

Cultural Spotlight

I n t e r n a t i o n a l S t u d e n t a n d S c h o l a r S e r v i c e s

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Fall is Here!

Fall has officially arrived! The weather is cool and the leaves are changing to a beautiful mix of orange, red, and yellow. Food choices also indicate that Fall has arrived— many coffee shops start offering Pumpkin Spice lattes, pumpkin flavored coffees or foods, apple cider (hot or cold) is available in stores, and apple orchards are at their peak for selecting apples and other delicious items.

With Fall arriving, there are many events happening around the Champaign-Urbana community that celebrate this season. Curtis Orchard is open for selecting pumpkins to carve and decorate, picking your own apples from the trees or buying pre-bagged apples; buying fresh made apple pies, donuts, and more! Also, this time of year it is common to find places that offer hayrides. A hayride is pretty much what it sounds like— a tractor pulls a wagon that is filled with bales of hay, and you sit on them while it drives around a farm or other larger outdoor area. Another common attraction you will find are corn mazes. Corn fields are abundant in Illinois and Midwest, and in the Fall is when most corn is harvested. When the corn stalks dry out, many people will remove sections to create a maze that you can go through. Hardy’s Reindeer Ranch in Rantoul, IL is one local place that offers hayrides, corn maze, and much more.

For more information on Curtis Orchard: <http://www.curtisorchard.com/>

For more information on Hardy’s Reindeer Ranch: <http://www.reindeerranch.com/>

Halloween

Halloween is quickly approaching! This holiday has a long history with many traditions and you may even notice that Halloween in the U.S. may resemble some of the same traditions you may participate in during this time of year in your home country. The name itself originated from “All Hallows’ Eve,” the day before All Saints’ Day.

Today in the U.S. Halloween has turned into a community event. It is typical for families to celebrate by dressing their children in costumes and going door to door “trick-or-treating”, where children ask for candy by saying “trick-or-treat!” Each community designates hours that trick-or-treating will be held. Often the designated time falls in the

evening and lasts for a couple of hours. Not all families and households participate in trick-or-treating, so those who will pass out candy to trick-or-treaters will leave a light on outside their house as a signal that trick-or-treaters are welcomed.

Once children reach high school age, they are often considered too old to go trick-or-treating. However, there are still plenty of fun activities for all ages associated with Halloween! Other activities that take place on or around Halloween include:

- Carving pumpkins
- Bobbing for apples
- Telling ghost stories
- Visiting haunted houses

and attractions

- Watching Horror movies
 - and many more!
- Many houses also decorate for the occasion with the goal of creating a scary, but fun environment. Items such as pumpkins, scarecrows, fake bats, spiders, and skeletons, tombstones, and much more are used as decorations.

For more information, check out the history of [Halloween](#) as well as some [top movies](#) to watch on Halloween!



Interesting Fall Facts:

- 278,000 tons worth of pumpkins were farmed locally in Illinois last year
- More candy is sold on October 28th than any other day of the year
- The average weight of a turkey purchased at Thanksgiving is 15 pounds.
- The heaviest turkey ever raised was 86 pounds, about the size of a large dog.



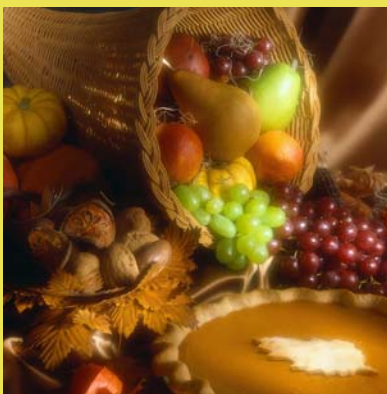


A n A m e r i c a n T h a n k s g i v i n g

Thanksgiving is a very significant American holiday. Taking place every 4th Thursday in November, this is a day for gathering with family and enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving Dinner. The “Holiday Season,” leading to Christmas, begins at Thanksgiving.

While the first Thanksgiving is commonly thought to have taken place in the year 1621, to celebrate a good harvest with a lot of good food, it didn't become an official holiday until much later. President Lincoln declared a “Day of Thanksgiving” to be held on the final Thursday of each November in 1863. It wasn't until 1941, however, that Congress passed a resolution making it an official federal Holiday; President Roosevelt signed it into law.

Because it is a national holiday, all federal and public offices are closed on this day. Many offices are also closed the following day as well. It is a long holiday weekend that features a lot of eating, shopping, and traveling.



The traditional Thanksgiving meal is quite the feast. Roasted Turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, corn, cranberry sauce, and bread are generally always part of a Thanksgiving dinner. Pumpkin pie is a popular dessert for the day.

How many turkeys are eaten on this day? In 2012, an estimated 46 million turkeys were eaten at Thanksgiving. Turkey is such a large part of the holiday that it is also known as “Turkey Day.”

Thanksgiving Day isn't just all eating—although that is most of it. There are many famous parades in cities across America. Probably the most famous is The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, in New York. It features many huge balloons, plus lots of singing and dancing. There are also several professional American football games played on this day.

The entire Thanksgiving weekend is a very busy travel weekend. Airports, highways, and train stations are all

very busy with people traveling to visit friends and families. Last year, more than 43 million people traveled in cars over the holiday weekend.

Even though there are many activities associated with Thanksgiving, for many people, it is a time to visit family and friends, many of whom they don't see often. While eating, shopping and traveling are important parts of the Thanksgiving holiday, the highlights are

Typical Thanksgiving

Dinner Menu

Roasted Turkey

Mashed Potatoes

Sweet Potatoes

Dressing

Corn

Cranberry Sauce

Fresh Rolls

Dessert

Pumpkin Pie

Apple Pie

Black Friday: An American Retail Tradition

For those who love to shop and find great bargains, Black Friday is the day for you. The day after Thanksgiving Day, this is one of the busiest shopping days of the year—actually, it has been the busiest shopping day for several years now. This is the day that starts the Christmas holiday shopping season.

Black Friday is famous for the huge sales that most stores offer. Many people do their Christmas shopping on this day—they know they can find good prices on highly desired items. According to the National Retail Federation, an estimated 89 million people went shopping on Black Friday in 2012. Over the entire Black Friday weekend, Friday-Sunday, shoppers spent an average of \$423 each, for a total of \$59.1 billion.

Be prepared to start early if you go

shopping on Black Friday. Many stores will open at 6 a.m.; some even as early as 4 a.m. Or, if you really can't wait, there are a few stores that have limited hours on Thanksgiving Day.

Online "Black Friday" shopping has increased significantly in recent years. Most stores offer the same prices on their website as in the store. Or, shoppers can sometimes get started on Thanksgiving Day—websites often offer deals beginning Thanksgiving Day. And, "Cyber Monday" has been popular for a few years now. On this day, retailers offer special prices only on their websites.

The term Black Friday originated in Philadelphia, where police used the term to describe the Friday after Thanksgiving because the streets were so crowded with cars and pedestrians that it was difficult to see and move.

Later, retailers all across the country used "Black Friday" because it is the day that stores could start making a profit—going from "in the red," or losing money, to making strong profits, or "in the black."



Eating, Drinking, and Seeing Pumpkins

During the fall months, there are no shortages of pumpkins in the Midwest. In fact, Illinois produces more pumpkins than any other state. Farms in Illinois produced millions of pumpkins last year—278,000 tons worth, according to the Illinois Farm Bureau. Illinois produces more than 90 percent of the canning pumpkins in the US. Nestle-Libby and Seneca Foods both have pumpkin processing facilities in Illinois.

When choosing a pumpkin, it is important to remember what purpose it will serve. There are two main types of pumpkins. Ornamental pumpkins are used for carving—Halloween Jack-o-lanterns turn out best if this type is used. Processing pumpkins are used for cooking and baking. If you plan on making a pumpkin pie, this is the best choice. Processing pumpkins are grown specifically for canning—the pumpkin pie that is offered for Thanksgiving dessert was probably made with canned pumpkins from Illinois.

Pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread, and pumpkin flavored lattes are among the most common food and drinks made with pumpkin. Pumpkin Pie is a very popular dessert with Thanksgiving Dinner. The origins of pumpkin eating, however, are very different from today.

Native Americans cut pumpkins into long strips and roasted them over fire. They also used dried pumpkin strips for weaving into mats. When colonists arrived on the continent, they made a version of pumpkin pie much different from today. They sliced off the top of the pumpkin, removed the seeds, and filled it with milk, spices and honey. Then, they placed the top back on, and put the pumpkin in the ashes of a fire for roasting. This created a pumpkin crust—much different from today's pumpkin pie made of filling and flour crust.

There are a number of other desserts and snacks that can be made from

pumpkin. Fresh pumpkins can be used, but canned pumpkin also make delicious treats. Breads, pancakes, puddings, cakes, and soups are all delicious when made with pumpkin. For a list of delicious treats with recipes for cooking them, the University of Illinois Extension has a great list—visit <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/pumpkins/recipes.cfm> for details.

