

Why Thanksgiving is an American celebration of immigration

A long time ago, refugees fleeing their home country's hostile political environment headed west over the Atlantic Ocean in search of a better life. They arrived on a rock, unprepared for the challenges that come with moving to a new land: a shortage of food and inadequate shelter. A group of Americans took pity on these refugees, sharing their soil and helping them gain a foothold on it. In an act of goodwill and diplomacy the immigrants hosted the Americans for a large shared feast. The Americans were called Wampanoag; the immigrants, the pilgrims. Their meal has since become celebrated in the most quintessential American tradition, Thanksgiving. Anyone who would argue that America is losing its sense of tradition to diversity would do well to remember the origins of the holiday, the fact that it was a meal where one group of people welcomed another as friends and neighbours, that its celebration lasted three days, and that turkey wouldn't become the main course for another 230 years. It's a celebration that has and will continue to evolve. Our modern, cozy version of Thanksgiving seems to have forgone its historical gravitas for the mythology of a children's tale. In other words, it exemplifies the American tendency to forget the people who were not only indigenous to this land, but who welcomed new arrivals and share their home.

By Michael Baron, *the culturaltrip.com*, 25 November 2016

1. Who were the refugees?
2. Where did the pilgrims come from?
3. Who were the Americans?
4. What did the Wampanoag do to help the pilgrims?
5. How long did the first Thanksgiving celebration last?
6. When did turkey become the main dish at Thanksgiving?
7. Why did the pilgrims leave their home country?
8. What challenges did the pilgrims face when they arrived?
9. According to the author, what is the main problem with how Americans celebrate Thanksgiving today?
10. What does the author mean when he says Thanksgiving has "forgone its historical gravitas for the mythology of a children's tale"?
11. Explain the title.