

# Thanksgiving: The Story of Pilgrims and Native Americans

Thanksgiving is a holiday celebrated in the United States, often marked by family gatherings, feasting, and gratitude. But do you know the story behind it? It involves two important groups: the Pilgrims and Native Americans.

## Step 1: Who are the Pilgrims?

The Pilgrims were a group of English settlers who faced persecution in England for their religious beliefs. In search of freedom, they decided to leave Europe and sail to the New World on a ship called the Mayflower in September 1620.

## Step 2: The Journey to America

The journey was long and difficult, lasting about 66 days. They arrived in North America in November 1620 at a place they called Plymouth, in present-day Massachusetts. The Pilgrims faced harsh weather, and many were ill-equipped to survive in the new land.

## Step 3: Meeting the Native Americans

When the Pilgrims arrived, they encountered Native Americans, who were already living on the land. The most well-known group they met were the Wampanoag people. At first, there was tension, but they soon realized they could help each other.

## Step 4: Important Friendships

One of the key figures was Squanto, a Patuxet man who spoke English. He helped the Pilgrims learn how to grow crops and hunt, which was essential for their survival. The Wampanoag tribe and the Pilgrims formed an alliance that strengthened their communities.

## Step 5: The First Thanksgiving

To celebrate their first successful harvest in 1621, the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag shared a feast that lasted three days. This event is often referred to as the First Thanksgiving. They feasted on foods like corn, beans, squash, and wildfowl.

## Step 6: Modern Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving became an official holiday in the U.S. in the 19th century. Today, it's a time for families to come together, express gratitude, and reflect on the historical significance of the holiday, including the relationships between different cultures.

## Conclusion

Understanding the story of the Pilgrims and Native Americans helps us appreciate Thanksgiving. It reminds us of the importance of community, cooperation, and gratitude in our lives. As we celebrate, it's

crucial to remember the complex history and the people involved.