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**Pilgrim's Pride**

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I love the smells and the sounds of the season -- the turkey roasting in the oven, the bands marching in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade -- it's all that and our family traditions that thankfully, I get to look forward to all year. What makes Thanksgiving one of the best times of the year for me? It was hard to narrow it down, but here are my top five reasons.

**I'm proud to be an American** and on Thanksgiving I am reminded of the incredible people, past and present, and the sacrifices they endured to help make this country the best place on earth. From the founders of Plymouth Colony who had the first Thanksgiving feast in 1621, to George Washington who in 1789 issued the first national Thanksgiving proclamation calling upon all Americans to be thankful for our country's independence and for the U.S. Constitution. To Sarah Josepha Hale who campaigned to get Thanksgiving established as a national holiday, and to President Lincoln who in 1863 during the Civil War asked all Americans to "heal the wounds of our nation" and proclaimed Thanksgiving the last Thursday in November. And, to our troops who help keep our country safe all the days of the year.

**Being surrounded by family and friends.** Thanksgiving is the busiest travel time of the year. There's no traffic jam, nor check-in line too long to keep family and friends apart. An estimated 25 million people will travel by air this year -- that's 1.5 percent more than last year -- with 80 million more more traveling by roads and rails. It's a day to give thanks for the love we share and to realize how fortunate we are to have one another in our lives.

**The turkey and all the trimmings.** I'm talking stuffing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, green beans and my personal favorite, pumpkin pie. About 46 million turkeys are served at Thanksgiving, and 50 million pumpkin pies are eaten. And in case you're counting, 3,000 to 5,000 calories are consumed per person.

**The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.** Eighty-seven years and counting. Even if you can't get there to see the parade in person, turn the TV on, sit in your pajamas and watch the floats go by. More than 50 million people will be doing the same thing. And, after Santa and his sleigh have made their way down the two and a half mile parade route, there's another holiday tradition to tune into at my house: Thanksgiving Day football.

**It's the kick-off of the holiday season** and who doesn't love that? In fact, this year, the holiday season starts the night before Thanksgiving with the first night of Hanukah. And with just four weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, you can bet that eager holiday shoppers will finish their meal and head to the mall to get a jump on their holiday shopping.

Here's one more reason why Americans may say pass the pumpkin pie a few more times this year: According to the American

Farm Bureau Federation, the average cost of a Thanksgiving dinner for 10 is $49.04 -- that's down 0.9 percent from last year.

Peace Love Profits & Pumpkin Pie, Blake

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1. **Using the article to spark some ideas, list your Top 5 things you like about Thanksgiving. Like in the article, give details for each of your answers.**
2. **What do you think about Black Friday being moved up to Thanksgiving night now? What’s good about it? What’s not so good about it?**