



CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING THE PILGRIM WAY

By Meredith Curtis



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The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock barely made it through the first winter. Many died from sickness and those that were left were weak and frightened. Still they soldiered on, determined to make it in the new land with the help of their Heavenly Father.



Spring brought a Christian Native American named Squanto who taught them to plant corn using fish as fertilizer.

When harvest time came, they were filled with gratefulness to God. He had preserved them! He had sent them a friend. He had healed them. Now, there was an abundant harvest.

They decided to honor the Lord with a Thanksgiving celebration that would include feasting, friendship, prayer, and a little friendly competition.

Have you ever thought of celebrating Thanksgiving the Pilgrim way?

Prepare a Feast

The pilgrims couldn't go to the grocery store to purchase food. They had to grow it, catch it, or hunt it. Yet, many foods we associate with Thanksgiving were abundant around them.

- Cranberries
- Turkey
- Deer
- Lobster
- Clams
- Blueberries
- Pumpkin
- Squash
- Corn
- Onions
- Beans
- Grapes
- Plums
- Maple syrup

If you want to have an authentic feast, you could serve:

- Turkey
- Venison
- Broiled lobster in butter
- Clam chowder
- Cornbread
- Squash casserole
- Green bean casserole
- Succotash (corn and lima beans)
- Cornbread stuffing
- Pumpkin bread
- Cranberry sauce
- Pumpkin pie
- Blueberry Pie
- Plum

Many foods we enjoy at Thanksgiving are traditional American foods like turkey, corn, cranberries, squash, and pumpkin were discovered in North and South America. Eventually, along with tomatoes, potatoes and chocolate, they made their way to Europe and other places.

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So, you could without guilt, add the following foods to your Thanksgiving dinner:

- Sliced tomatoes
- Salsa
- Mashed potatoes
- Hot chocolate
- Chocolate cream pie
- Chocolate cake

We love to learn in the kitchen by cooking and baking. For inspiration, read [*Increase The Fun Factor By Learning In The Kitchen.*](#)

Preparing a feast and getting the house ready for a holiday celebration is hard work, but it's made much easier if everyone does their part.

For tips on cultivating good work habits, read [*How To Raise Mommy's Helpers To Be Hard-Working Responsible Adults.*](#)

Invite Friends

The pilgrims invited their new friends from the Native American tribe nearby. Their new friends wanted to bring food to the party, so they brought some fresh deer, seafood, fruits, and vegetables.



For many, there was a language barrier so you can believe the translators were busy those 3 days. Oh, didn't I mention the feast lasted 3 days? Three days of fun and feasting!

Are there people without a place to go on Thanksgiving that you can include in your feasting and festivities? Thanksgiving is a great time to include the lonely.

Give Thanks to God

Prayers and hymn singing were part of the Thanksgiving celebration. After all, the whole purpose was to thank the Lord!



If you want to sing some of the hymns the pilgrims probably sang, you can sing “Come Ye Thankful People Come” and “We Gather Together.” They were composed in the 1600s. I love those hymns!



One thing we like to do at our house is go around the table and share what we are thankful for from the past year. Often there are tears as we recount the goodness and favor of the Lord.

Play Games

The Pilgrims and their Native American friends played all kinds of outdoor games. They ran foot races. They probably played tag and a game similar to hide-and-seek.



You can play some outdoor ball games.

- Football
- Softball or Baseball
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Pickleball
- Tennis

You can hold some different races.

- 50-Yard Dash (runners race in a straight line for 50 yards)
- Relay race (team of runners runs back and forth handing the baton off each time)
- Relay race (runner runs to next runner on team handing the baton off to the next runner and that runner to the next)
- Obstacle course

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Men most likely had competitions to see who the best shot was. You could set up a target and compete with bows and arrows instead of guns.



You might want to play some games that were popular back in the Pilgrims' day:

- Draughts (like checkers)
- Marbles
- Naughts and Crosses (like Tic-Tac-Toe)
- Stool Ball (each team has a stool they are protecting on their side while trying to knock the stool over on the other team's side)
- Hop Frog (leap frog)

Board games are always fun, too. Here are some we like to play with the whole family.

If none of these games sound fun, maybe you will enjoy board games. Here are some of our family's favorite board games that work for everyone: [*Games The Whole Family Will Love!*](#)

Strengthen Relationships

Thanksgiving is a great time to rekindle friendships with family members that you haven't seen since last holiday season or maybe several years.



Communication & Greeting

If your children are shy, you can role play weeks before having conversations with relatives they hardly know.

Practice greeting

- “Hi, I’m _____; glad to meet you.”
- “Welcome, Grandmom, it’s so good to see you again.”
- “Hello and welcome. Yes, I have grown since last Thanksgiving. How are you?”
- “Hi Aunt Linda. It’s so good to have you here for Thanksgiving.”

Practice asking questions:

- “How was your vacation to Greece this past summer?”
- “How is your landscaping business going?”
- “What are your grandchildren up to?”

Communication skills can be learned, especially if you role-play ahead of time.

Family Stories

Best of all, encourage the old family stories that you've already heard a million times. Maybe your children haven't heard them yet.

I wonder if there was a lot of talk at the first Thanksgiving Feast about the voyage over the Atlantic Ocean and how they never thought they'd make it. Maybe they thanked Miles Standish who worked so tirelessly to care for the sick over the winter or reminisced about Squanto's first visit to the settlement.

Thanksgiving is a great time to remember and be glad!

May you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

