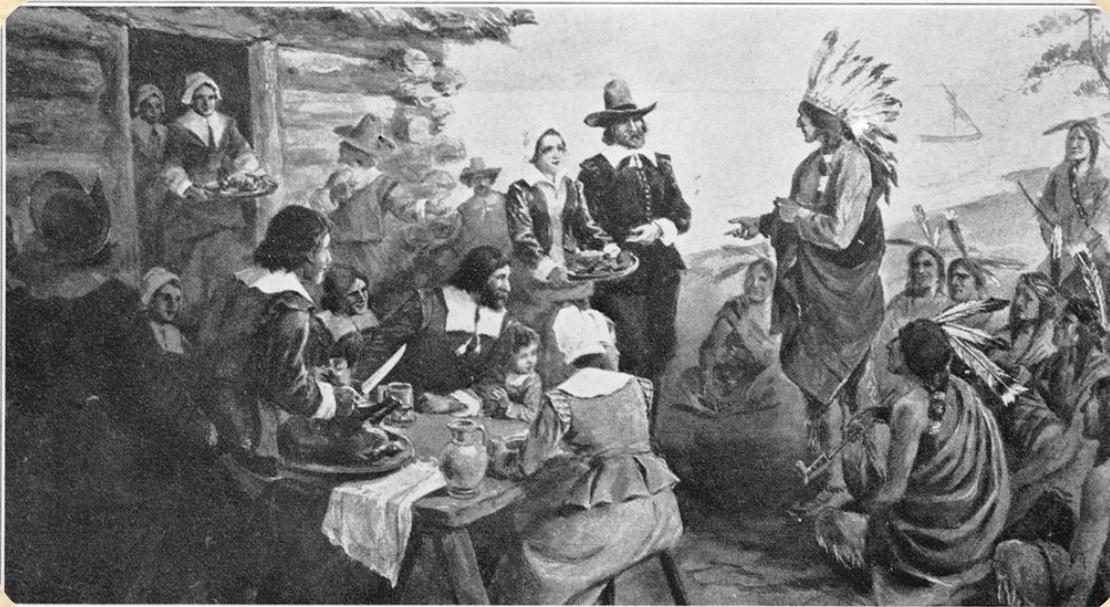




Thanksgiving Day in the United States

HISTORY

Almost every culture in the world holds celebrations of thanks for a plentiful harvests. The United States Thanksgiving holiday began as a feast of thanksgiving in the early days of the United States colonies almost four hundred years ago. Today, many people in the U.S. say it is their favorite holiday of the year. In 1620, a boat filled with more than one hundred people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in the New World. This religious group had begun to question the beliefs of the Church of England and they wanted to separate from it. The Pilgrims settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts.



Their first winter in the New World was difficult. They had arrived too late to grow many crops; without fresh food, half the colony died from disease. The following spring, the Iroquois Indians taught them how to grow corn (maize), a new food for the colonists. They showed them other crops to grow in the unfamiliar soil and how to hunt and fish. In the autumn of 1621, bountiful crops of corn,

barley, beans and pumpkins were harvested. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so a feast was planned. They invited the local Indian chief and ninety Indians. The Indians brought deer roast to go with the turkeys and other wild game offered by the colonists. The colonists had learned how to cook cranberries and different kinds of corn and squash dishes from the Indians. To this first Thanksgiving, the Indians had even brought popcorn.

THANKSGIVING DAY

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The following years, many of the original colonists celebrated the autumn harvest with a feast of thanks. After the United States became an independent country, Congress recommended one yearly day of thanksgiving, for the whole nation to celebrate. George Washington suggested the date November 26 as Thanksgiving Day. Then in 1864, at the end of a long and bloody civil war, Abraham Lincoln asked all Americans to set aside the last Thursday in November as a day of thanksgiving.

The President's Yearly Proclamation

Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday of November, a different date every year. The president must proclaim that date as the official celebration.

Following the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress recognized the need to give thanks for delivering the country from war and into independence. Congress issued a proclamation on October 11, 1782:

By the United States in Congress assembled.

PROCLAMATION.

"IT being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, for his gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give him praise for his goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his providence in their behalf: Therefore the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these States, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war, in the course of the year now drawing to a close; particularly the harmony of the public Councils, which is so necessary to the success of the public cause; the perfect union and good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between them and their Allies, notwithstanding the artful and unwearied attempts of the common enemy to divide them; the success of the arms of the United States, and those of their Allies, and the acknowledgment of their independence by another European power, whose friendship and commerce must be of great and lasting advantage to these States:----- Do hereby recommend to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe, and request the several States to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of THURSDAY the twenty-eight day of NOVEMBER next, as a day of solemn THANKSGIVING to GOD for all his mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify to their gratitude to GOD for his goodness, by a cheerful obedience of his laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.

Done in Congress, at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our LORD one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the seventh."

*JOHN HANSON, President.
Charles Thomson, Secretary.*



CELEBRATIONS, TRADITIONS AND SYMBOLS

Thanksgiving sees the most air and car travel of the year as families and friends try to reunite for the holiday. Many United States citizens enjoy a local Thanksgiving parade, or the annual Macy's department store parade, televised live from New York City. Others watch televised American football. Overseas, U.S. troops are served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Presidential Pardon

Each year since 1947, The National Turkey Federation and the Poultry and Egg National Board have given a turkey to the President of the United States at the White House ceremony. Early presidents were more likely to eat the turkey. A notable exception occurred in 1963, when President Kennedy, referring to the turkey given to him, said "Let's just keep him." It wasn't until the first Thanksgiving of President George H.W. Bush, in 1989, that a turkey was officially pardoned.



President Kennedy during the ceremony

In 2005 and 2006, the turkeys were flown to Disneyland in California where they served as honorary grand marshals for Disneyland's Thanksgiving Day parade. After that, they spent the rest of their lives at a Disneyland ranch.

On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, President Obama gave a turkey named Courage a last-minute reprieve. The bird hails from Goldsboro, North Carolina. Obama made light of the event. "There are certain days that remind me of why I ran for this office. And then there are moments like this where I pardon a turkey and send it to Disneyland," he said. In the past few years, two turkeys have been spared: 2008's were named Pumpkin and Pecan, 2007's were May and Flower, 2006's were Flyer and Fryer, and 2005's were Marshmallow and Yamy.

Source and Read more: [Thanksgiving Traditions: A Presidential Pardon — Infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/tgturkey2.html#ixzz10kTgMeo)
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/tgturkey2.html#ixzz10kTgMeo>

Symbols of Thanksgiving

Turkey, corn (or maize), pumpkins and cranberry sauce are symbols, which represent the first Thanksgiving. Now all of these symbols are drawn on holiday decorations and greeting cards.

Turkey. It was chosen by the British immigrants to celebrate the first Thanksgiving dinner for the harvest in their new land of freedom. From the first until now, the turkey is an essential element.

Corn. It meant the survival of the colonies. "Indian Corn" as a table or door decoration represents the harvest and the fall season.



Pumpkin. This food originated in America, where the natives of United States territory had grown it for more than five thousand years. It also complemented the nutrition of the first settlers, who incorporated it as an important element of their diet. Most of the winter pumpkins are harvested when ripe, the hard peel protects them and can be preserved and stored for several months.

Sweet-sour cranberry sauce or cranberry jelly. It was on the first Thanksgiving table, and is still served today. The cranberry is a small sour berry, originally from America. It grows in bogs, or muddy areas, in Massachusetts and other New England States.

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

The *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade* is an annual parade presented by Macy's Department Store. The tradition started in 1924 by the many department store employees who were first generation European immigrants. They wanted to celebrate the U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving, as their parents loved parades in Europe. The three-hour event is held in New York City starting at 9:00 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day. Approximately 40 million people watch the parade on television each year.

Macy's also sponsors the smaller Celebrate the Season Parade in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held two days after the big event.

Other Parades:

The United States' oldest Thanksgiving parade is the *Gimbels* parade, now known as "6abc-Ikea." It was first held in Philadelphia in 1920. Others include the McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade of Chicago, Illinois and parades in Plymouth, Massachusetts; Seattle, Washington; Houston, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; and Fountain Hills, Arizona. A parade is also held at the two U.S. Disney theme parks in California and Florida.

Sources:

<http://www.macysparade.com/>

http://www.nbc.com/Macys_Parade/



Macy's Parade 2007.



Thanksgiving Holiday is a Reminder to Americans to Help Others

By Louise Fenner
Staff Writer

Most Americans look forward to sharing a Thanksgiving Day meal with family and friends, but many also make a special effort to volunteer at shelters, churches, food banks and other charitable organizations. Many grocery stores and individuals contribute turkeys, potatoes, pumpkin pie and other traditional Thanksgiving items to food banks and soup kitchens, and volunteers spend the day cooking the meal and serving hundreds of people. "As we gather once again among loved ones, let us also reach out to our neighbors and fellow citizens in need of a helping hand," President Obama said in his Thanksgiving proclamation in 2009.

In 2008, then President-elect Obama and his family set an example by helping distribute food at a church in Chicago on Thanksgiving Day, and in a radio message he thanked those people across the United States who had "pitched in time and resources to give a lift to their neighbors in need. It is this spirit that binds us together as one American family — the belief that we rise and fall as one people." Thanksgiving, generally centers on a dinner of roast turkey, and thus food drives across the country focus on that main ingredient of the Thanksgiving feast.



On Thanksgiving 2008, then President-elect Barack Obama and his family distributed food at St. Columbanus Catholic Church in Chicago.

Each year in Santa Monica, California, for example, people donate uncooked turkeys or volunteer their ovens to roast a turkey the night before Thanksgiving. In 2008, some 300 turkeys were transformed into more than 2,100 hot meals for the needy and distributed at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

Operation Turkey in Austin, Texas, prepares and distributes Thanksgiving meals and clothing each year with the help of more than a thousand volunteers. Sixteen other cities, half of them in Texas, also have Operation Turkey drives

DONATING, VOLUNTEERING AND HAVING FUN

Some groups try to make donating fun. In Las Vegas, the Three Square food bank and Wranglers hockey team challenged fans to fill a tractor trailer moving van with donated food, and anyone who brought at least five items earned free tickets to that night's hockey game. The food bank asked for volunteers to help collect the food at the door, plus one special volunteer to wear a turkey costume during the event.

In St. Mary's County, Maryland, the local government sponsors a charity golf day on Thanksgiving. Golfers donate bags of nonperishable food and household items for a local food bank. In 2008, more than 2,000 items were collected. Social media sites are another way to make donating easy and fun. For example, the social networking site SocialVibe offers a "Thanksgiving Feast" application for the Facebook Web site that lets people ask their friends to participate in a game; for each point earned in the game, food is donated to needy people in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme.

A GROWING NEED

Peggy Grimes, executive director of the Montana Food Bank Network in Missoula, Montana, which provides food to nearly 200 charitable agencies throughout the state, says the need for food donations during the holiday season — and in fact, all year — is greater than ever. In 2008, the food bank distributed about 4 million pounds of food, but "we'll probably hit 8 million pounds this year," she said.

The Montana Food Bank Network is a partner of Feeding America (formerly called America's Second Harvest), the nation's largest charitable domestic hunger relief organization. Each day, about 20 to 25 volunteers work for the Montana food bank, sorting cans and boxes of food, repackaging bulk items such as cereal, and boxing up orders. College students and senior citizens often like to come during the day, Grimes said, while church groups and other individuals come in after work. "We're finding that more families want their children to be involved, and they come in the evening — so we've had evenings and weekends busy for about the last six months."

People who want to actually serve meals or distribute food baskets are directed to charitable groups that do that, Grimes said. For a soup kitchen that is serving a big meal at Thanksgiving, many volunteers are needed, she said. A special program called Hunters for the Hungry lets hunters donate deer, elk, moose and other game they kill. It is taken to the inmate-operated food processing facility at Montana State Prison in the town of Deer Lodge. It is cut up and frozen, Grimes said. The food bank distributes the meat where it is needed.

"We are seeing so many more families coming in" to the food bank because of job losses due to the economic recession, Grimes said. "When we have difficult financial times across the country, people begin to circle the wagons and say 'What's the most important thing for us to support: making sure people have a home and have food on their table.'"

"So people are stepping up, and they're really generous to us and help get the job done. If they weren't, we just wouldn't be able to get the food out to this many people."

Source: America.gov, <http://www.america.gov>



THANKSGIVING DAY RECIPIES

Turkey with stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry source and pumpkin pie are staples the Thanksgiving feast, although there are meat substitutes such as "tofurkey" (combining the words tofu and turkey), a loaf made from seitan (wheat protein) or tofu (soybean protein.)

- **Roasted Turkey**



Ingredients

- 1 (16 pounds) turkey
- 1 celery rib (thinly sliced)
- 1 onion (thinly sliced)
- 7 garlic cloves (mashed)
- 8 sprigs Thyme
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- salt, as needed and ground pepper
- 2 cups water
- 4 cups of turkey stock
- ¼ cup plus 2 tsp. flour

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees C. Set the turkey on a rack in a large roasting pan and scatter the turkey heart, gizzard and neck, the sliced celery, carrot, onion and garlic and the herb sprigs all around. Season the turkey with salt and pepper. Roast for one hour. Add 2 cups of water to the pan and roast the turkey for about 3 hour longer.
2. Transfer the turkey to a cutting board and let rest 30 minutes. Strain the pan juices into a large heatproof measuring cup, pressing on the solids. Skim the fat.

Sauce

3. Pour the pan juices into a medium saucepan. Add 4 cups of the turkey stock and boil until reduced to 5 cups, about 5 minutes. In a bowl, whisk the flour with remaining ½ cup of stock, then whisk the mixture into the stock. Boil, whisking.

- **Mashed Sweet Potatoes**

Ingredients

4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled
1tbsp butter
¼ cup milk
3/8 cup brown sugar
1tsp. cinnamon

Directions

Boil water. Peel potatoes and cut into small cubes, put in boiling water. Let cook until potatoes are soft. Remove potatoes, place in bowl. Mash potatoes with a potato masher or mixer, add butter and milk, stir. Add brown sugar and cinnamon, stir, Dish onto bowl or plate. Sprinkle cinnamon lightly over top.

- **Triple Cranberry Sauce**

Ingredients

1 cup cranberry-juice cocktail
¼ cup sugar
12 ounces fresh or frozen cranberries (rinsed and drained)
½ cup dried cranberries
2 tsp honey
1 tsp lemon zest
¼ tsp ground allspice

Directions

In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, cook the cranberry juice cocktail and sugar stirring until the sugar dissolves. Add fresh and dried cranberries and cool until fresh berries pop and dried cranberries begin to plump, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in honey zest and allspice. Cool the sauce completely and transfer to serving bowl or jar. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Serve alongside roasted turkey.

- **Vegetable – Herb stuffing**

Ingredients

1 ½ loaf sliced firm white bread
1 tbsp olive oil
2 medium carrots, finely chopped
2 medium stalks of celery, finely chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
½ cup fresh parsley leaves, coarsely chopped
¾ tsp poultry seasoning
Salt and pepper
2 ½ cup chicken broth

Directions

Preheat oven to 200 degrees C. Grease glass baking dish, set aside. Arrange bread on 2 large ungreased cookie sheets and toast in oven 16 to 17 min or until golden and dry, turning slices over halfway through toasting.

Meanwhile, in 12 inch nonstick skillet, heat oil on medium 1 min. Add carrots, celery and onion, and cook about 12 min or until vegetables are tender and lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Remove skillet from heat; stir in parsley, poultry seasoning, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper. With knife, cut bread into cubes, and place in very large bowl. Reset oven control to 165 degrees C. Add chicken broth and vegetable mixtures to bread bowl, toss until bread mixture is evenly moistened. Spoon stuffing into prepared baking dish. Cover dish with foil and bake stuffing 30 minutes. Remove foil and bake 15 to 20 min. longer or until heated through and lightly browned on top.

- **Grandma Sander's Pumpkin Pie Recipe**

(Quantity: Two eight -inch diameter pies)

Ingredients

3 cups flour
1 tsp salt
1 cup lard (or shortening or butter or combination)
1 beaten egg
1 teaspoon vinegar
5 Tbsp water.

Mix flour, salt and lard together with fingers until crumbly. Add egg, vinegar, and water. Mix together. Divide dough in half and roll into two balls. Wrap each ball in flour-dusted plastic wrap. After dough has hardened (30 min or so), place ball on flour-dusted surface and roll out crust. If dough is too sticky to roll, add more flour. Move rolled-out crust into an eight-inch pie pan. Flute the edge of the crust. Repeat with second ball of dough.

Pie Filling

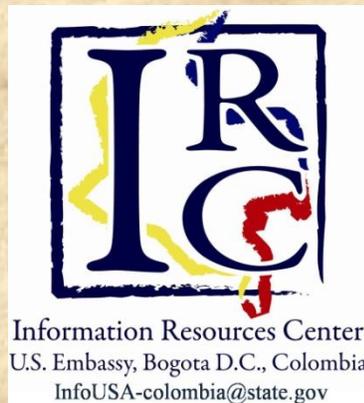
3 cups of steamed, mashed pumpkin
1 ½ cups brown sugar
2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ginger (fresh or powdered)
1 tsp salt
4 eggs
3 cups milk
1 cup light cream

Stir sugar, spices and salt into pumpkin. Beat eggs lightly and mix with milk and cream. Blend two mixtures together well and pour into two prepared (unbaked) crusts (see recipe above). Bake in hot (200 degree C) oven until pumpkin custard is firm (about 45 min).

Source: **Americans at the Table: Reflections on Food and Culture** U.S. Society & Values, E-Journal, July 2004.



Prepared by:



Information Resource Center
U.S. Embassy in Bogota
In cooperation with IRCs in our Region
Teléfono: 315 2131 :: Fax: 315- 2208 :: email: InfoUSA-Colombia@state.gov