

This Year, Your Thanksgiving Feast Will Gobble Up Less Green



By Erik Lief — November 18, 2016



Traditional Thanksgiving dinner [1]

While you're out food shopping in the final days leading up to Thanksgiving, pulling together all the traditional dishes associated with the big meal, just make sure to take one quarter out of your pocket and leave it at home, since you won't need it this year.

That's because Thanksgiving food prices have dropped slightly as compared to a year ago. And with the country's real median household income remaining flat, this news, along with the efficient agricultural production we sometimes take for granted, is something to be thankful for.

The average cost of a Thanksgiving dinner for 10 people in the United States is \$49.87, or 24 cents less than it was in 2015, according to the [American Farm Bureau Federation](#) [2], which has tracked supermarket prices of the traditional bird and related side dishes since 1986. And prices holding steady from a year ago corresponds with the national food prices in general, which the [Wall Street Journal](#) [3] reports "were flat for the fourth straight month in October." (Overall, consumer prices rose, but they were pushed up by energy costs.)

Moreover, "After adjusting for inflation," AFBF stated, "the cost of a Thanksgiving dinner fell to \$20.66 -- the lowest level since 2010." And that meal, which roughly 45 million turkeys will be consumed across the country, takes into account having generous leftovers for the days following the big feast.

Item	2015 Price	2016 Price	Difference
16-pound turkey	23.04	22.74	-.30
Pumpkin pie mix, 30 oz.	3.20	3.13	-.07
Milk, 1 gallon whole	3.25	3.17	-.08
1-pound relish tray (carrots and celery)	.79	.73	-.06
Misc. ingredients	3.18	2.81	-.37
Rolls, 12	2.25	2.46	+.21
Pie shells (2)	2.47	2.59	+.12
Green peas, 1 lb.	1.52	1.58	+.06
Fresh cranberries, 12 oz.	2.29	2.39	+.10
Whipping cream, 1/2 pint	1.94	2.00	+.06
Cubed stuffing, 14 oz.	2.61	2.67	+.06
Sweet potatoes, 3 lbs.	3.57	3.60	+.03
TOTAL	50.11	49.87	-.24

Decline in turkey prices led the way,

with a 16-pound bird costing \$22.74, 30 cents less than a year ago. Other dinner items that have fallen in price are milk (8 cents/gallon); pumpkin pie mix (7 cents/30 oz); and carrots and celery (6 cents/pound). The items with the largest price increases are rolls (21 cents/pack of 12); pie shells (12 cents/for 2); and fresh cranberries (10 cents/12 oz).

"Consumers will pay less than \$5 per person for a classic Thanksgiving dinner this year," said AFBF Director of Market Intelligence Dr. John Newton. "We have seen farm prices for many foods -- including turkeys -- fall from the higher levels of recent years. This translates into lower retail prices for a number of items as we prepare for Thanksgiving and confirms that U.S. consumers benefit from an abundant, high-quality and affordable food supply."

The prices were derived from nearly 150 volunteer shoppers checking prices in 40 states. Yet while the survey is informal, it was informative.

It's also worth remembering that the traditional American holiday meal, while strange as this may sound, is really a chemical feast of toxins and carcinogens, all courtesy of Mother Nature. As the American Council's [Holiday Dinner Menu](#) ^[4] points out, the chemical carcinogens that are supposed cancer-causing agents, whether natural or synthetic, do not necessarily make that food dangerous by their mere presence.

A [previous Council article](#) ^[5] stated, quoting the organization's founding president Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, "We would have to eat ridiculously enormous amounts of foods containing these chemicals over long periods of time before we could ever expect them to cause cancer." Dr. Whelan, who passed away in 2014 and we continue to remember fondly, added that, "The real benefits of eating fruits and vegetables far outweigh any hypothetical risks from consuming tiny amounts of potential carcinogens."

As we approach the third, big traditional meal without our late president, we're proud to say that her sage advice was as timeless and accurate then as it is today. And with that, Happy Thanksgiving, and enjoy your feast with your family and friends.

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[4] <https://www.scribd.com/document/153941243/ACSH-Holiday-Dinner-Menu>

[5] <http://acsh.org/news/2001/11/14/traditional-holiday-dinner-replete-with-natural-carcinogens-health-group-finds>