

THE Weaver Wonders

The First Thanksgiving

In the autumn of 1621, after a successful harvest, the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony and the Wampanoag people came together for a three-day feast that would later be remembered as the first Thanksgiving.

The preparations began with hunting and gathering. Pilgrim men set out to hunt wild fowl, returning with geese, ducks, and perhaps a few wild turkeys. Meanwhile, Wampanoag hunters contributed freshly caught venison, which

quickly became the centerpiece of the meal. Along the shores, fishers pulled in cod and bass, and shellfish such as clams and mussels were gathered from the tidal flats.

In the fields and forests, both groups collected the season's bounty. Corn was harvested and turned into breads and porridges, while beans and squash were cooked in simple stews. Pumpkins, though not baked into pies due to a lack of sugar and ovens, were roasted or boiled. Fresh berries and grapes, along with chestnuts and walnuts, added a touch of

sweetness and variety to the feast.

Once the food was prepared, the Pilgrims and Wampanoag came together to eat, share stories, and celebrate the harvest. Over three days, they enjoyed the meats, seafood, fruits, and vegetables, strengthening their bond through the simple act of gathering at the same table to give thanks for survival and abundance.

Historical facts:

The first Thanksgiving occurred in November 1621, after the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony celebrated their first successful harvest in the New World. Their first year had been extremely difficult, with harsh weather and food shortages. The Pilgrims survived in large part due to the aid and knowledge of the local Wampanoag people, who taught them important agricultural and survival skills.

Governor William Bradford organized a three-day harvest celebration to give thanks for the colony's survival and abundance.

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Happy Thanksgiving

About 50 Pilgrims and 90 Wampanoag, including their leader Massasoit, attended. The meal likely included venison provided by the Wampanoag, wild fowl such as ducks, geese, and possibly wild turkey, along with corn, beans, squash, nuts, shellfish, and berries. Beyond sharing food, the gathering featured games, contests, and moments of diplomacy between the two groups.

At the time, the feast was not a formal holiday but a harvest celebration and an opportunity to strengthen alliances. Over the centuries, the story of this event grew into a symbol of gratitude and cooperation. The idea of Thanksgiving as a national tradition was later established when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed it a national holiday in 1863, cementing the first Thanksgiving as a foundational moment in American history.

Big Bird

Record-Breaking Turkey Sets New World Standard.

In a feat that has left poultry enthusiasts stunned, a domesticated turkey named Tyson has officially claimed the title of the world's largest turkey, tipping the scales at

an astonishing 86 pounds (39 kg). The broad-breasted white turkey, a breed known for its size, was recognized by Guinness World Records for achieving this monumental weight.

The remarkable bird hails from the 1980s, where it earned fame not only for its size but also as a symbol of Thanksgiving abundance. For perspective, wild turkeys rarely exceed 30 pounds, making Tyson nearly three times larger than his wild cousins.

Agricultural experts note that turkeys bred to such sizes are typically showcased at county fairs and exhibitions, though their immense weight can pose health challenges over time. Tyson's achievement stands as a testament to selective breeding and continues to fascinate animal enthusiasts.

Farmers and fairgoers alike are marveling at the record-breaker, which has become an icon of poultry history.



Around the World

Countries with Holidays Directly Inspired by U.S. Thanksgiving:

Canada – Celebrated on the second Monday in October. Families gather for big meals featuring turkey, stuffing, and pumpkin pie, often including outdoor activities since it's early autumn.

Liberia – Celebrated on the first Thursday in November. Churches hold special services, and families enjoy meals with local dishes like roasted chicken, rice, and cassava alongside American-style pies.

Grenada – Observed on October 25th. People give thanks with community feasts and sometimes incorporate turkey or other American-inspired dishes.

Norfolk Island (Australia) – Inspired by 19th-century American whalers.

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The Weaver Wonders: Thanksgiving Edition

Residents decorate churches with fruits and vegetables and share communal meals.

Countries with Traditional Harvest Festivals Related to Thanksgiving Themes:

The Netherlands (Leiden) – Hosts a modest church service on the fourth Thursday in November to honor the Pilgrims' history, with no widespread feasting tradition.

Germany – Erntedankfest involves church services, processions, and harvest displays, followed by local festivals with traditional foods.

South Korea – Chuseok features family gatherings, ancestral rites, and sharing traditional dishes like songpyeon (rice cakes) and seasonal fruits.

These brief notes highlight how each country uniquely observes gratitude and harvest traditions, whether directly linked to U.S. Thanksgiving or through older local customs.

Black Friday

Black Friday is closely tied to Thanksgiving in the United States, serving as a cultural and economic extension of the holiday. While Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, Black Friday follows immediately after and has become the unofficial start of the holiday shopping season.

The connection between Thanksgiving and Black Friday stems primarily from timing and tradition. Because many

Americans have the Friday after Thanksgiving off from work, retailers seized the opportunity to attract shoppers with large discounts and early-morning sales. This day became known as Black Friday, a term that also reflects its economic significance: it is when many stores “go into the black,” or start turning a profit for the year. Over time, shopping on Black Friday evolved into a cultural ritual, with families and friends extending their Thanksgiving gatherings into the next day by hitting stores together for deals and doorbuster events.

In conclusion, Black Friday's relationship to Thanksgiving reflects a blend of cultural and economic practices. What began as a convenient shopping day after a national holiday has grown into a modern tradition that transitions Americans from a day of gratitude and family into a season of gift-giving and holiday celebrations.

Cyber Monday

Cyber Monday has become one of the most significant shopping events of the year, marking the official kickoff of the online holiday shopping season. Occurring on the Monday after Thanksgiving in the United States, it was designed to encourage consumers to take

advantage of online deals and has rapidly grown into a global phenomenon.

The concept of Cyber Monday originated in 2005, when the National Retail Federation (NRF) and its online division, Shop.org, introduced the term in a press release. They noticed that online retailers experienced a spike in sales on the Monday after Thanksgiving, largely because many consumers returned to work and used their high-speed office internet to shop, as home internet access was still slower at the time. The first Cyber Monday recorded approximately \$484 million in sales, signaling the potential of online-exclusive promotions.

Over the years, Cyber Monday's popularity exploded, becoming a centerpiece of holiday shopping. Retailers began offering steep online discounts, and consumers quickly

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Happy Thanksgiving

embraced the convenience of shopping from home or work. By the 2010s, Cyber Monday was breaking records annually, and in 2020 it became the largest online shopping day in U.S. history. What started as a one-day event in the United States has since expanded internationally, with many countries creating their own Cyber Monday campaigns.

In conclusion, Cyber Monday reflects the shift toward digital retail and the growing importance of convenience in consumer behavior. From its humble beginnings in 2005 to its status as a global shopping event, Cyber Monday continues to evolve and shape the future of holiday shopping.

Cranberries

Cranberry sauce has a long history in connection with Thanksgiving, rooted in both Native American traditions and early colonial feasts. Cranberries are native to North America, and Indigenous peoples valued them for their tart flavor, medicinal properties, and ability to preserve meat in dishes like pemmican. When European settlers arrived, they learned from Native Americans how to use cranberries and eventually incorporated the fruit

into their own meals.

The first official Thanksgiving in 1621 likely included some form of cranberries, but not the sweetened sauce we know today, as sugar was scarce for the Pilgrims. By the 18th and 19th centuries, as sugar became more accessible, recipes for cranberry sauce appeared in American cookbooks. The tradition of serving cranberry sauce with turkey solidified in the late 19th century, especially after the 1864 Thanksgiving proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln helped establish the holiday as a national celebration.

Cranberry sauce became even more widely popular in the 20th century with the invention of canned cranberry sauce, first mass-produced by Ocean Spray in 1941, making it a convenient staple on Thanksgiving tables across the country. Today, cranberry sauce—

whether homemade or canned—remains a symbol of American Thanksgiving, linking the modern holiday feast with its centuries-old origins.



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