

Thanksgiving

Whether you're falling asleep watching football or going to church, it's the culturally neutral holiday everyone can enjoy

By Robert Trishman
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It's Thanksgiving time again! It's the time when relatives gather around the table full of mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn, gravy, and of course, that big turkey. Then after dinner they all go into the living room and watch football (and probably fall asleep) until dessert is ready. And don't forget the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade!

OK, so all of my relatives do that, but does everyone? Forgive me for my "limited world view." It just so happens that I haven't been outside of Pennsylvania for longer than 7 days in a row and I haven't been exposed much to other cultures. I don't know who all celebrates Thanksgiving in the world or how they celebrate it. What do they do in far-off exotic lands like Thailand, Madagascar, and Southern California?

I would love to say that I've done extensive research and found a different form of Thanksgiving on every continent (and Southern Cali) along with the origins and foundations of Thanksgiving, as we know it. But I haven't, so all I have to offer is my opinion, and that is that Thanksgiving is the most ecumenical holiday of the year.

Think about it, some people go to worship services Thanksgiving morning, while others worship the Dallas Cowboys or Detroit Lions in the afternoon, featuring the Rev. John Madden's sacrifice of the "Turducken" (parts turkey, duck, and chicken). Some may do both of these things. Some people offer a prayer before dinner; others might just dig right in.

You can celebrate any number of traditions on Thanksgiving; there are no set rules. Personally, I'd trade in the turkey for a bucket of KFC or a Grande taco meal. I'd also eliminate the cranberry sauce and that pesky corn that won't stay on my fork or my plate. The mashed potatoes can stay but not without a heavy helping of salsa (try it sometime!). Forget all of that, I'm just going to make the whole holiday a celebration honoring my grandmother's pumpkin roll, there's nothing like it in the world.

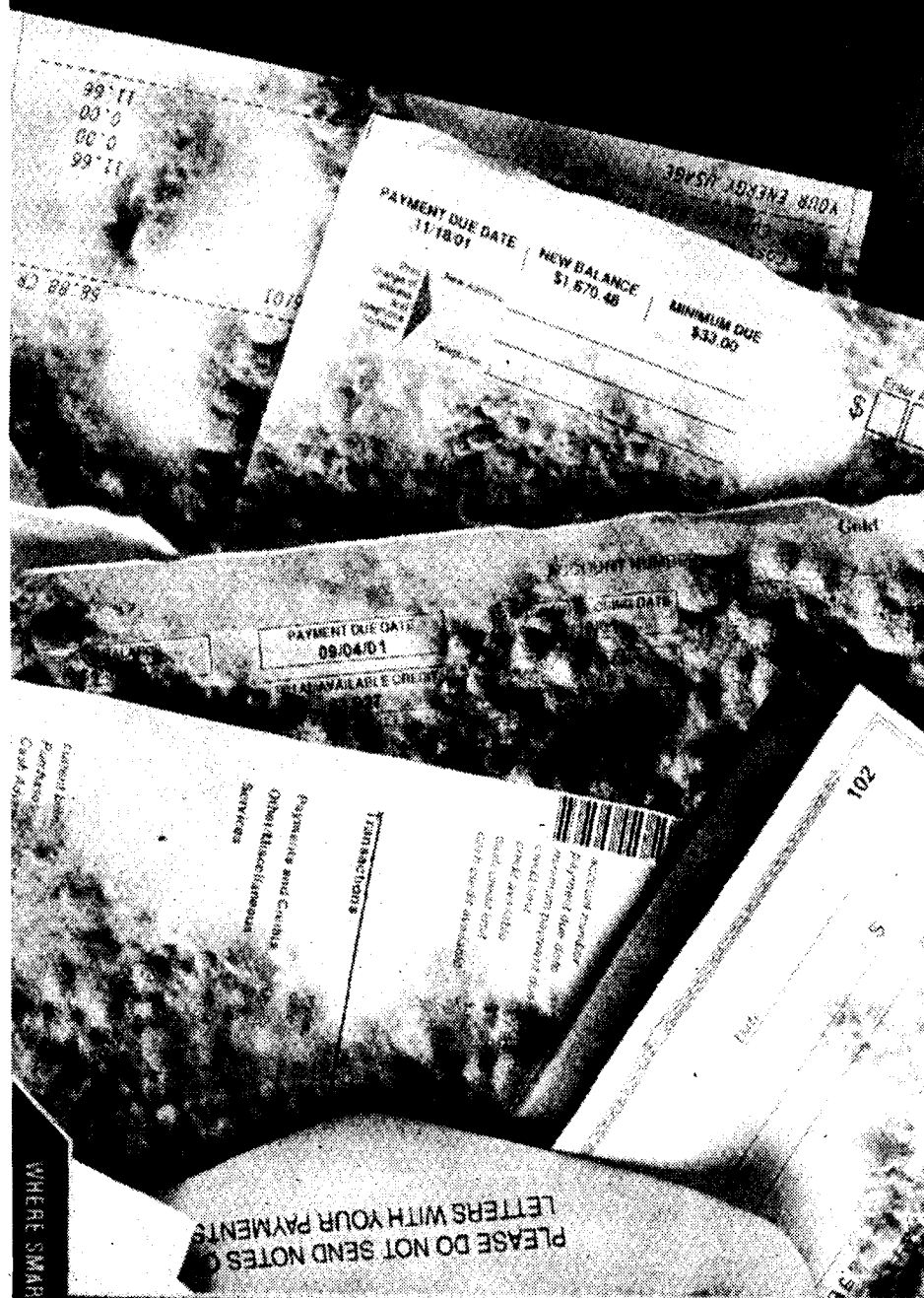
Yes, there are people in this world that have never heard of any of these foods. That is the beauty of Thanksgiving; you don't have to be a specific religion, nationality, social status, or blood type to celebrate it. Unlike other holidays, you don't have to be Irish, American, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, a veteran, a secretary, in love, or in costume to get the full effect. There is only one thing you have to be: thankful.

I have heard catchy-sounding phrases from inspired leaders like "Think to Thank" and "Have an attitude of gratitude." These are more than just cute poetic snippets, they are suggestions the world needs us to heed. I know it's one of my areas of weakness, so what better way to follow this counsel than by preparing for a day in honor of it?

A handout that one of my professors gave out recently says that Thanksgiving is one of the "OLDEST and MOST UNIVERSAL of human celebrations, and THERE ARE MANY THANKSGIVING STORIES TO TELL." It also reads, "Thanksgiving is Thanksgiving all around the world." At the very least we can be thankful that we have such a unifying, culturally neutral holiday. So I'd like to thank you all for reading this article and have a happy Turducken day!



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