

## Classic Thanksgiving Dinner Costing More in 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 10, 2011 – The retail cost of menu items for a classic Thanksgiving dinner including turkey, stuffing, cranberries, pumpkin pie and all the basic trimmings increased about 13 percent this year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

AFBF's 26th annual informal price survey of classic items found on the Thanksgiving Day dinner table indicates the average cost of this year's feast for 10 is \$49.20, a \$5.73 price increase from last year's average of \$43.47.

"The cost of this year's meal remains a bargain, at just under \$5 per person," said AFBF President Bob Stallman, a rice and cattle producer from Texas. "The quality and variety of food produced for our dinner tables on America's diverse farms and ranches sets us apart from our contemporaries around the world. It is an honor for our farm and ranch families to produce the food from our nation's land for family Thanksgiving celebrations."

The AFBF survey shopping list includes turkey, bread stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, cranberries, a relish tray of carrots and celery, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, and beverages of coffee and milk, all in quantities sufficient to serve a family of 10. There is also plenty for leftovers.

The big ticket item – a 16-pound turkey – came in at \$21.57 this year. That was roughly \$1.35 per



[Click on the image for a high resolution PDF version.](#)

[Newsline Audio: Cost of Thanksgiving Dinner](#)

► [Focus Column: Thanksgiving is All About Traditions](#)

► [Sweet Potato and Green Pea Salad Recipe](#)

### State Releases:

- [Arkansas](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [Virginia](#)

pound, an increase of about 25 cents per pound, or a total of \$3.91 per whole turkey, compared to 2010. The whole bird was the biggest contributor to the final total, showing the largest price increase compared to last year.

“Turkey prices are higher this year primarily due to strong consumer demand both here in the U.S. and globally,” said John Anderson, an AFBF senior economist.

In addition, “the era of grocers holding the line on retail food cost increases is basically over,” Anderson explained. “Retailers are being more aggressive about passing on higher costs for shipping, processing and storing food to consumers, although turkeys may still be featured in special sales and promotions close to Thanksgiving.

“Although we’ll pay a bit more this year, on a per-person basis, our traditional Thanksgiving feast remains a better value than most fast-food value meals, plus it’s a wholesome, home-cooked meal,” Anderson said.

A gallon of whole milk increased in price by 42 cents per gallon, to \$3.66. Other items that showed a price increase from last year were: a 30-ounce can of pumpkin pie mix, \$3.03, up 41 cents; two nine-inch pie shells, \$2.52, up 6 cents; a ½ pint of whipping cream, \$1.96, up 26 cents; one pound of green peas, \$1.68, up 24 cents; a 14-ounce package of cubed bread stuffing, \$2.88, up 24 cents; a dozen brown-n-serve rolls, \$2.30, up 18 cents; three pounds of sweet potatoes, \$3.26, up 7 cents; and fresh cranberries, \$2.48, up 7 cents.

A one-pound relish tray of carrots and celery declined by a penny to 76 cents, while a combined group of miscellaneous items, including coffee and ingredients necessary to prepare the meal (onions, eggs, sugar, flour, evaporated milk and butter) decreased in price, to \$3.10.

“Demand for U.S. dairy products has been strong throughout the year and continues to influence retail prices, as demand for higher-quality food products grows globally,” Anderson said.

He noted that despite retail price increases during the last year or so, American consumers have enjoyed relatively stable food costs over the years, particularly when adjusted for inflation.

The 13 percent increase in the national average cost reported this year by Farm Bureau for a classic Thanksgiving dinner is somewhat higher but still tracks closely with the organization’s 2011 quarterly marketbasket food surveys and the federal government’s Consumer Price Index for food (available online at <http://data.bls.gov/>) .

Farm Bureau volunteer shoppers are asked to look for the best possible prices, without taking advantage of special promotional coupons or purchase deals, such as spending \$50 and receiving a free turkey. Shoppers with an eye for bargains in all areas of the country should be able to purchase individual menu items at prices comparable to the Farm Bureau survey averages. Another option for busy families without a lot of time to cook is ready-to-eat Thanksgiving meals for up to 10 people, with all the trimmings,

Yearly Averages
1986 – \$28.74
1987 – \$24.51
1988 – \$26.61
1989 – \$24.70
1990 – \$28.85
1991 – \$25.95
1992 – \$26.39
1993 – \$27.49
1994 – \$28.40
1995 – \$29.64
1996 – \$31.66
1997 – \$31.75
1998 – \$33.09
1999 – \$33.83
2000 – \$32.37
2001 – \$35.04
2002 – \$34.56
2003 – \$36.28
2004 – \$35.68
2005 – \$36.78
2006 – \$38.10
2007 – \$42.26
2008 – \$44.61
2009 – \$42.91

which are available at many supermarkets and take-out restaurants for around \$50 to \$75.

2010 – \$43.47
----------------

2011 – \$49.20
----------------

The AFBF survey was first conducted in 1986. While Farm Bureau does not make any scientific claims about the data, it is an informal gauge of price trends around the nation.

A total of 141 volunteer shoppers from 35 states participated in this year's survey. Farm Bureau's survey menu has remained unchanged since 1986 to allow for consistent price comparisons.

**Please note:** Included are tables with historical information about AFBF's Thanksgiving Dinner survey.

Item	2010 Price	2011 Price	Difference
16-pound turkey	17.66	21.57	+3.91
Milk, 1 gallon whole	3.24	3.66	+.42
Pumpkin pie mix, 30-oz.	2.62	3.03	+.41
Whipping cream, ½ pint	1.70	1.96	+.26
Cubed stuffing, 14 oz.	2.64	2.88	+.24
Green peas, 1 lb.	1.44	1.68	+.24
Rolls, 12	2.12	2.30	+.18
Sweet potatoes, 3 lbs.	3.19	3.26	+.07
Fresh cranberries, 12 oz.	2.41	2.48	+.07
Pie shells (2)	2.46	2.52	+.06
Misc. ingredients	3.22	3.10	-.12
1-pound relish tray (carrots and celery)	.77	.76	-.01
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43.47</b>	<b>49.20</b>	<b>+5.73</b>