Campbell's

State of the Sides

2026

STATE OF THE SIDES
Campbell's
5TH EDITION



Celebrating 5 Years of Thanksgiving Traditions, Old & New

Celebrating Five Years of *Sides Season™*

Now in its fifth year, Campbell's State of the Sides Report offers an in-depth look at how Americans celebrate the dishes that define the holiday table, and how preferences evolve over time.



Tradition meets change

Exploring how holiday traditions, tastes and cooking habits are evolving across regions and generations, this year's findings show how some traditions hold steady – including an increased appetite for traditional Thanksgiving experiences, while others continue to change.

One constant through it all:

Campbell's

For 150 years, Campbell's has helped make holiday meals a guaranteed success, even creating a Thanksgiving staple: **Campbell's Iconic Green Bean Casserole.** This is a legacy that continues to shape how America gathers around the table.

Five Years of *Side Season™*

Sides have eclipsed the turkey entirely



4 in 5

Americans say they enjoy cooking the sides more than the turkey. Nearly half would be fine with no turkey at all.

▲ 11% POINTS SINCE 2023



86%

of Americans now serve at least 4 sides, increasing the number of sides on the table.

▲ 16% POINTS SINCE 2023



With a median of 5 sides at each meal, Americans will serve about

749 million

sides at Thanksgiving 2026.

46%

of Americans would be happy with a meal of sides only.

▲ 8% POINTS SINCE 2024

Gen Zs and Millennials agree!

The sentiment is even stronger among younger generations, with **65% of Gen Z and 56% of Millennials saying they would be happy with a side-only spread.**



Today, many Americans want their Thanksgiving table creamier and cheesier, which helps explain why dishes like green bean casserole and mac & cheese are among America's favorites.



44%

of Americans want more creaminess



41%

of Americans want more cheesiness

Why Sides Have a Special Place

Sides carry family history.

77%

of Americans say dishes passed down from their grandparents carry special significance, more than just recipes - they're a tangible connection to the people who came before.

Sides are where identity shows up on the table.

56%

of Americans enjoy serving dishes that reflect their culture or region, a number that climbs even higher with younger generations. 65% of Gen Z and 60% of Millennials say the same, showing sides are becoming more personal over time, not less.

The classics endure by choice, not habit.

88%

say they genuinely like the traditional Thanksgiving sides, proof that green bean casserole, mac & cheese and the rest of the lineup stick around because people actually want them there, not just out of routine.



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5 Sides, 5-Year Evolution

America's top 5 sides over the years have remained consistent:

	1	2	3	4	5
2026	 Stuffing/ Dressing			 Mac & Cheese	
2025		 Mashed Potatoes			 Green Bean Casserole
2024			 Yams/Sweet Potatoes		
2023					
2022					 Cranberry Sauce

Green Bean Casserole

Some things shouldn't change: green bean casserole remains America's most nostalgic and untouchable Thanksgiving side



67%

say it reminds them of Thanksgiving past.

51%

feel the table would be incomplete without it.

19%

would dare to change the recipe, the least of any top 5 Thanksgiving sides. When pressed, over a third would consider adding cheese, bacon or caramelized onions.

71%

say green bean casserole is a great way to get more vegetables at the holiday table.



More than two-thirds (69%) insist it's still best made the classic way with Cream of Mushroom or Cream of Celery Soup. **And for 87%, Campbell's Soup is their go-to for the best green bean casserole.**

In fact, Campbell's sells nearly **40 million cans** during the month of Thanksgiving, enough for 40 million Green Bean Casseroles! If you take into consideration the soup volume in each can, that's enough to fill the **Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade's entire balloon fleet**.

Over the last five holiday seasons, Campbell's sold over **308 million cans** of Cream of Mushroom. That's enough to make green bean casseroles that would **circle the country 4 times, lined up end to end.**

VEGETABLE - OVEN

MUSHROOM - Green Bean - French Fried Onion

Notes; 2 & 3

Ingredients	EXP I JP 4/13/55	EXP II JP 4/19/55	EXP III JP 5/17/55	EXP IV 5/17/55	EXP V 6/10/58	EXP VI JM 6/10/58	EXP VII DP 6/12/58
Source			JP				
Temp. Time							
Yield							
Drained - French style green beans	2 boxes	2 boxes	2 boxes	2 boxes			
Water	3/4 cup	/					
Mushroom soup	1 can	1 can	1 can	1 can	1 can	1 can	1 can
Celery salt	1/4 tsp						
Soy sauce	1/4 t.	1/3 t. & 1/2 t.	1 tsp.		1 tsp.	1 tsp.	1 tsp.
Pepper	/	freshly ground					
French fried onion	3oz. 1 can	3oz. 1 can	3oz. 1 can	frozen 2pkg.	Dash 2 oz. 1 can	Dash 3oz. 1 can	Dash 3oz. 1 can
Worcestershire							
Green Beans, drained		/	1/2 tsp.				
Liquid				canned 3 cups	cooked 2-1# (canned)	drained (save 15 cups)	frozen 2 pkg
Ham, boneless, rolled					1 can		
			OK				6 slices

EXP I - Cook green beans in water. Meanwhile blend soup with 1/3 cup cooking water, celery soy sauce and pepper in a 1 1/2 quart casserole. Mix in cooked beans. Top with onions. Bake 350 for 20 to 30 minutes. TASTED BY: EH, JM, JR, DP, JP - all liked - lost flavor of soy a salt. EH would like onions in basic recipe.
EXP II - Made the same way as before - TASTED BY: JM, JR, JP. I put 1/4 cup of onion in s baked for 20 mi n. at 350. Too brown on top. Needs more pep, so stirred in extra soy sauc

99-X-6152



In 1955,

Campbell's Test Kitchen Supervisor, **Dorcas Reilly**, created the original green bean casserole. Initially called the Grean Bean Bake, the simple, five-ingredient recipe became a Thanksgiving classic and one of America's most recognizable and beloved holiday dishes. Reilly was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2002 for her recipe.

Mac & Cheese

The one dish the whole family can agree on



It's a Southeast favorite.

Mac & cheese is most popular in the Southeast, **showing up on 67% of Thanksgiving tables** in the region and 42% of Southeasterners think it's the most iconic Thanksgiving side dish.

And the leftover everyone's fighting over.

37% say mac & cheese is the Thanksgiving leftover they look forward to most, though **42% say there are never actually any leftovers!**

More than just a comfort classic, it's become a season-long favorite, especially for younger generations.

51% say mac & cheese is the Thanksgiving dish they eat most often at other times of the year. 68% of Gen Z say the same.

Convenience is part of the appeal.

60% of Americans know they can prep their mac & cheese ingredients ahead of time for convenience, and 46% cite easy preparation as a reason they choose it for the holiday, proof that a crowd-pleaser doesn't have to be complicated.

57%

of Americans say mac & cheese is the dish everyone can agree on at the Thanksgiving table.

46%

of Gen Z ranks it #1 over every other side for the second-year running.



Crafted with

real cheese, Campbell's Cheddar Cheese Soup makes the perfect creamy, cheesy mac & cheese, while allowing home cooks to skip the roux.

Paving the Way for New Traditions



Putting a twist on Thanksgiving traditions.

While family traditions have a strong hold on the Thanksgiving menu, **3 in 4 Americans are adding something new to their table.** And, two-thirds (65%) of Americans say side dishes are where they feel most free to experiment in the kitchen.

Convenience and value are becoming increasingly important in festive meal planning.

More than half (57%) of Americans say they prioritize convenience when planning their Thanksgiving menu. For example, 59% choose green bean casserole recipes that balance saving time with maintaining flavors.

Roughly 5 in 6 Americans (84%) are open to prepping/assembling ingredients for a dish the night before, and 71% use semi-homemade recipes that combine pre-made and fresh ingredients.

Two-thirds (67%) say they look for recipes that offer the best value for them and their family. A trend even more prevalent with Gen Z (75%).

Mac & cheese fans embrace customization.

In fact, 96% of Americans would consider adding something to their mac & cheese. 61% say they'd try a different cheese and 53% would add meat such as bacon. And, more than a quarter say they would consider adding trending ingredients like chili/spices (26%) and truffles (25%).







Did you know...

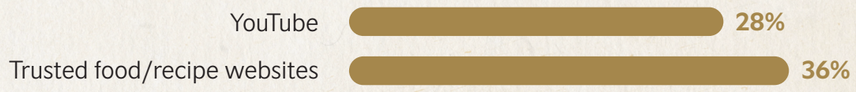
...that *Campbell's*® Cream of Mushroom Soup in green bean casserole can save you 30-40 minutes of prep time each holiday?

That's enough time to make a whole other side dish – or better yet – spend time with loved ones.

Technology Helps Preserve Tradition

Holiday Recipe Inspiration

When looking for recipes, Americans blend tried and true with new.



But when looking at Gen Z, the trend inverted.





Recipes with online love:



Mac & cheese is the most liked side on TikTok at Thanksgiving, popularizing mac & cheese with Gen-Z who dominate TikTok usage.

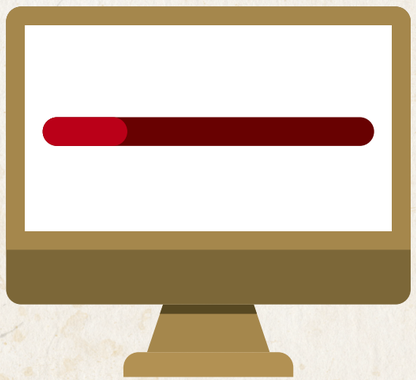
Source: TikTok. Most Liked Thanksgiving Posts in November. 2022-2025



Green bean casserole is the top trending recipe in Google search in November, ahead of cranberry sauce and stuffing/dressing.

Source: Google Trends 2025

AI is top of mind, though use is still emerging.

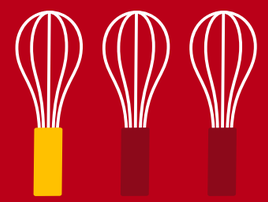


The new sous chef!

27%

of Americans have used generative AI to help with holiday planning or cooking, and interest is building — **22%** say they haven't used AI but would consider it.

▲ 5% POINTS SINCE 2025

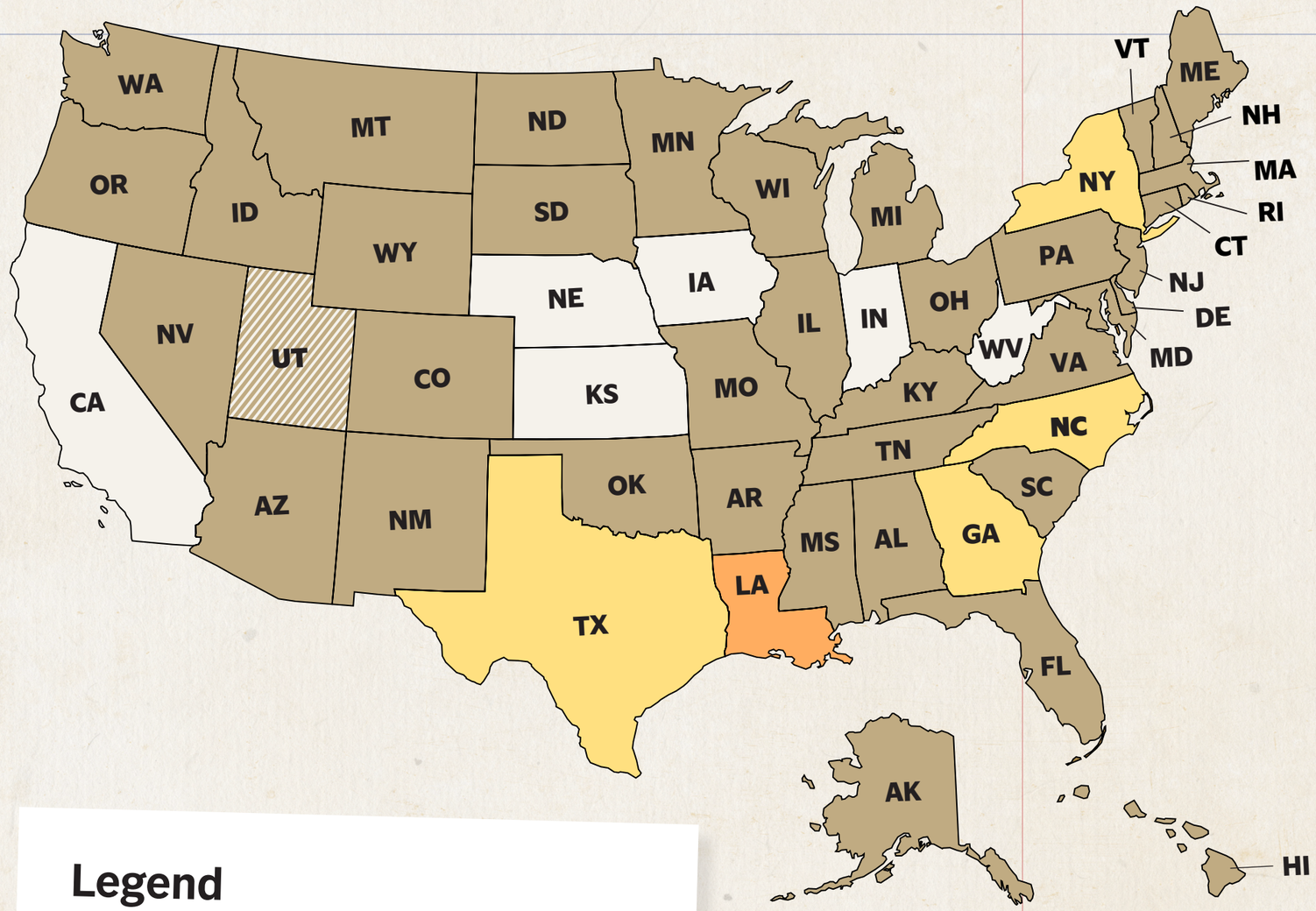


Surprisingly, nearly **1 in 3 Americans** would trust an AI recipe enough to try it for Thanksgiving without giving it a test run, and **31% of Americans** believe AI recipes give them a chance to be the best cook at Thanksgiving.



Younger generations are much more likely to use AI, with **nearly half (47%) of Gen Z** saying they have used AI to optimize or gain confidence in the kitchen, and **half of Gen Z** believes being tech-savvy gives them a Thanksgiving edge.

Regional Favorites & Preferences



Legend

- STUFFING / DRESSING
- MASHED POTATOES
- TIED FOR FIRST
- MAC & CHEESE
- YAMS/SWEET POTATOES

Florida and Kentucky don't do "a few" sides, they do a spread. These two states are the undisputed side-dish overachievers, Florida piles on a whopping 9.4 sides per table and Kentucky isn't far behind at 8.4, compared to a modest under-6 average nationwide.

Colorado and Maryland, on the other hand, are keeping it minimalist. With just 4.9 and 5.1 sides on average, these two states are still letting turkey have its moment in the spotlight.

Stuffing/dressing is in a league of its own. With the #1 spot locked down in 39 states, proving some traditions are simply unshakeable.

Mashed potatoes are quietly building an empire. California, Nebraska, Utah and West Virginia just joined the Mashed Potatoes fan club, alongside longtime loyalists Indiana, Iowa and Kansas.

Louisiana marches to its own beat. The state quietly crowned Sweet Potatoes/Yams the winning side.

The Midwest is green bean casserole's home turf, no contest. It's on 60% of tables, and Nebraska (70%) and Missouri (68%) lead the pack. 54% of Midwesterners call it the region's most iconic dish.

The Southeast's love for mac & cheese runs deep. It's on 67% of tables and almost half (42%) of residents call it the region's MVP dish. Georgia takes it a step further: 79% of Georgians serve it, the highest share anywhere in the country.

Mac & cheese's fanbase keeps growing. Mac & cheese is now the #1 favorite in New York, North Carolina, Georgia and Texas, proof this Southern staple has officially gone national.

Rising star!

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About the State of the Sides Report

Campbell's commissioned survey of 5,017 US adults 18 and over in the United States who celebrate Thanksgiving, with 100 Americans in each of the 50 states. The research was conducted from August-September 2026, by Reputation Leaders, an independent research organization. The margin of error is +/-1.4% for the national results and +/-9.8% for the state results, with 95% confidence