Should we eat Thanksgiving dinner early?

Some people like to dine during the day, but others prefer a later turkey time.

What you need to know

- **The first Thanksgiving feast, in 1621, went on for three days.**
- **Polls have found that most Americans prefer to eat their Thanksgiving dinner in the afternoon.**
- **Aside from eating dinner, watching sports is one of the most popular Thanksgiving activities.**
- **It can take anywhere from 2.5 hours to 5 hours to cook a Thanksgiving turkey, depending on how many pounds the bird weighs.**



HOLIDAY HISTORY
In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln said Thanksgiving would be observed on the fourth Thursday of November.

Thanksgiving can be busy with making visits to see family and watching the Thanksgiving Day parade and football, but it mostly revolves around eating a big holiday dinner. Finding the right time to serve the meal is an important part of the planning. Martha Stewart, a famous home and entertaining expert, recently said in an interview that the Thanksgiving meal should be served at 2 p.m. She received a variety of responses, with most people citing family tradition as the reason for their preference. Whether they typically sit down in the afternoon or evening, people had strong opinions on the topic. What do you think? Should we eat Thanksgiving dinner early?

Yes—it's tradition for a reason

An early Thanksgiving dinner is a tradition in many households and part of what makes the holiday feel different and special. It makes practical sense as well. Getting Thanksgiving dinner out of the way early gives guests plenty of time to enjoy the rest of the holiday. That's time they can spend relaxing with family members without feeling hungry or having to worry about meal preparation. It paves the way for participating in traditions like watching football or playing board games. An early meal is also better for families with young children. It's a hectic day for kids, and waiting all day to eat a big dinner can disrupt their schedule.

No—later is much better

Hosting Thanksgiving is a huge undertaking that requires hours of preparation, from cooking to setting the table. It's less stressful for the hosts if they aren't trying to get dinner ready early. It's also the busiest travel day of the year, so it's nice to give guests plenty of time to arrive. In addition, eating such a big meal makes people tired, so they might need to take a nap. That's a waste of a day off. And there are plenty of ways people can pass the time before an evening meal. They can play games indoors or outside, run a turkey trot, snack on appetizers, or just hang out with loved ones they might not see very often.

YES Three reasons we should eat Thanksgiving dinner early

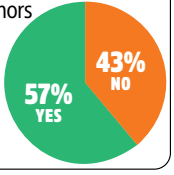
1. **An early Thanksgiving dinner is a tradition for many families and makes the day feel extra special.**
2. **Eating early gives people plenty of time to enjoy activities later without having to worry about cooking or cleanup.**
3. **An early dinner works best for the younger children in the family.**

NO Three reasons we should not eat Thanksgiving dinner early

1. **Hosts and cooks need plenty of time to prepare all the food and get their homes ready for guests.**
2. **If people eat too much early in the day, they might not get to enjoy the afternoon.**
3. **There are many fun ways to pass the day with family and friends while you wait for dinner to be ready.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if blood donors should be paid. More than half of you voted in favor of offering donors money in order to increase the blood supply.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think we should eat Thanksgiving dinner early or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

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