

Thanksgiving Day: Nov. 22, 2007

In the fall of 1621, the religious separatist Pilgrims held a three-day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest, an event many regard as the nation's first Thanksgiving. It eventually became a national holiday in 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a national day of thanksgiving. Later, President Franklin Roosevelt clarified that Thanksgiving should always be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month to encourage earlier holiday shopping, never on the occasional fifth Thursday.



Courtesy of Department of Education

272 million

The preliminary estimate of turkeys raised in the United States in 2007. That's up 4 percent from 2006. The turkeys produced in 2005 together weighed 7.2 billion pounds and were valued at \$3.2 billion. Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>

Weighing in With a Menu of Culinary Delights

46 million

The preliminary estimate of turkeys Minnesota expects to raise in 2007. The Gopher State is tops in turkey production. It is followed by North Carolina (39 million), Arkansas (31 million), Virginia (21.5 million), Missouri (21 million) and California (16.8 million). These six states together will probably account for about two-thirds of U.S. turkeys produced in 2007.



Courtesy of Flickr.com



U.S. Census Bureau

690 million pounds

The forecast for U.S. cranberry production in 2007, essentially unchanged from 2006 and 11 percent more than 2005. Wisconsin is expected to lead all states in the production of cranberries, with 390 million pounds, followed by Massachusetts (180 million). New Jersey, Oregon and Washington are also expected to have substantial production, ranging from 18 million to 52 million pounds.

1.6 billion pounds

The total weight of sweet potatoes — another popular Thanksgiving side dish — produced by major sweet potato producing states in 2006. North Carolina (702 million pounds) produced more sweet potatoes than any other state. It was followed by California (381 million pounds). Mississippi and Louisiana also produced large amounts: at least 200 million pounds each.

1 billion pounds

Total pumpkin production of major pumpkin-producing states in 2006. Illinois led the country by producing 492 million pounds of the vined orange gourd. Pumpkin patches in California, Ohio and Pennsylvania also provided plenty of pumpkins: Each state produced at least 100 million pounds. The value of all the pumpkins produced by major pumpkin-producing states was \$101 million.

If you prefer cherry pie, you will be pleased to learn that the nation's forecasted tart cherry production for 2007 totals 294 million pounds. Of this total, the overwhelming majority (230 million) will be produced in Michigan.



U.S. Census Bureau

1.8 billion bushels

The total volume of wheat — the essential ingredient of bread, rolls and pie crust — produced in the United States in 2006. Kansas and North Dakota accounted for 30 percent of the nation's wheat production.

841,280 tons

The 2007 contracted production of snap (green) beans in major snap (green) bean-producing states. Of this total, Wisconsin led all states (310,200 tons). Many Americans consider green bean casserole a traditional Thanksgiving dish. Source: The previous data come from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>.



Courtesy of Flickr.com

\$9.5 million

The value of U.S. imports of live turkeys during the first half of 2007 — 99.5 percent from Canada. Our northern neighbor accounted for all of the cranberries the United States imported (\$2.2 million). When it comes to sweet potatoes, however, the Dominican Republic was the source of 63 percent (\$1.7 million) of total imports (\$2.7 million). The United States ran a \$4.9 million trade deficit in live turkeys during the period but had surpluses of \$9.4 million in cranberries and \$15.3 million in sweet potatoes. Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www>>

13.1 pounds

The quantity of turkeys consumed by the typical American in 2005, with a hearty helping devoured at Thanksgiving time. Per capita sweet potato consumption was 4.5 pounds. Source: Upcoming *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008*, Tables 205-206 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>>

An Organic Feast

144,086

Number of certified organic turkeys on the nation's farmland, as of 2005. Most of these turkeys were in Michigan (56,729) or Pennsylvania (48,815). Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/organic/>>



Courtesy of Flickr.com

The Turkey Industry

\$3.6 billion

The value of turkeys shipped in 2002. Arkansas led the way in turkey shipments, with \$581.5 million, followed by Virginia (\$544.2 million) and North Carolina (\$453 million). In 2002, poultry businesses whose primary product was turkey totaled 35 establishments, employing about 17,000 people. Source: Poultry Processing: 2002 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/ec0231i311615.pdf>>

\$3.86 billion

Forecast 2007 receipts to farmers from turkey sales. This exceeds the total receipts from sales of products such as rice, peanuts and tobacco. Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/farmincome/finfidmu.htm>>



Courtesy of Flickr.com

The Price is Right

99 cents

Cost per pound of a frozen whole turkey in December 2006. Source: Upcoming *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2008*, Table 709 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>>

Where to Feast

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Number of places in the United States named after the holiday's traditional main course. Turkey, Texas, was the most populous in 2006, with 489 residents; followed by Turkey Creek, La. (363); and Turkey, N.C. (270). There also are nine townships around the country named Turkey, three in Kansas. Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/010315.html>>, <<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>>

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Number of places and townships in the United States that are named Cranberry or some spelling variation of the red, acidic berry (e.g., Cranbury, N.J.), a popular side dish at Thanksgiving. Cranberry township (Butler County), Pa., was the most populous of these places in 2006, with 27,509 residents. Cranberry township (Venango County), Pa., was next (6,900). Source: Population estimates <<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>>, <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/010315.html>>.

Number of places in the United States named Plymouth, as in Plymouth Rock, the landing site of the first Pilgrims. Plymouth, Minn., is the most populous, with 70,102 residents in 2006; Plymouth, Mass., had 55,516. Speaking of Plymouth Rock, there is just one township in the United States named "Pilgrim." Located in Dade County, Mo., its population was 135. Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/010315.html>>, <<http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>>



Courtesy of Flickr.com

114.4 million

Number of households across the nation — all potential gathering places for people to celebrate the holiday. Source: Families and Living Arrangements: 2006 <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/families_households/009842.html>

A list of observances covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series in 2007:

African-American History Month (February)	Back to School (August)
Super Bowl XLI (Feb. 4)	Labor Day (Sept. 3)
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Grandparents Day (Sept. 9)
Women's History Month (March)	Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/ St. Patrick's Day (March 17)	Unmarried and Single Americans Week (Sept. 16-22)
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)	Launch of Sputnik: 50th Anniversary (Oct. 4)
Older Americans Month (May)	Halloween (Oct. 31)
Cinco de Mayo (May 5)	American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
Mother's Day (May 13)	The 2008 Presidential Election
Hurricane Season Begins (June 1)	Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
Father's Day (June 17)	Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 22)
The Fourth of July (July 4)	The Holiday Season (December)
Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)	

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Facts for Features are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3762; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.