

Thanksgiving Day: Nov. 23, 2017

In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims — early settlers of Plymouth Colony — held a three-day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest. Many regard this event as the nation’s first Thanksgiving. The Wampanoag Indians in attendance played a key role. Historians have recorded ceremonies of thanks among other groups of European settlers in North America. These include the British colonists in Virginia as early as 1619.

The legacy of thanks and the feast have survived the centuries, as the event became a national holiday 154 years ago (Oct. 3, 1863) when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a national day of thanksgiving. Later, President Franklin Roosevelt clarified that Thanksgiving Day should always be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month to encourage earlier holiday shopping, never on the occasional fifth Thursday.

The following facts are made possible by the invaluable responses to the U.S. Census Bureau’s surveys. We appreciate the public’s cooperation as we continuously measure America’s people, places and economy.

Where to Feast

118.9 million

The number of occupied housing units across the nation in the second quarter of 2017 — potential stops for Thanksgiving dinner.

Source: Housing Vacancies and Homeownership, Table 8

www.census.gov/housing/hvs/data/histtabs.html

4.6 million

The number of multigenerational households in the United States in 2016. It is possible these households, consisting of three or more generations, will have to purchase large quantities of food to accommodate all the family members sitting around the table for the holiday feast, even if there are no guests.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey, Table B11017

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_1YR/B11017

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The number of places in the United States named after the holiday's traditional main course. Turkey Creek census designated place in Arizona, had 405 residents in 2015, followed by Turkey city, Texas (367); Turkey Creek village, La. (357); and Turkey town, N.C. (280). There are also 11 townships in the United States with "Turkey" in the name. (Please note that the populations of Turkey Creek census designated place, Ariz.; Turkey city, Texas; Turkey Creek village, La.; and Turkey town, N.C., are not significantly different from each other.)

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/S0101/1600000US0477415|160000US2276685|1600000US3768740|1600000US4873964

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The number of places and townships in the United States named Cranberry, a popular side dish at Thanksgiving. Cranberry township (Butler County), Pa., was the most populous of these places in 2016, with 30,739 residents. Cranberry township (Venango County), Pa., was next with 6,452 residents.

Source: Vintage 2016 Population Estimates

www.census.gov/data/datasets/2016/demo/popest/total-cities-and-towns.html

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The number of counties, places and townships in the United States named Plymouth, as in Plymouth Rock, the landing site of the first Pilgrims. The two counties named Plymouth are in Massachusetts (513,565 residents) and Iowa (25,200 residents).

Plymouth city, Minn., is the most populous place, with 77,216 residents in 2016.

There is one township and one census designated place in the United States named Pilgrim. Dade County township in Missouri had a population of 129. A census designated place in Michigan had a population of 50. There are also Mayflower city, Ark., whose population was 2,430, and Mayflower Village census designated place, Calif., whose population was 5,421. (Please note that the populations of Pilgrim census designated place, Mich., and Pilgrim township in Dade County, Mo., are not significantly different from each other.)

Note: Townships have been included in these counts from 12 states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin) where the primary governmental or administrative divisions of a county serve as general-purpose local governments that can perform the same governmental functions as incorporated places. These county subdivisions are known as minor civil divisions, and the Census Bureau presents data for these in all products for which place data are provided.

(Please note that population totals for the two places on the list that are census designated places, Pilgrim, Mich., and Mayflower Village, Calif., and Pilgrim township in Dade County, Mo., pertain to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey.)

Sources: Vintage 2016 Population Estimates

www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/total-cities-and-towns.html

www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/counties-total.html

2011-2015 American Community Survey

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/S0101/0600000US2905757584|1600000US0646436|1600000US2664100

Participants in the First Feast

23.8 million

The number of U.S. residents of English ancestry as of 2016. Some could very well be descendants of the Plymouth colonists who participated in the autumn feast that is widely believed to be one of the first Thanksgivings, especially the 636,000 living in Massachusetts.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey, Table B04006

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_1YR/B04006

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_1YR/B04006/0400000US25

6,500

The number of members of the Wampanoag American Indian tribal grouping as of 2010, roughly half of whom resided in Massachusetts. The Wampanoag attended the first Thanksgiving, playing a lead role in the historic event, and were essential to the survival of the colonists during the newcomers' first year.

Sources: 2010 Census American Indian and Alaska Native Special Tabulation File, Table CPH-T-6

[www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/cph-t/t-6tables/TABLE%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/cph-t/t-6tables/TABLE%20(1).pdf)

American Indian Perspectives on Thanksgiving, National Museum of the American Indian

http://nmai.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/thanksgiving_poster.pdf

Preparing the Feast ... Enjoying the Day ... and the Aftermath

98.6%

The percentage of households in 2011 with a gas or electric stove — essential for cooking their Thanksgiving feast. Another 96.8 percent had a microwave, also helpful in preparing the meal.

Source: Extended Measures of Well-Being: Living Conditions in the United States: 2011, Table 3

www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-136.pdf

98.3%

The percentage of households with a television in 2011. No doubt, many guests either before, after or perhaps even during the feast will settle in front of their TVs to watch some football.

Source: Extended Measures of Well-Being: Living Conditions in the United States: 2011, Table 3

www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-136.pdf

35.8%

The percentage of households with a stand-alone food freezer in 2011, which they may want to use to preserve their Thanksgiving leftovers. Far more (99.2 percent) have a refrigerator. Once all the guests leave, it will be time to clean up. Fortunately, 69.3 percent have a dishwasher to make the task easier.

Source: Extended Measures of Well-Being: Living Conditions in the United States: 2011, Table 3

www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-136.pdf

Culinary Delights

66,284

The number of supermarkets and other grocery (except convenience) stores in the United States in 2015. These establishments are expected to be extremely busy around Thanksgiving as people prepare for their delightful meals.

Source: 2015 County Business Patterns, NAICS Code 44511

<https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/BP/2015/00A1//naics~44511>

3,510

The number of baked goods stores in the United States in 2015 — a potential place to visit to purchase tasty desserts.

Source: 2015 County Business Patterns, NAICS Code 445291

<http://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/BP/2015/00A1//naics~445291>

2,792

The number of fruit and vegetable markets in the United States in 2015 — a great place to find holiday side dishes.

Source: 2015 County Business Patterns, NAICS Code 445230

<http://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/BP/2015/00A1//naics~445230>

244.0 million

The forecasted number of turkeys raised in the United States in 2016. That is up 4.5 percent from the number raised during 2015.

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/PoulProdVa/PoulProdVa-04-28-2017.pdf>

44.5 million

The forecasted number of turkeys raised in Minnesota in 2016. Minnesota topped in turkey production, followed by North Carolina (33.5 million), Arkansas (26.0 million), Indiana (19.5 million), Missouri (19.2 million) and Virginia (17.2 million).

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/current/PoulProdVa/PoulProdVa-04-28-2017.pdf>

\$25.8 million

The value of U.S. imports of live turkeys in 2016, with 99.9 percent of them coming from Canada and the remaining from France. When it comes to sweet potatoes, the Dominican Republic was the source of 49.6 percent (\$6.4 million) of total imports (\$12.9 million). The United States ran a \$13.7 million trade deficit in live turkeys during the period but had a surplus of \$159.4 million in sweet potatoes.

Source: International Trade Statistics, Harmonized Code 010512, 071420

<https://usatrade.census.gov/>

859.0 million pounds

The forecasted weight of cranberries produced in the United States in 2016. Wisconsin was estimated to lead all states in the production of cranberries, with 521.0 million pounds, followed by Massachusetts (estimated at 207.0 million pounds). New Jersey, Oregon and Washington were also estimated to have substantial production, ranging from 19.4 to 58.8 million pounds.

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/New_England_includes/Publications/Special_Reports/cranberries.pdf

3.1 billion pounds

The total weight of sweet potatoes — another popular Thanksgiving side dish — produced by major sweet potato producing states in 2015.

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

<https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/results/8C8E327E-6B51-354B-B3CC-6B662C2E656B>

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)	Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
Super Bowl (1st Sunday in February)	Grandparents Day (1st Sunday after Labor Day)
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Women's History Month (March)	Unmarried and Single Americans Week (3rd week of
September)	
Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/	Halloween (Oct. 31)
St. Patrick's Day (March 17)	American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month
Earth Day (April 22)	(November)
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)	Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
Older Americans Month (May)	Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in November)
Mother's Day (2nd Sunday in May)	The Holiday Season (December)
Hurricane Season Begins (June 1)	
Father's Day (3rd Sunday in June)	
The Fourth of July (July 4)	
Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)	
Back to School (August)	

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Facts for Features are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office.

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