MADE WITH LITTLE STORYBOOK

The Thankful Table

A cozy autumn day about harvests, history, helpers, and saying thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

Why Do We Pull Out the Big Table?

Grandpa Rafi pulls out a hidden table leaf. Suddenly, there is room for more people. This chapter follows that big-table idea: food, memory, and every helper behind one bite. You will meet the people who knew this land long before Plymouth.

Long Before the Ships Arrived

Long before English ships arrived, Wampanoag people lived in Patuxet. Patuxet was their homeland, beside the coast in what is now Massachusetts. They knew the seasons well and gave thanks for food and life through the year. In autumn, families gathered ripe crops. Wampanoag people are not only from history books. Wampanoag communities still live in Massachusetts today.

WOW FACTS

Wampanoag is often translated as “People of the First Light.”

IN THIS PICTURE

A Wampanoag family gathers autumn food near the Patuxet coast.





IN THIS PICTURE *Corn, beans, and squash help one another in one garden mound.*

A Garden Team of Three

Corn, beans, and squash can grow as a team. Tall corn gives bean vines a pole to climb. Beans have tiny root helpers that take nitrogen, a plant food from the air, and help feed the soil. Broad squash leaves cover the ground like a living umbrella. They keep the soil shaded and help hold in water. This garden team is called the Three Sisters.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Bean roots have tiny helpers that bring nitrogen into the soil.

The Three-Day Harvest Gathering

In 1621, a harvest gathering lasted three days in Patuxet. It came after a hard year and careful talks between Wampanoag leader Ousamequin and Plymouth colonists. Their agreement to help keep peace was an alliance. About 90 Wampanoag men joined the colonists. They brought five deer. Many people picture pumpkin pie and forks, but those did not belong at this gathering. Wampanoag communities continue today.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Five deer brought by Wampanoag guests made venison a clearly recorded food there.

IN THIS PICTURE
Wampanoag guests and Plymouth colonists share a 1621 harvest gathering.





2

CHAPTER 2

How One Woman’s Letters Made a Holiday

Imagine writing one hopeful letter, then another, for years. Sarah Josepha Hale — the writer who also wrote “Mary Had a Little Lamb” — asked U.S. leaders for one shared day of thanks. She kept going for 36 years. Her patient words helped an idea grow into a holiday.

A Day for Healing

In 1863, families and states in the United States were painfully divided. President Abraham Lincoln chose a day to pause, give thanks, and care for one another. His official announcement was called a proclamation. It made Thanksgiving a national holiday, on the last Thursday of November. One quiet day could not fix everything. But it invited people to look for hope together.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Congress later set the U.S. holiday date as the fourth Thursday in November.

IN THIS PICTURE
Lincoln reads a proclamation during a divided time in the United States.



IN THIS PICTURE

A Canadian Thanksgiving can happen while autumn leaves are still swirling.



Canada Gives Thanks Earlier

Aunt Clara has arrived when the leaves feel chilly. In Canada, Thanksgiving comes in October, on the second Monday. Why earlier? Much of Canada is farther north, where the growing season often ends sooner. A harvest is when ripe food is gathered. So families may pause for harvest thanks earlier there. People can share gratitude on different days—and still mean it just as deeply.

> WOW FACTS
>
> Canada's modern annual Thanksgiving date has been observed since 1957.

True or Silly? Food Detective

1. Pumpkin pie was not on the 1621 table. Wheat flour, butter, and ovens were limited.
2. Mashed potatoes do not fit the 1621 meal. Potatoes were not yet a New England crop.
3. Forks were not common eating tools at the 1621 gathering.
4. Five deer brought by Wampanoag guests are among the clearest records of food at the gathering.





3

CHAPTER 3

Thank You Around the Whole Wide World

Aunt Clara spins the picture globe. “Thank-you days live in many places,” she says. Some families thank the earth. Some remember family members. Some thank people who grow, carry, cook, and serve food. The foods and seasons may change. The noticing stays bright.

Moonlight, Family, and Treats

In Korea, Chuseok is a harvest festival for family and remembrance. Families may share songpyeon, soft rice cakes shaped like half-moons. In China and Vietnam, many families celebrate under the full moon and share round mooncakes. Half-moon, full moon, little bite, big thank-you: food can help families remember one another.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Songpyeon are shaped like half-moons, while mooncakes are often round like the full moon.

IN THIS PICTURE
Families make moon-shaped treats beneath a bright harvest moon.



IN THIS PICTURE

A bubbling harvest pot leads into music, food, and dancing.



Thanks That Bubbles and Dances

In South India, Pongal thanks the sun, earth, rain, and cattle that help food grow. Rice and milk bubble up from a clay pot. That cheerful overflow says, “May we have plenty.” In Ghana, Ga people celebrate Homowo with music, dancing, and food. Homowo means “hooting at hunger.” It remembers getting through hard times together.

> **WOW FACTS**
> At Pongal, rice and milk bubbling over can stand for hopes of plenty.

Thanking Food and Helpers

In Germany and Austria, Erntedankfest celebrates the harvest. Baskets of apples, wheat, and vegetables show the good food gathered. Japan’s Labor Thanksgiving Day thanks workers and helpers. Think of a baker, farmer, driver, cleaner, or firefighter. Food reaches your table because many hands help. Gratitude can be for a harvest—and for people, too.

WOW FACTS

Japan’s Labor Thanksgiving Day grew from an older rice-harvest tradition.

IN THIS PICTURE

Harvest baskets and thank-you pictures celebrate food and helpful work.





4

CHAPTER 4

What Happens Inside a Thankful Brain?

Sometimes a small problem can fill your whole mind. Then you notice one good thing: a kind hand, a crunchy apple, a safe home. That noticing is gratitude—saying thank you for good things and helpers. It cannot erase a hard feeling, but it can help your worried brain feel steadier.

One Bite, Many Helpers

Look at one spoonful of corn. Sunshine helped the plant make food. Rain gave it a drink. Soil held its roots, while worms helped keep the soil loose. A farmer grew it. A driver moved it. A grocer put it in the store. Then a cook made it ready. Your bite is like a tiny thank-you parade, with many helpers joining in.

> **WOW FACTS**
> Earthworms dig tiny tunnels through garden soil, helping rain and air reach growing corn roots.

IN THIS PICTURE
Corn's journey travels from field and rain to a warm kitchen bowl.



TRY IT!

Make a Thankful Jar

Make a jar of small picture-thanks to notice all year long.

1. Ask an adult for a clean clear jar, blank paper, and rounded child-safe scissors.
2. With the adult nearby, cut simple leaf shapes from the paper.
3. Draw one picture on each leaf: a friend, food, a pet, or something else you appreciate.
4. Drop the leaves into the jar, then take turns choosing one to share at a meal or bedtime.

Do this together with a grown-up.



IN THIS PICTURE

Friends and family share a meal, stories, and room for one another.



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Passing Warmth Forward

A holiday meal can be a beginning, not an ending. You can notice helpers on an ordinary Tuesday, too. You might welcome someone new, share food, listen to a family story, or help carry dishes. Families celebrate harvest gratitude in many different ways and seasons. The warm part is not only what is on the table. It is the care you pass from person to person.

Check your wonder

1 **Why is it helpful to think about the people behind our food?**

- **A.** It helps us notice farmers, drivers, cooks, and other helpers.
- **B.** It tells us every food came from the same place.
- **C.** It means only grown-ups can prepare meals.

2 **What does the Three Sisters garden show us?**

- **A.** Plants grow best when they are planted far apart.
- **B.** Corn, beans, and squash can help one another grow.
- **C.** Only one kind of food should grow in a garden.

3 **Which idea gives a fuller story of the 1621 harvest gathering?**

- **A.** It was the first time anyone gave thanks for food.
- **B.** It was a three-day gathering after an alliance between Wampanoag people and colonists.
- **C.** It was exactly like a Thanksgiving dinner today.

4 **What can harvest celebrations around the world teach us?**

- **A.** Everyone celebrates on the same day with the same foods.
- **B.** Only people in the United States give thanks for harvests.
- **C.** People can show thanks in many different foods, seasons, and traditions.

ANSWERS 1-A 2-B 3-B 4-C

1. Food reaches our table through many caring hands and parts of nature. 2. Corn supports beans, beans help the soil, and squash shades the ground. 3. Wampanoag people had long traditions of gratitude, and the gathering followed diplomacy and an alliance. 4. Families around the world have many meaningful ways to thank helpers, land, and community.

New words

harvest
The time when ripe food is gathered from fields, gardens, trees, or water.

Patuxet
A Wampanoag homeland where Plymouth Colony was later built.

alliance
An agreement between groups to help or protect one another.

proclamation
An official announcement from a leader.

harvest festival
A celebration that gives thanks for food, land, workers, or family.

Wampanoag
Native peoples of southeastern New England, including Massachusetts today.

Three Sisters
Corn, beans, and squash grown together so each plant helps the others.

diplomacy
Careful talking between groups to solve problems or keep peace.

gratitude
Noticing good things and the helpers you want to thank.

Where we looked

We used web research from museums, archives, government sources, and cultural organizations to check the history and traditions in this book.

Timeline | The “First Thanksgiving”
americanindian.si.edu

President Abraham Lincoln’s Thanksgiving Day Proclamation | National Archives Museum
visit.archives.gov

Rethinking Thanksgiving Celebrations: Native Perspectives on Thanksgiving | Native Knowledge 360°
americanindian.si.edu

Plimoth Patuxet Museums | Thanksgiving
plimoth.org

Three Sisters planting method | FWS.gov
fws.gov

Congress Establishes Thanksgiving | National Archives
archives.gov

What Food Was Served at the First Thanksgiving in 1621?
smithsonianmag.com

Eye-Witness Account of the 1621 Harvest Celebration
plimoth.org

Now you know that a thankful table holds food, helpers, memories, and room for others. You also know that gratitude has many traditions around the world. Keep wondering: who helped bring your next bite to the table?

THE END

Who helped bring the food to your table today?



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