Life

# LIFE — THANKSGIVING FOOD ROUNDTABLE

It's like I can almost smell turkey, potatoes and gravy wafting in the air. Thanksgiving is almost here, and the Life section is back yet again to share our thoughts on the best and worst dishes the holiday has to offer. See where we rank the classic bird, pumpkin pie and — Brussels sprouts?



**A Thanksgiving dinner table featuring roasted chicken. The food focused holiday is just around the corner.**

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**by Grace Mathieu** | CONTRIBUTOR | SHE/HER/HERS | gkm23004@uconn.edu

Growing up, my Thanksgiving dinner consisted of three things: a dollop of sweet potatoes, a little bit of turkey and a hefty serving of stuffing. Now, my family's stuffing isn't just bread, veggies and some arbitrary seasonings. In my house, we have off-brand French-Canadian meat stuffing, and I'll argue that it's the best variant.

The secret to French-Canadian meat stuffing is in the recipe ratios. A lot of the ingredients are one to one — one onion, one cup of water and so on. There is a 50-50 blend of ground pork and ground beef in the mixture, which adds an inherent layer of flavor that is just not achievable with dry seasonings.

But my family's not-so-secret ingredient is that we don't use potatoes like traditional recipes do. In lieu, we use Pepperidge Farm's herb seasoned bread stuffing. It's seasoned, simple and efficient — which is very helpful when you're in charge of the full Thanksgiving spread. The best part is that while the stuffing is considered a side dish, it's truly a meal itself within the meal.

**by Jaylyn Davis** | STAFF WRITER | SHE/HER/THEY/THEM | iue25001@uconn.edu

I've always been a mac and cheese person. When I was a child, I had chicken nuggets with mac and cheese for dinner every night. While I have much healthier and more diverse meals today, I still dedicate some meals for mac and cheese, one meal being Thanksgiving dinner. While mac and cheese is one of the sides for the meal, it's what I go for the most simply because I love the creamy cheese and vivid flavors that mac and cheese has.

Besides mac and cheese, I'm a huge fan of ham. Whenever my family and I have ham for Thanksgiving, I usually take a million slices, so I can spend more time enjoying the ham's delectable texture and flavor. It's also a nice alternative to turkey.

One final thing I really enjoy with Thanksgiving dinner is pumpkin pie. There are so many pies out there, but pumpkin pie has one of the sweetest flavors. It's also got a lovely texture like ham. Every time I finish my Thanksgiving dinner with a slice for pumpkin pie, I feel satisfied and relaxed for the night.

**by Sophie Shugrue** | STAFF WRITER | SHE/HER/HERS | hdc24004@uconn.edu

It's time that someone defends Brussels sprouts. I love Brussels sprouts because they can be tossed in any seasoning or sauce, adding a delicious burst of flavor while still staying true to its leafy smack. One could argue the same for green beans, but to me, green beans will always have that distinctive grassy taste no matter what you smother them with, and Brussels sprouts far outrank them in versatility. My favorite ways to eat them are in butter and cheese or marinated in maple syrup with little bits of bacon sprinkled over top.

Small enough to be perfectly poppable, Brussels sprouts melt in your mouth. It feels good to get my vegetable intake up with such a delicious green.

An overrated Thanksgiving food is pumpkin pie, but specifically its crust. When I was little, I would scoop the filling out of my slices of pumpkin pie with a spoon, leaving the crust barren on my plate, because the crust would always be dry in my mouth compared to the delicious filling within it. If it were socially acceptable for me to do so, I would eat spoonfuls of only the filling, but since it isn't, I avoid pumpkin pie altogether.

**by Suhayl Ahmed** | CONTRIBUTOR | HE/HIM/HIS | suhayl.ahmed@uconn.edu

The most recognizable Thanksgiving food is turkey, but, honestly, its most useful contribution is its drippings that make up the gravy. Gravy is one of the best dishes on the table. It acts like those 3x word squares on a Scrabble board: you can add it to every dish, from turkey to stuffing to mashed potatoes to mac and cheese. It elevates even the most flavorless, terribly cooked dishes. It turns that dry piece of turkey breast that sucks every last drop of moisture from your mouth into something tolerable, or perhaps even good.

But gravy's greatest strength is its versatility. Heap it on the mashed potatoes, lick it off a spoon or pour it in a cup — it doesn't matter because it'll taste good. I haven't tried it yet, but I'm fairly confident that adding gravy to ice cream would make it taste better, too.

Gravy is the glue that holds the meal together; the great unifier of the Thanksgiving table. Although the anti-gravy lobby might throw accusations of it being an artery-clogging indulgence best enjoyed in moderation, has Thanksgiving ever been about moderation? While turkey unjustly holds the spotlight, gravy does the heavy lifting every holiday season.

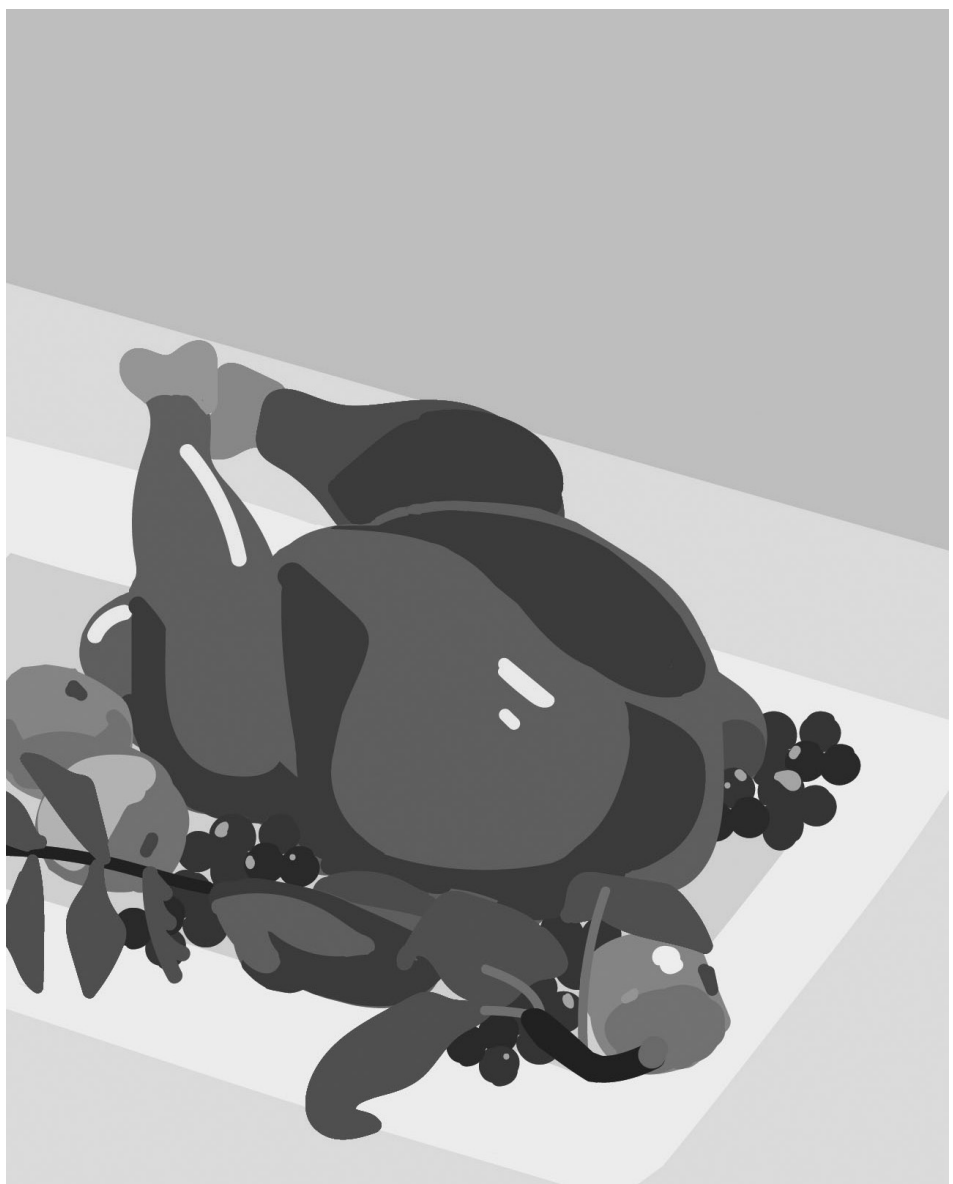


ILLUSTRATION BY KIRA YOUNG, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

**by Zayda Shevlin** | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | SHE/HER/HERS | fhy24005@uconn.edu

For a holiday that celebrates pies, we chose the worst pie to crown the iconic symbol of Thanksgiving. Pumpkin pie is the worst pie of all time and shouldn't even be considered a dessert.

A true pie lover knows that the dampness of an apple or blueberry pie, for example, balances the crunchy and dry texture of its crust. However, pumpkin pie has an abominable texture that doesn't balance with its crust and leaves your mouth feeling sticky and incomplete. Let alone the nauseating sensory nightmare that is the gelatin-like texture of pumpkin pie; the taste doesn't live up to the hype either.

I say, if sweet potatoes can be considered a side dish, then pumpkin pie filling should too. With a similar flavor profile, they would complement the same dishes equally. Pumpkin pie doesn't satisfy one's sweet tooth like something of an apple pie or an ice cream cone would.

I will admit the flavor and aroma of pumpkin is very reminiscent of Thanksgiving, but I don't see why pumpkin pie is the only dish incorporating the winter squash. Maybe a pumpkin casserole or a pumpkin mash would be more fitting, rather than letting its pie be the designated dessert of the fall season.


## SUBOG Weekly Events:

### November 15th - November 22nd

November 18th – Comedy Bingo @ 7 pm in the Student Union Theatre

November 19th – Asian Cultural Night @ 7 pm in BUSN 106

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu