

# What Is Thanksgiving

## Thanksgiving

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Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated on various dates in October and November in the United States, Canada, Saint Lucia, Liberia, and unofficially in countries like Brazil and Germany. It is also observed in the Australian territory of Norfolk Island. It began as a day of giving thanks for the blessings of the harvest and of the preceding year. Various similarly named harvest festival holidays occur throughout the world during autumn. Although Thanksgiving has historical roots in religious and cultural traditions, it has long been celebrated as a secular holiday as well.

## Thanksgiving (United States)

*Thanksgiving is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November (which became the uniform date country-wide in 1941)*

Thanksgiving is a federal holiday in the United States celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November (which became the uniform date country-wide in 1941). Outside the United States, it is sometimes called American Thanksgiving to distinguish it from the Canadian holiday of the same name and related celebrations in other regions. The modern national celebration dates to 1863 and has been linked to the Pilgrims' 1621 harvest festival since the late 19th century. As the name implies, the theme of the holiday generally revolves around giving thanks and the centerpiece of most celebrations is a Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends.

The dinner often consists of foods associated with New England harvest celebrations: turkey, potatoes (usually mashed and sweet), squash, corn (maize), green beans, cranberries (typically as cranberry sauce), and pumpkin pie. It has expanded over the years to include specialties from other regions of the United States, such as macaroni and cheese and pecan pie in the South and wild rice stuffing in the Great Lakes region, as well as international and ethnic dishes.

Other Thanksgiving customs include charitable organizations offering Thanksgiving dinner for the poor, attending religious services, and watching or participating in parades and American football games. Thanksgiving is also typically regarded as the beginning of the holiday shopping season, with the day after, Black Friday, often considered to be the busiest retail shopping day of the year in the United States. Cyber Monday, the online equivalent, is held on the Monday following Thanksgiving.

## Thanksgiving (Canada)

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Thanksgiving (French: Action de grâce) or Thanksgiving Day (French: Jour de l'Action de grâce), is an annual Canadian holiday held on the second Monday in October. Outside the country, it may be referred to as Canadian Thanksgiving to distinguish it from the American holiday of the same name and related celebrations in other regions.

Thanksgiving has been officially celebrated as an annual holiday in Canada since November 6, 1879. While the date varied by year and was not fixed, it was commonly the second Monday in October.

On January 31, 1957, the Governor General of Canada Vincent Massey issued a proclamation stating: "A Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed – to be observed on the second Monday in October."

## Thanksgiving dinner

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The centerpiece of contemporary Thanksgiving in the United States and Canada is Thanksgiving dinner, a large meal generally centered on a large roasted turkey. Thanksgiving is the largest eating event in the United States as measured by retail sales of food and beverages and by estimates of individual food intake. In a 2015 Harris Poll, Thanksgiving was the second most popular holiday in the United States (after Christmas), and turkey was the most popular holiday food, regardless of region, generation, gender, or race.

Along with attending church services, Thanksgiving dinner remained a central part of celebrations from the holiday's early establishment in North America. Given that days of thanksgiving revolve around giving thanks, the saying of grace before Thanksgiving dinner is a traditional feature of the feast. At Thanksgiving dinner, turkey is served with a variety of side dishes that can vary from traditional to ones that reflect regional or cultural heritage.

Many of the dishes in a traditional Thanksgiving dinner are made from ingredients native to the Americas, including the turkey bird, potato, sweet potato, corn (maize), squash (including pumpkin), green bean, and cranberry. The Pilgrims may have learned about some of these foods from Native Americans, but others were not available to the early settlers. The tradition of eating them at Thanksgiving likely reflects their affordability for later Americans. Early North American settlers did eat wild turkey, but the lavish feasts that are frequently ascribed to Thanksgiving in the 17th century were a creation of nineteenth-century writers who sought to popularize a unifying holiday in which all Americans could share.

Thanksgiving Day was made a national holiday in the mid-19th century, and the importance of the day and its centerpiece family meal has become a widely observed American and Canadian tradition, with the meal consisting of roast turkey (or substitute) and many sides being central part of the holiday. The first frozen TV dinner was a Thanksgiving dinner triggered by a glut of turkeys in the year 1953.

## Thanksgiving (2023 film)

*Thanksgiving is a 2023 American slasher film directed by Eli Roth from a screenplay by Jeff Rendell, based on a story by the pair, who produced with Roger*

Thanksgiving is a 2023 American slasher film directed by Eli Roth from a screenplay by Jeff Rendell, based on a story by the pair, who produced with Roger Birnbaum. It is based on a fictitious trailer from Grindhouse (2007). The film stars Patrick Dempsey, Addison Rae, Milo Manheim, Jalen Thomas Brooks, Nell Verlaque, Rick Hoffman, and Gina Gershon, and follows a small Massachusetts town that is terrorized by a killer in a John Carver mask around the Thanksgiving holiday one year after a Black Friday riot ended in tragedy.

Thanksgiving was released in the United States by Sony Pictures Releasing on November 17, 2023. The film received generally positive reviews from critics and grossed \$46.6 million worldwide against a production budget of \$15 million. A sequel is currently in development which is scheduled for a November 2025 release.

## NFL on Thanksgiving Day

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Since its inception in 1920, the National Football League (NFL) has played games on Thanksgiving Day, patterned upon the historic playing of college football games on or around the November holiday. The NFL's Thanksgiving Day games have traditionally included one game hosted by the Detroit Lions since 1934, and one game hosted by the Dallas Cowboys since 1966 (with two exceptions in 1975 and 1977). Since 2006, a third game has also been played in prime time on Thanksgiving night. Unlike the two afternoon games, this game has no fixed teams.

In 2001, the NFL began branding the games as the Thanksgiving Classic. In 2022, the league changed the branding to the John Madden Thanksgiving Celebration in honor of former head coach and broadcaster John Madden, who died in December 2021.

### Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

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The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is an annual parade in New York City presented by the American-based department store chain Macy's. The Parade first took place in 1924, tying it for the second-oldest Thanksgiving parade in the United States with America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit (with both parades being four years younger than Philadelphia's Thanksgiving Day Parade). The three-hour parade is held in Manhattan, ending outside Macy's Herald Square, and takes place from 8:30 a.m. to noon Eastern Standard Time on Thanksgiving Day, and has been televised nationally on NBC since 1953.

### Black Friday (shopping)

*Black Friday is the Friday after Thanksgiving in the United States. It traditionally marks the start of the Christmas shopping season and is the busiest*

Black Friday is the Friday after Thanksgiving in the United States. It traditionally marks the start of the Christmas shopping season and is the busiest shopping day of the year in the United States. Many stores offer highly promoted sales at heavily discounted prices and often open early, sometimes as early as midnight or even on Thanksgiving. Some stores' sales continue to Monday ("Cyber Monday") or for a week ("Cyber Week").

"Black Friday" has evolved in meaning and impact over the years, initially referring to calamitous days, with a notable early instance being Black Friday (1869) in the US. This financial crisis saw a dramatic plunge in gold prices, affecting investors. The term was later used in American retail, starting ambiguously in the 1950s. Initially associated with workforce absence post-Thanksgiving, it was reinterpreted by Philadelphia police to describe the shopping-induced congestion. Attempts at rebranding to "Big Friday" failed, and the term "Black Friday" solidified by the 1980s, referring to the pivotal point where retailers purportedly shifted from loss ("in the red") to profit ("in the black"). This day marks the unofficial start of the Christmas shopping season, with promotional sales aiming to draw large crowds. Black Friday is the busiest shopping day of the year in the United States and retailers prioritize it and Cyber Monday as highly profitable holiday shopping days.

The concept has since globalized, with countries around the world adopting "Black Friday" sales to mimic the US phenomenon, adjusting local customs or creating similar events. The advent of online shopping and events like "Cyber Monday" have expanded the traditional one-day shopping frenzy into a broader holiday shopping season, diluting the singular focus of Black Friday, and expanding its economic impact.

### List of films set around Thanksgiving

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#### List of Thanksgiving television specials

*The following is a list of Thanksgiving television specials in the United States and Canada. Unless otherwise stated, these are episodes of established*

The following is a list of Thanksgiving television specials in the United States and Canada. Unless otherwise stated, these are episodes of established television series or one-off specials that are rerun annually.

Events not specifically made for television (e.g. parades, theatrical films, unscripted sporting events) are not included in this list; professional wrestling pay-per-view specials, because they are scripted and made primarily for television, are included in this list.

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