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## **Thanksgiving Customs & Decorating Tips**

**By Leslie Gerard**

Thanksgiving is an annual holiday, observed in the United States on the fourth Thursday in November, commemorating a harvest festival celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1621. In Canada, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday in October. Today, this holiday focuses mainly on family togetherness, home and customs that have made this special day a festive one.

Modern tradition celebrates Thanksgiving with parades, pageants, parties and large gatherings of friends and family for dinner. Turkey, which is a traditional Thanksgiving dinner, is typically served with stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, etc. For many families, giving thanks by verbally expressing what they are thankful for is a longstanding tradition. Before dinner begins, each individual is given time to express his/her gratitude in front of everyone at the dinner table.

When it comes to decorations, most communities decorate their church with flowers, fruits and colors that represent the season. At home, families typically decorate with wreaths featuring the shades of autumn and a festive centerpiece on their dining room table. Many dinner tables are adorned with a horn of plenty, which is also known as a cornucopia. This symbol consists of a goat's horn overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn. It represents a supply of good things, which is a traditional wish for Thanksgiving.

Once the turkey is eaten and the wonderful scent of Thanksgiving dinner has left, you can still enjoy the smells of the holiday with the use of scented candles. Pumpkin scented candles are especially festive, and will add a nice decorative touch and pleasing scent to any room. Other popular scents include those of fruit, flowers and any favorite smell that reminds you of the holiday.

Immediately following Thanksgiving, people begin to shift their thinking toward the next major holiday, which is Christmas. As Thanksgiving Day comes to a conclusion, some choose to spend the evening relaxing with family and friends. For others, it's the perfect time to start thinking about Christmas and the growing tradition of putting up the Christmas tree on Thanksgiving evening. Traditionally, the day after Thanksgiving is the busiest shopping day of the year as consumers begin to start buying for Christmas. On this day, stores offer promotions and sale prices to draw shoppers into their store.

When all is said and done, Thanksgiving is a day for being thankful. From family and friends to a plentiful dinner table and a warm feeling that we get from spending time with those that we cherish, this

day is truly one for tradition.

<http://www.madmommasrecipes.com>

## Decorating For Thanksgiving - Budget Friendly Decor For The Holiday

By Home Decorating Digest

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Decorating for Thanksgiving on a tight budget can be simple when using elements found around your home or apartment. Here are a few tips for adding that special Thanksgiving flavor to your decor for little or no money.

**THINK FALL COLORS.** Thanksgiving decorating requires a harvest color scheme of warm yellows, golds, burnt reds, browns and greens. Think in terms of these colors when selecting ribbons and fabrics to be used with your projects.

**START GATHERING.** Go outdoors and start gathering colorful fallen leaves, acorns, pinecones, sticks, twigs and large branches. Use the large branches to anchor a display on or inside shelves, counter tops or bookcases. Fill the display with the items you gathered until you have a collage of color. Also consider stacking logs on your porch or inside your space...even if you don't have a fireplace!

**CREATING A CENTERPIECE** All you need to create this budget piece are your outdoor supplies and a hot glue gun. Using a large attractively shaped branch, start gluing your leaves and branches in a natural pattern in and around the branch. You can buy attractive Indian corn and gourds at your local grocery store to place next this centerpiece to complete your Thanksgiving table. Use your harvest colored ribbons as accents.

**REUSE PUMPKINS.** Don't think that pumpkins are only for Halloween. Some vendors largely discount pumpkins after October 31st. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.** Decorate with pumpkins of all sizes by adding them to your porch or indoor displays. Just before your Thanksgiving dinner use them to create homemade pumpkin soup or pie. No waste here!

**ILLUMINATION.** Candles are the obvious choice for bringing warmth to your Thanksgiving festivities. Select a variety of sizes and shapes to add contrast. A good rule of thumb when on a budget is to think multiple uses. White candles can be used for both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Tea candles work well when displayed in glasses and are also a little more budget friendly. The least expensive illumination tips are to use your old white Christmas tree lights on top of bookcases or draped around your room. Get a jumpstart on Christmas.

You can create an atmosphere that exudes the warmth and welcome you feel for your guest by adding special touches to your decor. Just by using what you have, a little elbow grease and some imagination you can create a holiday atmosphere...for little to or money!

Home Decorating Digest, <http://www.HomeDecoratingDigest.com> is an online publication offering

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