

IN THE MARGINS: Mississippi's Thanksgiving: On Food and Football

By Tony Martin
Editor

It's Thanksgiving, which unfortunately sometimes gets lost in between Halloween and Christmas. Thanksgiving yard decorations don't get the love the other two holidays do.

Still, Thanksgiving is pretty special. It's a day set aside to, well, give thanks. For believers, it takes on a special poignancy, because we understand that all good gifts come from God Himself, so there is no reason *not* to be thankful!

In pondering what we should be thankful for, I'd say we're to be thankful *for* all things, *in* all things. In thinking about my adopted state, I've noticed that a couple of things rise to the top – as a people group, these two items have a grip on our folks.

Thanksgiving in Mississippi – it's like any other Thanksgiving, but with a little more gravy and a lot more football! I don't mean to ruffle any turkey feathers, but let's face it, in Mississippi, we've turned Thanksgiving into an Olympic sport, where the main events are eating and watching the Southeastern Conference football games.

First up, let's talk about the feast. Down here, we don't just eat on Thanksgiving; we embark on a culinary marathon. It's like our stomachs suddenly believe they're bottomless pits, and our plates become their training grounds. The turkey? That's just the warm-up act. We've got casseroles, sweet potatoes, greens, and let's not forget the dressing (not stuffing, mind you, we're in the South). And for dessert, it's

a showdown between pecan pie and pumpkin pie – though why choose one when you can have both?

But the real magic happens when you're so full you swear you can't eat another bite, and then – voila! – you find just a smidgen of space for one more spoonful of grandma's famous mac and cheese. It's a Thanksgiving miracle!

Now, let's pivot to the other Thanksgiving tradition that's as essential as the turkey itself – SEC football. In Mississippi, football isn't just a game; it's a way of life, especially around Thanksgiving. This is when rivalries heat up, and family and friends gather around the TV, yelling advice to players who, let's be honest, can't hear us but we believe in our hearts they can.

There's something special about watching a game, stuffed with turkey, surrounded by family, with the sound of your uncle passionately arguing about a referee's call in the background. It's like the stuffing to our Thanksgiving turkey – necessary and oh-so-satisfying. And whether you're a die-hard fan or just there for the halftime show, there's a sense of unity that comes from watching the game together.

So, as Thanksgiving rolls around in Mississippi, we embrace our two favorite pastimes: eating like there's no tomorrow and getting way too emotional about college football. It's a time of joy, a bit of overindulgence, and lots of cheering. Sure, we might need to loosen our belts a notch or two, but hey, that's just part of the Thanksgiving charm.

And remember, when it's fourth and inches on the dinner table, and you're eyeing that last piece of pie like it's the endzone, go for it. After all, it's Thanksgiving – the one day when calories magically don't count (or so we like to believe).

Happy Thanksgiving, Mississippi style! God is good. He has blessed us. O be thankful!