

Thanksgiving Turkey Traditions
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The holidays are rapidly approaching. Family gatherings, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with The Ohio State University Marching Band, and bountiful meals are scheduled on the calendar for Thanksgiving week. As with previous Thanksgivings, my mother, grandmother, and I plan who will be preparing what dish for our family's holiday meal.

While every family has their own variation of the Thanksgiving meal, turkey is a predominant staple on many American tables. According to the University of Illinois Extension, 88 percent of Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving, which equates to 46 million turkeys consumed on Thanksgiving annually. Although turkeys now are considered to many families as the centerpiece of the Thanksgiving meal, this was not always the case.

At the first Thanksgiving in 1621, turkey was likely not served on the table as the main source of meat. Venison, ducks, geese, and even swans were regularly consumed by colonists, according to the History Channel. Sarah Josepha Hale, the author of the children's rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb," also played a significant part to shape our Thanksgiving dinner table.

Hale served as an editor for *Godey's Lady's Book*, a women's magazine in the 1830s. Through this publication, Hale championed for Thanksgiving to become a national holiday, according to the National Women's History Museum. While President George Washington proclaimed the first national Thanksgiving in 1789, President Abraham Lincoln was the first president to select a date for Thanksgiving to be held in November.

While the tradition of Thanksgiving being held on the fourth Thursday of November has stayed consistent since the 1800s, the method of how we obtain our bountiful meal has not. With the development of grocery stores and restaurants, how many Americans source their meal has changed over time. Since turkeys are now raised on farms, the number and quality of the birds have increased to the point where turkey is a regular staple in many meals throughout the year. "In 1970, 50 percent of all turkey consumed was during the holidays, now just 29 percent of all turkey consumed is during the holidays as more turkey is eaten year-round," according to the University of Illinois Extension.

For hunters who would rather hunt for their turkey in the wild rather than in the store, there are two wild turkey hunting seasons in Ohio. There is a wild turkey hunting season in the spring and fall. Spring wild turkey hunting season encompasses all counties in the State of Ohio. However, only a portion of the counties in Ohio allow for fall wild turkey hunting. Highland, Ross, Pike, Adams, Brown, and Clermont Counties allow fall wild turkey hunting, while Clinton and Fayette Counties do not. During the fall season, turkey hunters are allowed to harvest one wild turkey per hunter. The Fall Wild Turkey season runs from October 13 to November 25, 2018. More information on Ohio Hunting and Trapping Regulations can be found at

<http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/hunting-trapping-and-shooting-sports/hunting-trapping-regulations/season-dates-and-bag-limits>. For more information related to agriculture and natural resource related questions, contact the Highland County Extension Office at 937-393-1918.

Do you and your family have any unique Thanksgiving traditions? Share your Thanksgiving traditions in the comment section below.

Sources:

University of Illinois Extension. (2018). Turkey for the Holidays. Retrieved from: http://extension.illinois.edu/turkey/turkey_facts.cfm

History.com Editors. (2011). First Thanksgiving Meal. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/first-thanksgiving-meal>

Norwood, A. (2017). Sarah Josepha Hale. Retrieved from: <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/sarah-hale>

Upcoming Events:

The **Global Climate Change Update** with Dr. Thomas Blaine from The Ohio State University will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018, from 6:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. The program will be held at the Brown County Fairgrounds, Rhonemus Hall. The cost to attend is free, but registration is required. For more information or to register, contact James Morris at morris.1677@osu.edu or at the Brown County Extension Office at 937-378-6716.

The next **Highland County Monthly Extension Program** will be held on December 10, 2018, at 10:00 A.M. at the Ponderosa Steakhouse in Hillsboro, Ohio. More details will be coming soon, please save the date and plan to attend.