

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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Thanksgiving Day Nov. 25, 2010

In the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims, early settlers of Plymouth Colony, held a three-day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest, an event many regard as the nation's first Thanksgiving. Historians have also recorded ceremonies of thanks among other groups of European settlers in North America, including British colonists in Virginia in 1619. The legacy of thanks and the feast have survived the centuries, as the event 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.

242 million

The number of turkeys expected to be raised in the United States in 2010. That's down 2 percent from the number raised during 2009. The turkeys produced in 2009 together weighed 7.1 billion pounds and were valued at \$3.6 billion.

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>

Weighing in With a Menu of Culinary Delights

47 million

The preliminary estimate of turkeys Minnesota expected to raise in 2010. The Gopher State was tops in turkey production, followed by North Carolina (31.0 million), Arkansas (28.0 million), Missouri (17.5 million), Indiana (16.0 million) and Virginia (15.5 million). These six states together would probably account for about two-thirds of U.S. turkeys produced in 2010.

735 million pounds

The forecast for U.S. cranberry production in 2010. Wisconsin is expected to lead all states in the production of cranberries, with 435 million pounds, followed by Massachusetts (195 million). New Jersey, Oregon and Washington are also expected to have substantial production, ranging from 14 million to 53 million pounds.

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1.9 billion pounds

The total weight of sweet potatoes — another popular Thanksgiving side dish — produced by major sweet potato producing states in 2009. North Carolina (940 million pounds) produced more sweet potatoes than any other state. It was followed by California (592 million pounds) and Louisiana (162 million pounds).

931 million pounds

Total production of pumpkins produced in the major pumpkin-producing states in 2009. Illinois led the country by producing 429 million pounds of the vined orange gourd. Pumpkin patches in California and Ohio also provided lots of pumpkins: Each state produced at least 100 million pounds. The value of all pumpkins produced by major pumpkin-producing states was \$103 million.

If you prefer cherry pie, you will be pleased to learn that the nation's forecasted tart cherry production for 2010 totals 195 million pounds, albeit 46 percent below 2009's forecasted total. Of this 2010 total, the overwhelming majority (140 million) will be produced in Michigan.

2.2 billion bushels

The total volume of wheat — the essential ingredient of bread, rolls and pie crust — produced in the United States in 2010. North Dakota and Kansas accounted for 33 percent of the nation's wheat production.

736,680 tons

The 2010 contracted production of snap (green) beans in major snap (green) bean-producing states. Of this total, Wisconsin led all states (326,900 tons). Many Americans consider green bean casserole a traditional Thanksgiving dish.

Source: The previous data came from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>

\$7.3 million

The value of U.S. imports of live turkeys from January through July of 2010 — 99.1 percent from Canada. When it comes to sweet potatoes, the Dominican Republic was the source of 62.1 percent (\$3.4 million) of total imports (\$5.5 million). The United States ran a \$3.9 million trade deficit in live turkeys during the period but had a surplus of \$31.5 million in sweet potatoes.

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/>>

13.8 pounds

The quantity of turkey consumed by the typical American in 2007, with no doubt a hearty helping devoured at Thanksgiving time. Per capita sweet potato consumption was 5.2 pounds.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture as cited in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010*, Tables 212-213 <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>>

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 with a primary product of turkey totaled 35 establishments, employing about 17,000 people.

Source: Poultry Processing: 2002 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/ec0231i311615.pdf>>

\$4.1 billion

Forecast 2010 receipts to farmers from turkey sales. This exceeds the total receipts from sales of products such as barley, oats, sorghum (combined) and peanuts.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service

<<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/farmincome/finfidmu.htm>>

The Price is Right

\$1.33

Retail cost per pound of a frozen whole turkey in December 2008.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as cited in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010*, Table 717 <<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 2009, with 445 residents, followed by Turkey Creek, La. (362) and Turkey, N.C. (272). There are also nine townships around the country named Turkey, three in Kansas.

Source: Population estimates <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/cities.html>>

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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 2009, with 27,560 residents. Cranberry township (Venango County), Pa., was next (6,774).

Source: Population estimates <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>,

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/cities.html>>

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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 72,849 residents in 2009; Plymouth, Mass., had 56,842. There is just one township in the United States named “Pilgrim.” Located in Dade County, Mo., its population was 126 in 2009. And then there is Mayflower, Ark., whose population was 2,257 in 2009.

Source: Population estimates <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>
<<http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/cities.html>>

117 million

Number of households across the nation — all potential gathering places for people to celebrate the holiday.

Source: Families and Living Arrangements: 2009
<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2009.html>>

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau’s *Facts for Features* series:

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

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>.