



Thanksgiving



Every year, on the fourth Thursday of November, American people celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday of October in Canada.

What is the origin of this very important celebration ? Briefly !

Even if Thanksgiving has historical roots in religious and cultural traditions, it has long been celebrated in a secular (= not religious) manner as well.

In September 1620, a small ship called the Mayflower left Plymouth, England, carrying 102 passengers (The Pilgrims). They started a new life on the north east of America. It was very difficult because it was very cold in winter, and they did not have a lot of food. The Indians helped these poor people to survive. They showed them what plants to grow and how to get food. One year later, the Pilgrims had enough food to live. They organized a feast and invited the Indians. This was the first Thanksgiving Dinner.

Video on Youtube: Deconstructing History: Mayflower (2'42) → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w59Tkol-tZY>



Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor by William Halsall (1882)



The Pilgrims in the Mayflower



The First Thanksgiving 1621, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1932)



Freedom from Want,
The Thanksgiving Picture
or I'll Be Home for Christmas
by Norman Rockwell (1943)



Thanksgiving



What are the traditions at Thanksgiving ?

Travel

At Thanksgiving, you want to be with your family. Many people travel long distances by car, train or plane to be with their family. This is a very busy time for traveling !



American football

American football is one of the many traditions in American culture associated with Thanksgiving Day. People usually play American football But they also watch games on TV (NFL → National Football League)



The Turkey Pardon

The President of the United States receives a live turkey at the White house. The president traditionally “pardons” the turkey. It can stay alive and live on a farm.



Generosity

Thanksgiving is also the occasion to be generous. A lot of people volunteer to serve food or make donation to the poor and the homeless.



Macy's

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade takes place in New York City. There are marching bands (fanfares), floats (chars), songs and giant balloons ! It's well-known and people watch it on TV.



Food

All the family traditionally take part in the preparation of the dinner. The traditional menu (see p.2)



Gratitude

Usually people say what they are grateful for / thankful for
“I'm grateful for ...”





Thanksgiving



The Traditional Menu

Roast turkey



Gravy



Mashed potatoes



Stuffing



Ham



Green beans



Corn



Sweet potatoes



Corn bread



or

Sweet yam (sweet potato) casserole



Cranberry sauce



Apple pie



Pecan pie



Pumpkin pie

