Thanksgiving Day is the fourth Thursday in November, but many Americans take a day of vacation on the following Friday to make a four-day weekend, during which they may travel long distances to visit family and friends.

The holiday dates back to 1621, the year after the Puritans arrived in Massachusetts, determined to practice their dissenting religion without interference. After a rough winter, in which about half of them died, they turned for help to neighboring Indians, who taught them how to plant corn and other crops. The next fall's bountiful harvest inspired the Pilgrims to give thanks by holding a feast.