

Thanksgiving trivia questions and answers

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There are many countries and cultures that have a Thanksgiving holiday or celebrations based around giving thanks.

But this set of trivia questions will focus mostly on Thanksgiving in the United States. Although there is a section at the end for trivia about Thanksgiving celebrations around the world.

History of Thanksgiving in the USA

What year was the celebration that is most commonly attributed as the first Thanksgiving?

1621

This is the celebration that people most often talk about when they are talking about the “first” Thanksgiving. But there are others that are claimed to be the first Thanksgiving. There was another celebration in Plymouth in 1623 and one in Boston in 1631 that people claim was the actual first Thanksgiving. In reality there were lots of Thanksgiving celebrations in North America before 1621 as well because days of Thanksgiving were often celebrated after good events that were deemed to have the hand of God behind them.

How long did the first Thanksgiving celebration last?

3 Days

It was celebrated much earlier than our current celebration, possibly in late September. There were about 50 European settlers and around 90 native Americans who attended the 3-day feast.

When the religious group that would later be known as the Pilgrims left England to practice their religion freely, where did they go?

Leiden, Holland

Unlike the Puritans, the Pilgrims believed that they couldn't practice their religion within the English state church. This led to fines and sometimes imprisonment. To escape persecution, they fled to Leiden, Holland. But they had a hard time fitting in and finding jobs because they didn't want to assimilate into the local culture. They were also worried

about their children being influenced by the culture they were living in. So they secured investors and made their journey to found a colony in New England.

Under which president did Thanksgiving become an annual holiday?

Abraham Lincoln

As a nation, the US has celebrated Thanksgiving off and on since 1774. In 1789 George Washington made a proclamation that the American people should celebrate a day of thanksgiving to God on November 26th. Some presidents after him continued the tradition, sporadically declaring days of Thanksgiving. But it wasn't until 1863 with Lincoln proclaiming a day of Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November that it became an annual holiday. Every year after that Presidents proclaimed the last Thursday of November to be a day of Thanksgiving. It was changed to be the fourth Thursday in under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Thanksgiving parades

In what decade did both the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and America's Thanksgiving Parade start?

The 1920's (specifically 1924)

America's Thanksgiving Parade was inspired by Eaton's Santa Claus Parade in Toronto, Ontario and the papier-mache heads that he saw on a trip to Europe. Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was started by Louis Bamberger in Newark, New Jersey but was transferred to New York City where it is now held by Macy's.

How do both Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and America's Thanksgiving Parade conclude?

With the arrival of Santa Claus

In America's Thanksgiving Parade this usually features Santa receiving the key to the city from the Mayor of Detroit. This is supposed to herald in the Christmas season, but as we all know it's been creeping earlier and earlier each year.

What is the oldest Thanksgiving parade currently called?

6abc Dunkin' Donuts Thanksgiving Day Parade

Catchy huh? It was started in 1920 and originally called the Gimbels Thanksgiving Day Parade until the Gimbels department stores closed down. WPVI a.k.a Channel 6 a.k.a abc6 as well as several companies have sponsored the parade since Gimbels went out of business.

Turkey trivia

Which president was the first to give a turkey a presidential pardon?

Ronald Reagan

John F. Kennedy was the first president on record for unofficially sparing a Turkey in 1963. But it wasn't until the Reagan administration in 1987 that a turkey was given an official presidential pardon as a joke. Despite it being a joke, the turkey was spared and put into a petting zoo. In 1989 George H. Bush made it an annual tradition and each president following him has carried on the tradition.

What are turkey chicks called?

Pults or turkeylings

Let me just say, turkeylings is an amazing name for baby turkeys. Female turkeys are called hens, and males are called toms in the US or stags in Europe.

What is the wobbly red piece of flesh on top of the beak of a turkey?

A snood

The red bit of flesh under the beak is called a wattle. We are definitely not helping the turkey's reputation as a silly animal with all these names.

What are most turkey feathers used for after the turkey is plucked?

Animal feed

Feathers from birds like turkeys and chickens are ground up and used as protein in animal feed. Feathers are made up of keratin which ruminant animals, such as cows, are able to digest.

What state raises the most turkeys?

Minnesota

With 41 million turkeys raised in 2015 Minnesota tops the chart for turkey production. Next up is North Carolina with 31 million turkeys raised. Then Arkansas coming in third with 27.5 million turkeys.

Thanksgiving food

What animal did the native Americans bring to the first Thanksgiving?

Deer (venison)

After they arrived, some of the Native Americans went out hunting and brought back five deer to give to the governor, the captain, and others.

What food was present at the first Thanksgiving but is rarely eaten at Thanksgiving now?

Seafood

*Because Plymouth Colony relied heavily on fishing there was plenty of seafood at the first Thanksgiving. In his journal titled *Of Plymouth Plantation* the leader of the Plymouth Colony William Bradford had this to say about the harvest before the first Thanksgiving: "For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion."*

What decade was the green bean casserole, a Thanksgiving staple in many households, first created?

1950s (Specifically 1955)

The green bean casserole was created by the Campbell Soup Company and more specifically by Dorcas Reilly.

In what century were the first pumpkin pies as we know them made?

The 17th century (1600s)

Although the pumpkin is native to North America, the pumpkin pie was actually first made in England and Europe. It wasn't until the 19th century that pumpkin pies as we know them started showing up in American cookbooks.

What culture produced the idea of the cornucopia, the horn of plenty?

Greek culture

The cornucopia is very prevalent in Greek mythology. With one origin story having baby Zeus breaking off a horn from a divine goat that was suckling him. Another origin story has Heracles ripping off the horn of a river god named Achelous. The cornucopia then became associated with several Greek and Roman deities.

Thanksgiving and harvest festival traditions around the world

Thanksgiving in the USA is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November, but when is Canada's Thanksgiving?

The second Monday of October

Canadian Thanksgiving shares many aspects of American Thanksgiving, right down to the turkey. Canadian Thanksgiving can trace its beginning back to either 1578 and Martin Frobisher who gave thanks to God for surviving the trip from England or to the late 1600s and Samuel De Champlain with his fellow French settlers who gave thanks for a successful crop.

During Chuseok, the Korean Thanksgiving / harvest festival, they traditionally eat a stuffed food but it isn't a turkey. What food do Koreans stuff and eat during Chuseok?

Rice cakes (songpyeon)

Rice is ground down into a flour and then water is added to make a rice dough. Then that dough is stuffed with lots of different types of ingredients and formed into small rice cakes which then are steamed over pine needles.

Where is the only place in Australia where Thanksgiving is celebrated?

Norfolk Island

The custom was brought there by American whaling ships and it just kind of stuck. The rest of Australia doesn't celebrate Thanksgiving.

Who do children in Japan give drawings to on Labor Thanksgiving Day?

Police stations

Labor Thanksgiving Day was established in 1948, after World War II, to celebrate hard work and giving thanks to each other. But it's roots are much older. It comes from the harvest festival known as Niiname-sai which dates back at least to the 7th century and possibly much earlier.

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