



Municipal Money Matters

Office of the Philadelphia Controller Christy Brady

November 2024

Cost of Thanksgiving for Philadelphians

The increasing costs of food, gas, utilities and many other essential items that families rely on daily have resulted in many watching their wallets more closely these days. The holiday season has never been an exception to rising prices, and Philadelphians can expect to continue to pay more out of their pockets for the traditional meal.

Over the last 50 years, the cost for a typical Thanksgiving meal to feed 10 people has increased by almost 300%. This year, Philadelphians can expect to pay about \$66.60 for the annual meal, which is higher than the \$17.05 they paid in 1974. Inflation spikes and the overall higher cost of living over the last five decades have pushed prices significantly higher as consumers pay more for their favorite foods, including turkey (377%), pumpkin pie mix (393%) and dinner rolls (345%).

While each decade has experienced price fluctuations due to the economic conditions at the time, the price for groceries over the last decade contributed to a 45% increase, raising the cost of a traditional meal by \$20 from \$46.42.

Traditional Thanksgiving Meal to Feed 10 in Philadelphia Over the Last 50 Years

Item	1974*	2014**	2024**	50 Yr. \$ Diff	50 Yr. % Diff
Turkey, 16 lb	\$5.67	\$19.44	\$27.04	\$21.37	377%
Whole Milk	\$1.24	\$3.70	\$4.92	\$3.68	297%
Pumpkin Pie Mix, 30 oz.	\$0.79	\$2.65	\$3.89	\$3.10	393%
Whipping Cream	\$1.17	\$2.44	\$3.66	\$2.49	213%
Cubed Stuffing, 12 oz.	\$0.43	\$2.66	\$3.50	\$3.07	714%
Green Peas, 1 lb.	\$1.51	\$0.92	\$2.82	\$1.31	87%
Dinner Rolls, 12	\$0.92	\$2.50	\$4.09	\$3.17	345%
Sweet Potatoes, 3 lbs.	\$1.70	\$2.63	\$2.96	\$1.26	74%
Fresh Cranberries, 12 oz.	\$0.38	\$2.75	\$2.32	\$1.94	511%
Pie Shells, 2	\$1.90	\$2.43	\$5.42	\$3.52	185%
Misc. Ingredients/Relish Tray	\$1.34	\$4.30	\$5.98	\$4.64	346%
Total	\$17.05	\$46.42	\$66.60	\$49.55	291%

*The cost for each item was derived from the Consumer Price Index for prices recorded in 1974.
 **The cost for each item was calculated by averaging prices from three separate grocery stores in the City of Philadelphia.



Flashback to 1974: Frank Rizzo was in his first term as mayor, serving alongside City Controller William (Bill) Klenk. City Hall was the tallest building in the city, with William Penn overlooking the town. The Flyers won the Stanley Cup against the Boston Bruins, and, unbelievably, Gritty wasn't even there to witness it — because in 1974, the big orange guy wasn't even born yet. A Philadelphian could buy a pretzel for no more than **\$0.10** on the way to the Vet for an Eagles game after having scrapple for breakfast for **\$0.59**.

From all of us here at the Controller's Office, we wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving!

Each month Controller Brady looks forward to bringing transparency and accountability of our city, right to you.