

## 2024 Thanksgiving Meal Prices Up Slightly in Arkansas for Some Shoppers

Families across Arkansas and the country are preparing to gather to give thanks for life's many blessings. Thanksgiving, celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, traditionally features a meal to symbolize and honor a bountiful harvest.

For many years, the Arkansas Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee, along with staff economists, have participated in an American Farm Bureau (AFBF) survey to estimate the average cost of a Thanksgiving meal for 10 in Arkansas. In this survey, AFBF breaks down the cost of a "classic" Thanksgiving meal and an "updated" Thanksgiving meal. The "updated" including ham, potatoes and green beans.

This year, a classic meal for a group of 10 in Arkansas is estimated to cost \$49.10, or \$4.91 per person. That total represents a 13% decrease from the 2023 average of \$56.52, or \$5.65 per person. Compared to national costs, the cost of a classic Thanksgiving dinner for a group of 10 decreased 5% from last year for a

### Thanksgiving Dinner Survey Items & Average Prices

Classic Menu Items	2023	2024	% Change	
16 lb. Young Tom Turkey	\$22.70	\$15.13	-33.34%	▼
Sweet Potatoes (3 lbs)	\$2.37	\$3.03	27.63%	▼
Fresh Cranberries (12 oz pkg)	\$1.89	\$1.83	-3.58%	▼
Fresh Carrots (lb)	\$1.38	\$1.04	-24.63%	▼
Fresh Celery (bunch)	\$1.72	\$1.05	-39.16%	▼
Frozen Green Peas (16 oz pkg)	\$1.12	\$1.44	28.57%	▲
9" Frozen Pie Shells (2 per pkg)	\$2.88	\$3.29	14.23%	▲
Cube Stuffing, Herb Seasoning (14 oz pkg)	\$3.05	\$3.99	30.81%	▲
Dinner Rolls (12 count pkg)	\$3.76	\$4.20	11.52%	▲
Pumpkin Pie Mix (30 oz can)	\$4.47	\$4.20	-6.08%	▼
Whole Milk (gallon)	\$3.69	\$4.23	14.51%	▲
Whipping Cream (½ pint carton)	\$3.54	\$1.92	-45.82%	▼
**Miscellaneous	\$3.95	\$3.75	-5.06%	▼
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$56.52</b>	<b>\$49.10</b>	<b>-13.13%</b>	▼
Updated Menu Items	2023	2024	% Change	
4 lb. Half Boneless Ham	\$10.87	\$21.20	94.99%	▲
Russet Potatoes (5 lb bag)	\$3.39	\$2.97	-12.49%	▼
Frozen Green Beans (16 oz pkg)	\$1.43	\$1.77	23.25%	▲
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15.69</b>	<b>\$25.94</b>	<b>65.33%</b>	▲
<b>ENTIRE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$72.21</b>	<b>\$75.04</b>	<b>3.92%</b>	▲

total cost of \$58.08, or \$5.81 per person.

Additionally, when adding the expanded items (boneless ham, Russett potatoes, and frozen green beans), that price in Arkansas increases to \$75.04 or \$7.50 per person, which accounts for a 4% increase from 2023 at \$72.21. Again, nationally when adding the increased menu items, the price increases to \$77.34, or \$7.73 per person, which represents a 8.7% decrease from last year's cost of \$84.75.

The cost per pound for turkey in Arkansas stands at \$0.95, a 42-cent decrease from 2023 (\$1.42), resulting in a 33% decrease. The USDA reports average turkey prices in 2024 at \$0.94 per pound, aligning the state with the national average.

The largest cost increase in ingredients this year is in the boneless ham. In 2024, a boneless-pound ham purchased in the state costs \$21.20, or \$5.30 per pound, compared to \$10.87, or \$2.72 per pound, in 2023. This represents a 95% increase year-over-year. State regulations, like California Prop 12 and Massachusetts Question 3, have increased the amount of space required to raise sows and may have led to a decreased sow supply. That, combined with the usual holiday season demand, may have driven up prices.

Ham was not the only ingredient that saw price increases. Cube stuffing prices rose by 31%, while frozen green peas and sweet potatoes saw increases of 29% and 28%, respectively. Out of the 15 items surveyed, seven items had reduced prices compared to last year. The largest decreases were in whipping cream (-46%), fresh celery (-39%) and fresh carrots (-25%).

Arkansas food prices remain relatively affordable compared to other states, however, price variations can be observed across the state and among different stores. Keep an eye out for promotional discounts to help mitigate increased costs this Thanksgiving.

The survey was conducted using statewide averages from members of the Arkansas Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee. These members surveyed food prices at grocery stores and supermarkets across the state and reported the "best in-store price" for 15 items, taking advantage of advertised specials, excluding discount coupons, and purchase requirements. While not a scientific study, the survey aims to provide a snapshot of actual prices across Arkansas, with data collected from Nov. 1-7, 2024.



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