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## Hawaiian Thanksgiving

In ancient times, Hawaiians gave thanks in a celebration called *makahiki*. It began in late October or early November when the Pleiades constellation was first observed rising above the horizon at sunset. It continued for four full months through the season of heavy storms and rough seas. Thanks were given to Lono, the Hawaiian god of rain and fertility. Tributes and tithes were paid to local chiefs who redistributed the gifts of the land. War, fighting, farming, and deep-sea fishing were all prohibited (*kapu*) during *makahiki*. It was a time for communal activities, competitive sporting games, hula, ceremonies, and blessings. And, of course, FOOD!



In 1849 King Kamehameha III shortened the *makahiki* holiday to one day: December 31st. This was 14 years before Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving to be a national US holiday.

Now, of course, since we're part of the United States, we celebrate on the last Thursday of November, along with the rest of the country. We eat the traditional Thanksgiving food, but often with a local flair. Popular side dishes might include Okinawan sweet potatoes, Portuguese sausage stuffing, poi, rice, laulau, poke, and macaroni salad.

If you've ever attended a luau in Hawaii, you might remember that the pig is steamed in an underground oven called an *imu*. A turkey can also be cooked in an *imu*, and is called *kālua* turkey!

**“Hau'oli Lā Ho'omaika'i” (Happy Thanksgiving!)**