

WARM UP

1 What do you know about American Thanksgiving Day?

- 1 How do Americans celebrate it?
- 2 What does it give thanks for?
- 3 When is it celebrated?
- 4 What is the other name for Thanksgiving Day?

AMERICAN HOLIDAY FOOD: PECAN PIE RECIPE

THANKSGIVING: AMERICA'S 'FAVOURITE' HOLIDAY

The American writer and anglophile Bill Bryson once said that Thanksgiving was his 'favourite' holiday, surpassing Christmas, Labour Day and even the 4th of July in terms of sheer enjoyment value. His reasoning was that there is no gift-giving pressure, no picnic logistics to worry about in the cold weather and no wild expense involved of any kind. Thanksgiving instead is a holiday spent with family and friends, sharing food and drink. Rightly so, as the day commemorates the charity and care shown to early American settlers by Native Americans. Since becoming an official holiday in 1863, foods from the so-called new world have been served up in celebration of the time when early Americans were taught by the indigenous tribes to fish, hunt and grow staples such as corn and root vegetables. These days the fourth Thursday in November is less a case of learning to

spear-hunt for eels and more a case of mixing the cornbread stuffing with celery, carrot and onion; making American gravy, which is a light golden colour and looks insipid, but is actually quite delicious. Centre stage is the turkey of course. Southerners rather worryingly deep-fry the whole turkey, but most Americans roast it and accompany it with cranberry sauce. Although known affectionately as Turkey Day, meals differ around America depending on the cultural heritage of the 'new' Americans of the region. Macaroni cheese, made with a highly processed yellow cheese, is a common side dish among Italian-Americans and others. Germanic connections mean that it's not uncommon to find pork and sauerkraut or swede. Desserts include several types of pie: pumpkin pie; sweet potato pie; pecan pie and of course apple pie; all served up piping hot with a strong punch of brown sugar and cinnamon.



READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the text about Thanksgiving and decide if these statements are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 People like Thanksgiving Day because they exchange gifts and have picnics.
- 2 It became an official holiday in 1863.
- 3 On Thanksgiving Day, Americans do traditional hunter-gathering activities.
- 4 The writer does not like the appearance of American gravy.
- 5 The writer approves of the way in which Southern Americans prepare turkey.
- 6 There are a lot of different ethnic influences on the Thanksgiving dinner.
- 7 Different kinds of pie are popular on the Thanksgiving Day menu.

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LISTENING

3  24 Listen and put this recipe for pecan pie in the correct order. The first and last are done for you.

PECAN PIE

- a Add 4 tablespoons of golden syrup, 2 tbsp rum, 50 g melted butter, pinch of salt, a few drops vanilla extract, 175 g pecan nuts halved and mix well.
- b Break three eggs in a large mixing bowl, beat well and then beat in 110 g sugar.
- c Check if it is cooked through by inserting a skewer; it is done if it comes out clean.
- d Pour the mixture into the pastry case and bake for 10 minutes.
- e Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6 and line a 23 cm pie tin with the pastry.
- f 1 Put 225 g plain flour, 110 g caster sugar, 110 g butter and 4 egg yolks into a food processor and whizz until you get a dough.
- g Reduce the oven heat to 180°C/gas mark 4 and bake for another 30 minutes.
- h Remove, placing it in a plastic bag and put into the fridge to relax for 1 hour.
- i 9 Turn out of the tin when slightly cooled and serve warm or cold with ice cream or cream.



WRITING

4 Your restaurant manager has asked you to write a special menu to celebrate a special day in your country. You should include dishes which you feel characterise the soul and character of your people: a starter, a main course, side orders and a dessert.

SPEAKING

5 Present your menu to the class and explain why you think each dish characterises your people.

My menu opens with a starter of... , which...