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“Turkey is not always...”

Turkey with a side of mashed potatoes may not always be the staple item at Thanksgiving dinner.

“On the Loemker side we make sausage and sauerkraut,” said Anne Loemker, of Worden, Ill., when asked about her Thanksgiving dinner.

When Thanksgiving is talked about many envision a big turkey at the center of the table, decorated with different side dishes decorating around.

Some families never have celebrated Thanksgiving in the “traditional” way, while others may have had an “off” year.

“Before we moved home, Surf and Turf was our yummy family tradition,” said Kathy Ball of Edwardsville, Ill.

Becca Heil of Belleville, Ill. described her first Thanksgiving as a wife, “We had PB & J’s and wild cherry Pepsi. We were on our honeymoon in New York City, and we didn’t know where to look for a restaurant after the big parade. I cried all day!”

Having a big Thanksgiving dinner can be costly if making it all on one’s own, which is a reason why some have vetoed the traditional meal.

Judy Schroeder Steinmann, of Hamel, Ill., described the November holiday as a child, “We didn’t have turkey when I was a kid. We had guinea, goose, or duck; whatever we had running around out there on the farm.”

Depending on one’s personal values, could also determine what is on their plate on Thanksgiving.

“I’m a vegetarian, but that does not bother me on Thanksgiving because I have so many choices,” explained Erin Richardson, of Edwardsville, Ill. “I love all the side dishes! I cannot wait for green bean casserole this year,” said Richardson.

In some households, families begin the Christmas festivities a little early.

“We have the same thing for Thanksgiving as we do for Christmas. My uncle makes a ham soaked in Pepsi,” said Jennifer Antele of Maryville, Ill.

As the Thanksgiving holiday nears, may your stomach be full, and your day be full of happiness.