



The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by the Pilgrims who sailed from England to what is now called America in November 1620. Their first year was very hard and many people died. But they had a good harvest which they were thankful for. To celebrate, they had a big Thanksgiving meal in October 1621. This was the first Thanksgiving but it didn't become a national holiday until 1941.

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## Thanksgiving Traditions and Rituals

In many American households, the Thanksgiving celebration has lost much of its original religious significance; instead, it now centers on cooking and sharing a bountiful meal with family and friends. Turkey, a Thanksgiving staple so ubiquitous it has become all but synonymous with the holiday, may or may not have been on offer when the Pilgrims hosted the inaugural feast in 1621.

Today, however, nearly 90 percent of Americans eat the bird-whether roasted, baked or deep-fried-on Thanksgiving, according to the National Turkey Federation. Other traditional foods include stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Volunteering is a common Thanksgiving Day activity, and communities often hold food drives and host free dinners for the less fortunate.




