

Thanksgiving: What's the occasion all about?

Thanksgiving is a holiday celebrated in America every year on the fourth Thursday in November. For many families, it's a chance to gather together and there are also Thanksgiving parades, large and small, to mark the occasion. Many people use Thanksgiving as a day to reflect on the positive things in life - things they are thankful for. Nearly everyone gets one or two days off school or work, and in America it marks the beginning of the Christmas holiday season.

What's the history of Thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving Day goes back to the time when Europeans went to start new lives in America. In 1621 a group of Europeans, who became known as the 'Pilgrims', invited the local Native Americans to join them in a feast. The Pilgrims had had trouble growing enough food to eat in the years before. The Native Americans had taught them how to grow crops successfully and, according to the story, to thank them for this, the Pilgrims invited them to a big feast. Unfortunately good relations between Native Americans and pilgrims did not last long and violence between European settlers and Native Americans increased and led to many years of conflict.

When is Black Friday and what is it?

The day originally started in the United States all the way back in 1952 and was set on the first Friday that followed Thanksgiving Day. It was designed by shops and other retailers to encourage people to start spending in the run-up to Christmas - and it's usually one of the busiest shopping days of the year.

While some shops love Black Friday, not everyone thinks it is a good idea and it often doesn't run smoothly. Sometimes shops can be so busy that you have to queue to get in, websites can crash and people have been known to argue and fight over items they want to buy. Critics say events like this are often better for big shops who have lots of items to sell, but it can be difficult for smaller shops to cut prices as much. As Black Friday gets so much publicity, customers expect everyone to offer bargains and not all shops can afford it.

Cyber Monday - busiest online shopping day

Cyber Monday's origins were very much of its time. By the mid-2000s, ecommerce was becoming normalized, but it looked a lot different than it does today. So when office workers returned to their desks the Monday after Thanksgiving, they took advantage of broadband access to make online holiday purchases. In 2005, the term Cyber Monday was coined by the National Retail Federation. It worked.