Almost in every culture in the world there is a celebration of thanks for rich harvest. The American Thanksgiving began as a feast of thanksgiving almost four hundred years ago.

 In 1620, a religious community sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in New World. They settled in what is not known as the state of Massachusetts. Their first winter in America was difficult. They arrived too late to grow a rich harvest. Moreover, half the Iroquois Indians taught them also how to grow other crops and how to hunt and fish.

 In the autumn of 1621 they got a beautiful harvest of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so they planned a feast. The colonists learned from Indians how to cook cranberries and dishes of corn and pumpkins.

 In following years many of the colonists celebrated the harvest with a feast of thanks. After the United States gained independence, Congress recommended one yearly day of thanksgiving for the whole country. Later, George Washington suggested the date November 26 as Thanksgiving Day. Then, after the civil war, Abraham Lincoln suggested the last Thursday in November to be the day of thanksgiving.

 On Thanksgiving Day, family members gather at the house of an older relative, even if they live far away. All give thanks for everything good they have. Charitable organizations offer traditional meal to the homeless.

 Foods, eaten at the first thanksgiving, have become traditional. The traditional thanksgiving meal consists of roast turkey stuffed with herb-flavored bread, cranberry jelly, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie. Other dishes may vary as to region: ham, sweet, potatoes, creamed corn.

***A Celebration of Thanksgiving***

The origins of Thanksgiving predated the Pilgrims at least 2,000 years. After the harvest of each year was safely stored for the winter, Celtic priests, the Druids, would mark the end of their calendar with prayers to their sun god for protection during the period of darkness and cold of winter. These harvest festivals evolved and became combined with a Christian Feast of Saints.

The first formal celebration of Thanksgiving in North America was held by an English explorer, Martin Frobisher, who attempted to establish an English settlement on Baffin Island, after failing to discover a northern passage to the Orient in 1576. Canada established the second Monday in October as a national holiday, "a day of general thanksgiving," in 1957.

The Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock held their Thanksgiving in 1621 as a three day "thank you" celebration to the leaders of the Wampanoag Indian tribe and their families for teaching them the survival skills they needed to make it in the New World. It was their good fortune that the tradition of the Wampanoags was to treat any visitor to their homes with a share of whatever food the family had, even if supplies were low. It was also an amazing stroke of luck that one of the Wampanoag, Tisquantum or Squanto, had become close friends with a British explorer, John Weymouth, and had learned the Pilgrim's language in his travels to England with Weymouth. Wild turkey was on the menu, along with corn (Pilgrim's wheat), Indian corn, barley, peas, waterfowl, five deer (brought by the Indians as their dish to pass), bass and cod. Since then, we've added such delicacies as ham, sweet potatoes, corn on the cob, popcorn, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. What? Pumpkin pie is not authentic? The Pilgrims probably made pumpkin pudding sweetened with honey, but they didn't have sugar, crust or whipped topping. Life was tough back then.

 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.

The actual day we celebrate Thanksgiving in America was picked by our presidents, starting with George Washington who declared a one-time holiday. Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November to be "...a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." Franklin D. Roosevelt moved it to the fourth Thursday of November in 1939, to prevent a 5 week November from shortening the Christmas shopping season.

T for time to be together, turkey, talk, and tangy weather.
H for harvest stored away, home, and hearth, and holiday.
A for autumn's frosty art, and abundance in the heart.
N for neighbours, and October, nice things, new things to remember.
K for kitchen, kettles' croon, kith and kin expected soon.
S for sizzles, sights, and sounds, and something special that abounds.

### *Did You Know?*

Americans did not invent Thanksgiving. It began in Canada. Frobisher's celebration in 1578 was 43 years before the pilgrims gave thanks in 1621 for the bounty that ended a year of hardships and death. Abraham Lincoln established the date for the US as the last Thursday in November. In 1941, US Congress set the National Holiday as the fourth Thursday in November.

Frobisher and early colonists, giving thanks for safe passage, as well as pilgrim celebrations in the US that began the traditions of turkeys, pumpkin pies, and the gathering of family and friends.


### *There are three traditions behind our Canadian Thanksgiving Day.*

1. Long ago, before the first Europeans arrived in North America, the farmers in Europe held celebrations at harvest time. To give thanks for their good fortune and the abundance of food, the farm workers filled a curved goat's horn with fruit and grain. This symbol was called a cornucopia or horn of plenty. When they came to Canada they brought this tradition with them.
2. In the year 1578, the English navigator Martin Frobisher held a formal ceremony, in what is now called Newfoundland, to give thanks for surviving the long journey. He was later knighted and had an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean in northern Canada named after him - Frobisher Bay. Other settlers arrived and continued these ceremonies.
3. The third came in the year 1621, in what is now the United States, when the Pilgrims celebrated their harvest in the New World. The Pilgrims were English colonists who had founded a permanent European settlement at Plymouth Massachusetts. By the 1750's, this joyous celebration was brought to Nova Scotia by American settlers from the south.

At the same time, French settlers, having crossed the ocean and arrived in Canada with explorer Samuel de Champlain, also held huge feasts of thanks. They even formed "The Order of Good Cheer" and gladly shared their food with their Indian neighbours.

After the Seven Year's War ended in 1763, the citizens of Halifax held a special day of Thanksgiving.

The Americans who remained faithful to the government in England were known as Loyalists. At the time of the American revolution, they moved to canada and spread the Thanksgiving celebration to other parts of the country. many of the new English settlers from Great Britain were also used to having a harvest celebration in their churches every autumn. Eventually in 1879, Parliament declared November 6th a day of Thanksgiving and a national holiday. Over the years many dates were used for Thanksgiving, the most popular was the 3rd Monday in October. After World War I, both Armistice Day and Thanksgiving were celebrated on the Monday of the week in which November 11th occurred. Ten years later, in 1931, the two days became separate holidays and Armistice Day was renamed Remembrance Day. Finally, on January 31st, 1957, Parliament proclaimed....

 Now, more than ever, we're reminded to treasure our families, communities, and the institutions that raise our spirits, help the less fortunate, and express our passions. As we move forward, join us in a new tradition. This year, during the Thanksgiving holiday, as you come together for family, friendship, food and fellowship, celebrate Giving Day.

* Make a Giving Day commitment to support your favorite cause with a gift of time or money
* Express your values, compassion, and passions with your loved ones by sharing your Giving Day commitment at Thanksgiving dinner
* Build a new tradition by encouraging others to celebrate Giving Day

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| **Thanksgiving Day** |
| The English Puritans were trying to "purify" the Church of England, but finally they formed their own church. They left England and went to Holland and then to America. They became "Pilgrims" because they were travels in search of religious freedom. |
| In the fall of 1620 the Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic Ocean on their ship, the Mayflower. The trip was very difficult, and many people got sick. But while they were on the crowded ship, the Pilgrims agreed on a form of government for their new colony. This agreement, the Mayflower Compact, established the principles of voting and majority rule. |
| Finally on December 22 the travels landed the Plymouth, Massachusetts. There as not enough food for the long, cold winter, and many settlers died. Then some friendly Indians, Samoset, Chief Massasoit, and Squanto, showed to the Pilgrims how to hunt, fish, and plant corn, beans, and other foods. Because of their help, the Plymouth settlers had a good harvest the next fall. |
| Governor William Bradford declared some special day of thanksgiving. The Pilgrims and the Indians had three-day feast of deer, wild turkey and fish. There were also nuts, corn, beans, pumpkins wild fruits, cranberries, and other foods. The first Thanksgiving celebration was a great success. |
| President Abraham Lincoln established Thanksgiving as an official national holiday. Now every year on the fourth Thursday of November American families and friends gather, have a feast, and give thanks. Some traditional Thanksgiving food are turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie. |

### *Turkey Noodle Casserole*

* 1 pkg frozen peas, thawed under cool running water (10 ounce)
* 2 cups diced cooked turkey (or ham)
* 1 1/2 cups cooked noodles
* butter or margarine
* 1/4 cup chopped onion

* 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
* 1 can (10 1/2-ounce) cream of mushroom soup
* 1/2 cup milk
* salt, to taste
* 1/4 teaspoon curry powder
* 1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
* 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

Combine turkey, noodles, and peas in a 2-quart buttered casserole dish. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a saucepan. Sauté onion and mushrooms; blend in soup, milk and seasonings. Pour soup mixture over meat; top with shredded cheese. Bake in a 350 degree F. for about 20 to 30 minutes.
Serves 4.