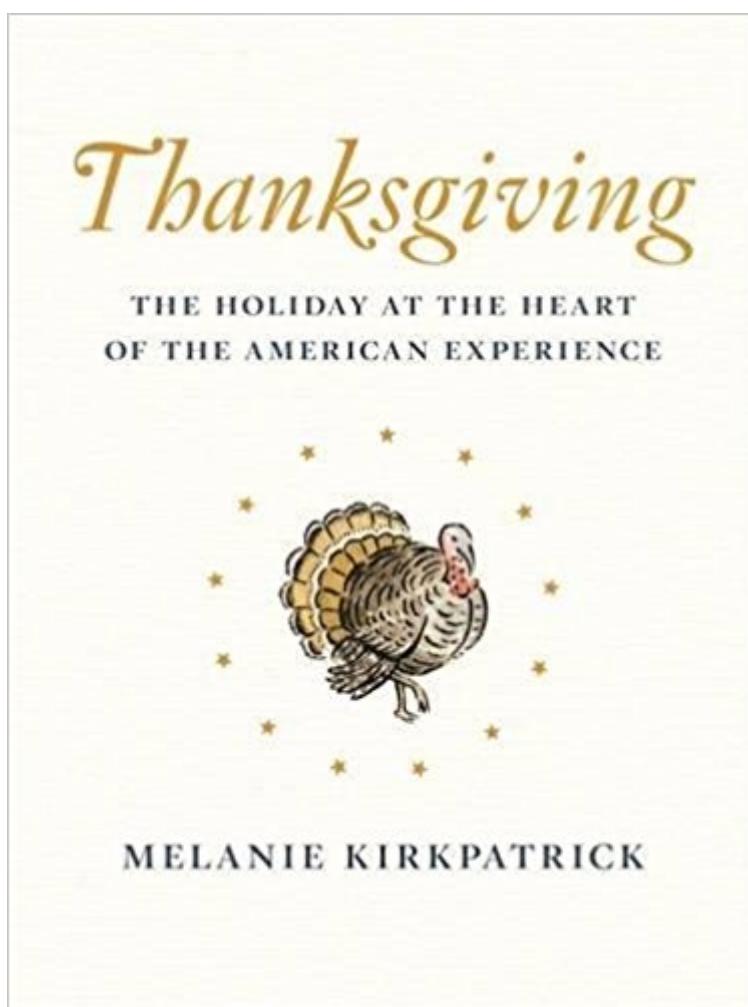


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Thanksgiving: The Holiday At The Heart Of The American Experience



Synopsis

We all know the story of Thanksgiving. Or do we? This uniquely American holiday has a rich and little known history beyond the famous feast of 1621. In *Thanksgiving*, award-winning author Melanie Kirkpatrick journeys through four centuries of history, giving us a vivid portrait of our nation's best-loved holiday. Drawing on newspaper accounts, private correspondence, historical documents, and cookbooks, *Thanksgiving* brings to life the full history of the holiday and what it has meant to generations of Americans. Many famous figures walk these pages—Washington, who proclaimed our first Thanksgiving as a nation amid controversy about his Constitutional power to do so; Lincoln, who wanted to heal a divided nation sick of war when he called for all Americans; North and South to mark a Thanksgiving Day; FDR, who set off a debate on state's rights when he changed the traditional date of Thanksgiving. Ordinary Americans also play key roles in the Thanksgiving story—the New England Indians who boycott Thanksgiving as a Day of Mourning; Sarah Josepha Hale, the nineteenth-century editor and feminist who successfully campaigned for Thanksgiving to be a national holiday; the 92nd Street Y in New York City, which founded Giving Tuesday, an online charity established in the long tradition of Thanksgiving generosity. Kirkpatrick also examines the history of Thanksgiving football and, of course, Thanksgiving dinner. While the rites and rituals of the holiday have evolved over the centuries, its essence remains the same: family and friends feasting together in a spirit of gratitude to God, neighborliness, and hospitality. Thanksgiving is Americans' oldest tradition. Kirkpatrick's enlightening exploration offers a fascinating look at the meaning of the holiday that we gather together to celebrate on the fourth Thursday of November. With Readings for Thanksgiving Day designed to be read aloud around the table.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Melanie Kirkpatrick shows brilliantly how, from cooking pot to melting pot, America is a product of Thanksgiving as much as Thanksgiving is a product of America." *— Andrew Roberts* *“In this short, beautiful, history of our oldest national custom, Melanie Kirkpatrick reminds us that we Americans have, and will always have, in common. An edifying, elevating book in the year of our worst division, Thanksgiving uplifts by informing and takes us to our better, internal American.â •*
— Amity Shlaes, author of Coolidge and The Forgotten Man

Melanie Kirkpatrick is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a former deputy editor of The Wall Street Journal's editorial page. She is the author of *Escape from North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia's Underground Railroad*, which *World Magazine* named its 2013 Book of the Year. She has lived in Tokyo, Toronto, Hong Kong, Honolulu and Manhattan, and currently resides in rural Connecticut with her husband, Jack David.

Melanie Kirkpatrick's beautiful new book about Thanksgiving is one that every family should own. It depicts the history, traditions, and food that all Americans enjoy on this important day often overshadowed by other holidays. The book reads easily and has charming illustrations. This is a book that can be brought out every year and shared with friends and family. I appreciate the time that the author took to compile the vast array of information about Thanksgiving and writing this wonderful book for all of us to enjoy.

Never heard of "Forefathers Day"? These and countless other interesting facts, details and stories about Thanksgiving and its history are skillfully and thoughtfully presented to us by Melanie Kirkpatrick in her excellent book: *Â Thanksgiving: The Holiday at the Heart of the American Experience*. A fascinating read and excellent gift, in November and throughout the year! Thank you Ms. Kirkpatrick!

Thanksgiving: The Holiday at the Heart of the American Experience is a delightful book that conveys the essence of the American Thanksgiving in a series of vignettes, commentaries,

historical proclamations, and of course recipes. It is very well written in that it manages to be simultaneously both informative and entertaining as well as serious, thorough, and well documented. The book is most remarkable for its completeness and balance. Beyond Thanksgiving's traditional roots in New England, the author traces history of major American Thanksgiving celebrations with their own regional, cultural, and ethnic variations. However all of the celebrations are tied together by the common threads of gratitude and inclusivity and their impact, both positive and negative, on all of the peoples who have come to share our American experience.

A perfect gift for your Thanksgiving host, Melanie Kirkpatrick's book explores in an engaging and accessible way all the threads which have come together to form the Thanksgiving tradition in America .

Gives a good historic perspective and prompts gratitude...

Really nice book enjoying it very much

This book is just what I was looking for. It's all about the Thanksgiving holiday and includes both history and contemporary narrative. It is a treasure.

In early October I found myself and my two cats evacuating with neighbors from Atlantic Beach, FL, to Orlando, to escape hurricane Matthew. On the last Thursday of November, I will sit down with these same neighbors to share a Thanksgiving filled with gratitude: my neighbors and I (and the cats) were spared the hurricane's wrath. Along with pumpkin pie and a bottle of wine, I'm bringing to the celebration author Melanie Kirkpatrick's excellent book, *Thanksgiving: The Holiday at the Heart of the American Experience*. I intend to share with guests passages written by famous Americans taken from one of the book's several sections, "Readings for Thanksgiving Day." I'm leaning toward firsthand accounts by William Bradford and Edward Winslow of the Pilgrims' feast in Plymouth in 1621, but I'm also drawn to author Laura Ingalls Wilder's description of a childhood lesson learned from the Dakota Territory in the 1870s. There's no question but that I will share with my neighbors F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Turkey Cocktail Recipe" (the "To one large turkey add one gallon of vermouth and a demijohn of angostura bitters. Shake."). I may also challenge guests to guess which president tried to change the holiday to an earlier date from

the traditional last Thursday in November and how that went over (hint: there was a national uproar). Kirkpatrick's writing gift and talent for making history come alive have combined to give us a fine account of our nation's beloved holiday. It is a book I know will engender good conversation, and I am eager to bring it to the celebration.

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