



Thanksgiving: About the Holiday



Thanksgiving is a national holiday in the United States for giving thanks and sharing a meal with family and friends. Many trace it to a 1621 harvest feast shared by the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people. Today it is a day of gratitude, parades, and favorite foods.

Thanksgiving Day in the United States is held on the fourth Thursday of November. In 2026, it falls on Thursday, November 26.

- U.S. Thanksgiving is held on the fourth Thursday of November. In 2026, that is November 26.
- Many trace the holiday to a 1621 harvest feast shared by the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people.
- George Washington proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving Day in 1789.
- Writer Sarah Josepha Hale, author of Mary Had a Little Lamb, campaigned 17 years for a national Thanksgiving.
- Abraham Lincoln's 1863 proclamation led to Thanksgiving being observed every year.
- Lincoln's proclamation set the holiday on the last Thursday of November.
- In 1939, Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving a week earlier to lengthen the holiday shopping season.
- In 1941, Congress set Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November, and Roosevelt signed it into law.
- The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City was first held in 1924.
- The 2026 Macy's parade is planned as the 100th parade, since it was canceled during World War II.
- Turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie are popular Thanksgiving foods.
- Many families share what they are thankful for and help neighbors in need on Thanksgiving.