

Name: _____

Thanksgiving Foods

Turkey, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, cornbread and pumpkin pie are the foods most often associated with Thanksgiving. Why is this?

The turkey is a bird native to the Americas, and it's known (from their writings) that the pilgrims hunted wild turkeys. But we do not know for certain that they ate turkey at their first Thanksgiving celebration.



We do know that their Indian guests brought deer to the feast, so venison (deer meat) was definitely part of the first thanksgiving meal.

Cranberries are native to (grow wild in) the area where the Pilgrims settled, so there may have been cranberries at the meal. If so, they would have been raw cranberries, or dried. The berries could not have been made into cranberry sauce since the pilgrims had no sugar to cook with.

The sweet potato is native to *South* and *Central* America, and Columbus brought sweet potatoes back to Spain. But it is not native to *North* America, so it is unlikely that the Pilgrims had sweet potatoes for their meal. Still, because they are a food native to America (and unknown in the 'Old World' before Columbus), they have become a Thanksgiving tradition.

Corn was probably eaten at the First Thanksgiving. It may even have been made into cornbread. Corn was an important food for the Indians. Without corn from the Indians, the pilgrims could not have survived their first winter. The following spring, the Indians taught the pilgrims how to grow corn of their own.

Pumpkin is a squash native to America. It was grown by the Indians and may well have been served at the First Thanksgiving. But not as pumpkin pie. Not only did the pilgrims not have sugar, they had no ovens in which to bake pies.



