

## Thanksgiving Foodways

With thanks to Betty Belanus of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage <https://folklife.si.edu> who shared this activity with Local Learning.

Many people in the United States celebrate the national Thanksgiving holiday by sharing a special meal. Although there is a stereotype about turkey and dressing as the iconic meal, we all have different ideas about what foods we want on Thanksgiving Day. Turkey or tamales? Mashed potatoes or sweet potato casserole? Collard greens or green bean casserole? Pecan pie or apple pie? What would your favorite Thanksgiving meal include? Who would share the meal? How is the 2020 pandemic altering Thanksgiving?

**Supplies** Paper plate, crayons or markers, optional collage supplies like magazines, scissors, glue

### Activities

1. Make a list of what foods your favorite Thanksgiving meal includes.
2. Use a paper plate, crayons, markers, or images from magazines to decorate your favorite Thanksgiving plate.
3. Because of the pandemic, many people are staying home and sharing Thanksgiving meals with a smaller group. This is a good time to invite family members and friends to decorate plates. Ask people to share their favorite Thanksgiving foods and stories on a phone call or Zoom call.

### Bonus Activities

- Our foodways traditions include planning, shopping, prepping, cooking, serving, and cleaning up—not just eating! Document a meal from start to finish by observing, taking notes, making photos, and interviewing those who are preparing and serving the food.
- Choose a favorite food to learn its history, changes over time, growing cycle, recipe variations. Share your findings in a slideshow or podcast.
- Document how the pandemic is affecting Thanksgiving by researching online and interviewing family members and friends. Use the **Then and Now Venn Diagram** to compare Thanksgiving traditions. Share your reflections in a paragraph or poem.