

Thanksgiving Feast

By Karen Zhang

Karen in America

每年11月的第四个星期四是感恩节，这是美国人独创的一个古老节日。美国人提起感恩节总是倍感亲切，因为这是合家欢聚的节日，也是美国国定假日中最地道、最美国式的节日。

感恩节的来历要追溯到1620年，英国的一些受宗教迫害的清教徒乘坐“五月花”号去美洲寻求宗教自由，在海上颠簸两个月之后，终于在寒冷的11月在普利茅斯登陆。这年冬天，半数以上的移民死于饥饿和传染病，他们得到了当地印第安人的帮助，并在第二年春天开始播种，丰收后，为了感谢上帝的赐予和印第安人的帮助，他们举行了3天的狂欢。这一习俗延续至今。

说到感恩节，自然少不了传统的阖家盛宴，下面让我们来看看美国人是如何度过感恩节的吧。

Thanksgiving is a traditional American holiday. It falls on the fourth Thursday of every November. Americans usually take the following Friday off, especially after having such a hearty meal—nobody wants to work.

Unlike Christmas or Easter, Thanksgiving is not religious but was first celebrated by the Pilgrims^[朝圣者] after their harvest in the New World—North America—in the 17th

century. So as you can imagine, delicacies from appetizers^[开胃食品]

like various dips, salads and soup to the key dishes like roast turkey, vegetables and corn bread to desserts like pumpkin pies, cider^[苹果汁], ice cream, you name them, will all be served

in one meal on Thanksgiving Day. There's so much to savor^[品尝], just be prepared to have an eating marathon all night!

I did not know how important Thanksgiving is to Americans until I got to this country. Thanksgiving is comparable to the family reunion on winter solstice^[冬至] or on Spring Festival's eve in China. Most Americans prefer spending Thanksgiving Day with their family members at home. It is a time for family—both immediate and distant—to get together. So the traffic this time of year across the States is

super heavy.

My first year studying in America, I was invited to my professor's home for Thanksgiving. Early in the evening, her house had been packed with guests—mostly family members—from all over the world. Surrounded by all sorts of goodies, I felt so at home. My professor and several helpers were working hard in the kitchen. They had prepared the feast^[盛宴] a week before. See, that is the American spirit of do-it-yourself, instead of dining out or ordering catered food.

If you want to try everything served on the table, take a small portion of each. That was the lesson I learned. Otherwise, your belly^[肚子, 腹部] might be too stuffed before the best dish is served.

If you are spending Thanksgiving in America, you cannot get away from American football. Watching the football game is a Thanksgiving tradition after a big fat meal. However, if you do not like American football and you can somehow hang on until midnight, you can try your luck at the Black Friday sales.

Black Friday—the Friday after Thanksgiving—is the first day of the Christmas shopping season. In other words, Thanksgiving kicks off the Christmas holiday season. If you are lucky, you can get lots of consumer goods at very low prices. (For more about Black Friday, please refer to the November 2011 issue.)

Anyway, Thanksgiving is a great holiday for every American to look forward to—I even think it is more important than Christmas for American families to get together. 🍷

