OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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PRESS RELEASE

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Thanksgiving Dinner in Philadelphia Costs Almost $60 More Than It Did 50 Years Ago

PHILADELPHIA – As communities across the country continue to celebrate America's 250th anniversary, a new report from City Controller Christy Brady indicates the cost of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner costs four times as much today than during the nation's Bicentennial (1976), illustrating how rising food costs have affected family budgets over the last 50 years.

According to the Controller's Office analysis, a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people now costs an estimated $73.21, compared to $15.93 in 1976, an increase of approximately 360%.

"Thanksgiving is a cherished tradition that brings families together around the dinner table," said Controller Brady. "But for many Philadelphians, rising costs continue to put pressure on household budgets."

Several Thanksgiving staples have realized significant price increases since 1976. Dinner rolls have risen by 721%, while fresh cranberries, whole milk, and pie shells have all increased by more than 480%.

A comparison of Thanksgiving meal costs in Philadelphia:

Item	1976	2026	50 Yr. $ Diff	50 Yr. % Diff
Turkey 16 lb.	$7.54	$30.56	$23.02	305%
Whole Milk	$0.86	$5.01	$4.15	482%
Pumpkin Pie Mix	$1.52	$4.51	$2.99	197%
Whipping Cream	$0.70	$2.76	$2.06	294%
Cubed Stuffing, 12 oz	$1.35	$5.94	$4.59	340%
Green Peas, 1 lb.	$0.32	$1.85	$1.53	477%
Dinner Rolls 12 rolls	$0.58	$4.76	$4.18	721%
Sweet Potatoes, 3 lbs.	$0.68	$3.94	$3.26	479%
Fresh Cranberries, 12 oz	$0.35	$2.05	$1.70	485%
Pie Shells	$0.87	$5.07	$4.20	482%
Mis. Ingredients/Relish Tray	$1.16	$6.76	$5.60	483%
Total	**$15.93**	**$73.21**	**$57.28**	**360%**

“Looking back over the last 50 years gives us an important perspective on how dramatically the cost of everyday essentials has changed and the challenges many families face affording holiday meals," said Controller Brady.

The report also highlights Philadelphia's role in the nation's Bicentennial celebrations in 1976 and examines how changing consumer prices have affected holiday traditions over the last half-century.

The estimated cost of Thanksgiving items is based on average prices collected from grocery stores throughout Philadelphia. The traditional menu items are based on the classic menu reported by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Visit https://controller.phila.gov/ to view the City Controller’s November 2026 Municipal Money Matters.

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