



# Food For Thought

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*Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers*

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## The Thanksgiving Story

The Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock on December 11, 1620. Their first winter was very hard. But the next fall they had a good harvest from the seed they had planted. They decided to celebrate with a feast, including the Indians who had helped them survive their first year.

The men went hunting to get meat for the feast. It is not certain that wild turkey was a part of their feast since they used the term “turkey” for any kind of wild birds.

Another food that we almost always have at Thanksgiving is pumpkin pie. It is unlikely that the first Thanksgiving included that treat. The supply of flour had been used, so there was no bread or pastries of any kind. Pumpkin was plentiful because it grew here wild and they ate it boiled.



There was also no milk, cider, potatoes or butter. There were no cows to produce milk and the newly discovered potato was still thought by many to be poisonous. The feast did include fish, berries, watercress, lobster, dried fruit, corn, clams, venison and plums.

Thanksgiving was not held every year. In fact, it was not until June 1676 that another day of Thanksgiving was held. Thanksgiving was officially proclaimed by President Lincoln in 1863 to be celebrated the last Thursday in November. In 1941, Thanksgiving was declared a legal holiday by the United States Congress to be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving this year, talk about the foods you prepare for the holiday and how they are the same or different from the foods eaten at the first Thanksgiving.

## CORN

Corn was a very important crop for the pilgrims and the native Indians. It was the main food and was eaten at every meal. There were many varieties of corn – white, blue, yellow and red.



Some of the corn was dried to preserve and keep it for food throughout the winter months. Corn was often ground into corn meal. Corn meal could be used to make cornbread, corn pudding, corn syrup or could be mixed with beans to make succotash.

Corn was unknown to the pilgrims before they met the Indians. Indians gave them seeds and taught them how to grow it. Today we grow more acres of corn than any other grain.



**Riddle: Why did the farmer stop telling secrets in the cornfield?**

We eat corn fixed in many different ways. Here is a recipe using corn meal and corn kernels. Hope you enjoy it.

### EASY CORN CASSEROLE

- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1 8 3/4 ounce can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 8 3/4 ounce can creamed corn
- 1 8 1/2 ounce package corn muffin mix
- 8 ounces low-fat or regular sour cream



Preheat oven to 350° F.

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Pour into an 8-inch square baking dish coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes or until set.

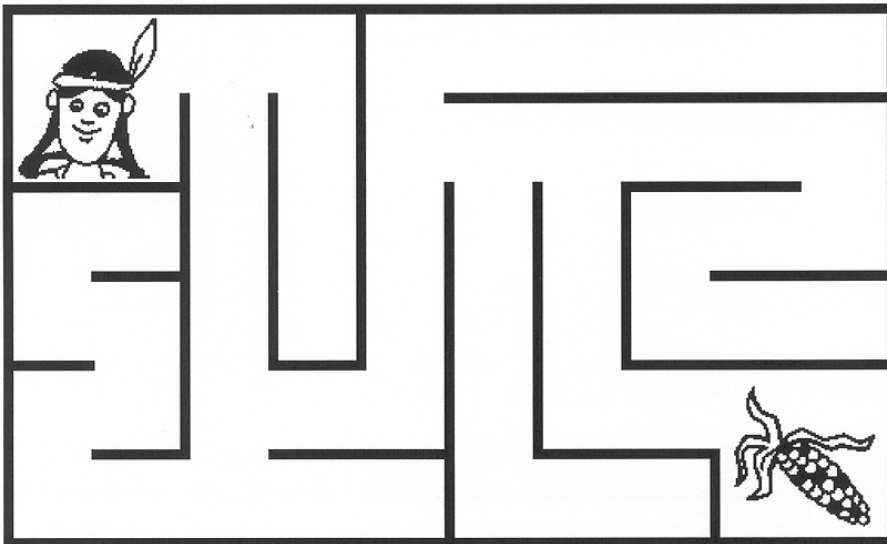
Serves 8

### Popcorn Marshmallow Balls

- 12 cups popped corn
- 1/4 cup butter or margarine
- 1 bag (10 oz) marshmallows

Put the popped corn in a large bowl or pan and set aside. Slowly heat butter and marshmallows on the stove in a heavy saucepan. Put the heat on low. Stir constantly until the mix is melted and smooth. Pour the melted marshmallows over the popcorn and mix carefully until the popcorn is well coated. Form into shapes. (Put a little butter on your hands to help keep the mixture from sticking to you.)

### Help the Indian find the corn



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Prepared by:  
Barbara Farner  
Extension Educator  
Nutrition & Wellness  
Matteson Extension Center



**Riddle answer: Because the corn  
was all ears.**

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