CONVERSATION STARTERS WORLD

THANKSGIVING TRIVIA HOST ROUND

30 questions / Questions, then the answer key

1. Lincoln issued the October 1863 Thanksgiving proclamation, but which member of his Cabinet actually wrote it?

2. In 1841, a Boston minister reprinting an eyewitness account of the 1621 harvest feast became the first known writer to call it “the first Thanksgiving.” Where in the book did he put that phrase?

3. Where can you see the original signed Mayflower Compact today?

4. How many adult English women survived the first winter and probably oversaw cooking for at least 140 people at the harvest celebration?

5. The Mayflower's church members called themselves “Saints.” What did they call the other passengers?

6. According to Pilgrim Edward Winslow, Ousamequin (Massasoit) once sent messengers to Plymouth with his own knife, to cut off a man's head and hands and bring them back. Whose?

7. Which neighboring Native nation pressured Wampanoag leader Ousamequin to pay tribute, making an alliance with Plymouth potentially useful?

8. Metacom, the Wampanoag leader the English called King Philip, was killed in 1676. For about how long did Plymouth keep his head on display?

9. In 1942, New York's mayor stabbed a giant Macy's dragon balloon so its material could be donated as what?

10. Until 1932, what did Macy's do with its giant balloons after the parade?

11. The tame turkeys English colonists brought to America were European birds. In which present-day country were their ancestors probably first domesticated?

12. Before the American bird acquired it, the English name “turkey” was used for which African bird?

13. Before Disneyland took over in 2005, pardoned turkeys retired to which Virginia park with an unfortunate cooking-related name?

14. President Harding's 1921 Thanksgiving turkey flew part of the way to Washington on a mailplane, wearing a custom flying suit and goggles. Why did it finish the trip by train?

15. Which pungent condiment goes into the cranberry relish Susan Stamberg shared with NPR listeners for decades?

16. Which Cowboys defender touched a blocked field goal in the snowy 1993 Thanksgiving game, allowing Miami to recover and get another kick?

17. To give more Cowboys linemen a share of his Thanksgiving prize, John Madden wished for a turkey with how many legs?

18. As of 2026, which NFL team has never played a game on Thanksgiving Day?

19. Which two universities' Thanksgiving football rivalry drew such crowds that churches moved services earlier to accommodate the fans?

20. In 2002 FOX started handing out a Thanksgiving trophy called the Galloping Gobbler. According to FOX, which star left the very first one in his locker room, from where it ended up in a dumpster?

21. “We Gather Together,” often sung at Thanksgiving, originally celebrated which country's victory over Spain?

22. Which classic holiday movie lost its NBC Thanksgiving time slot to the National Dog Show in 2002?

23. Which sitcom gave us the Thanksgiving line, “As God is my witness, I thought turkeys could fly”?

24. In which 1997 film does teenager Wendy Hood turn Thanksgiving grace into remarks about napalm, materialism and stolen tribal land?

25. Lisa Simpson's Thanksgiving poem includes the line "My soul carved in slices! By spiky-haired demons." Which famous Beat poem does it echo?

26. Which CBS documentary about the people picking America's fruits and vegetables was deliberately aired just after Thanksgiving in 1960?

27. At a festival in Yellville, Arkansas, live turkeys were dropped from the courthouse roof for the crowd to catch and keep for Thanksgiving dinner. Starting in 1948, what were they dropped from?

28. What was the nickname for the old New York Thanksgiving custom of children dressing as beggars and going door to door for treats?

29. Franklin Roosevelt was the first president to celebrate Thanksgiving outside the United States. In 1936 he ate his Thanksgiving dinner in the South Atlantic, aboard which Navy ship?

30. Which South American country has a National Thanksgiving Day, set by law on the fourth Thursday of November, the same day as ours?

ANSWER KEY

1. William H. Seward
2. In a footnote (accept a note at the bottom of the page)
3. Nowhere; the original is lost
4. Four
5. Strangers
6. Tisquantum (Squanto)
7. The Narragansett
8. About 20 to 25 years (accept two decades or more)
9. Scrap rubber
10. Let them go (accept released them into the sky)
11. Mexico
12. Guinea fowl
13. Frying Pan Farm Park
14. It got airsick
15. Horseradish
16. Leon Lett
17. Six
18. The Jacksonville Jaguars
19. Princeton and Yale
20. Emmitt Smith
21. The Netherlands
22. It's a Wonderful Life
23. WKRP in Cincinnati
24. The Ice Storm
25. Howl (Allen Ginsberg)
26. Harvest of Shame
27. An airplane
28. Ragamuffin Day
29. USS Indianapolis
30. Brazil