

Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day is a harvest festival. Traditionally, it is a time to give thanks to God for the harvest and express gratitude in general. It is a holiday celebrated primarily in Canada and the United States. The date and location of the first Thanksgiving celebration is a topic of modest contention. Though the earliest attested Thanksgiving celebration was on September 8, 1565 in what is now Saint Augustine. It is celebrated every year on the fourth Thursday in the month of November. Its origin can be traced back to the 16th century when the first thanksgiving dinner is said to have taken place.

The Pilgrims left Plymouth, England, on September 6, 1620 and their destination was the New World. Although filled with uncertainty and peril, it offered both civil and religious liberty. On the new world the pilgrims learnt to grow corn, beans and pumpkins from the Indians, which helped all of them survive . In the autumn of 1621, they held a grand celebration where 90 people were invited including Indians. The grand feast was organized to thank god for his favors. In 1789 George Washington, the first president of the United States, proclaimed November 26 a day of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving day continued to be celebrated in the United States on different days in different states until Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of Godey's Lady's Book, decided to do something about it. For more than 30 years she wrote letters to the governors and presidents asking them to make Thanksgiving Day a national holiday.

The turkey tradition was really pushed by Benjamin Franklin, who wanted to make it the United States national symbol because it is a quick runner, wary, with sharp eyesight, and exhibited a regal stance, at least to Franklin. While the bald eagle nudged out the wild turkey for our official national symbol, Norman Rockwell has probably made the image of the family Thanksgiving turkey even more famous, and certainly more mouth watering. In many homes, family members will each mention something they are very thankful for.