

# Thanksgiving Border Crossing 2025: Your Complete Guide

Navigate peak holiday travel successfully — know before you go

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Thanksgiving week creates the year's most challenging border crossing conditions. This guide helps you navigate peak holiday travel successfully.

## Enhanced Enforcement During Holidays

### CBP doesn't relax standards during holidays. Expect:

- Thorough document verification despite long lines
- Increased scrutiny of food declarations
- Random vehicle inspections are more common
- Zero tolerance for incomplete or inaccurate declarations

### Best border crossing times during Thanksgiving week:

- Tuesday morning (before rush begins)
- Thanksgiving Day itself (the quietest day of the week)
- Friday morning (most families still at destinations)

### Worst border crossing times:

- Wednesday 2pm–midnight
- Sunday 11am–10pm
- Monday 6am–10am

## Peak Traffic Patterns

### Wednesday before Thanksgiving:

- Heaviest southbound traffic from US to Mexico, northbound from Canada
- Wait times triple normal averages
- Evening crossings see 3–6 hour waits at major ports

### Sunday after Thanksgiving:

- Return traffic overwhelms all crossing points
- Afternoon and evening create gridlock
- Monday morning remains busy as travelers extend weekends

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## Food Declaration Requirements

Thanksgiving creates unique food transportation challenges. All food must be declared, regardless of preparation or packaging.

### Prohibited items:

- Raw meats and poultry (includes that fresh turkey)
- Most fruits and vegetables
- Unpasteurized dairy products
- Items containing meat (even baked goods with meat ingredients)

### Allowed with declaration:

- Commercially canned foods (sealed)
- Hard cheeses (properly packaged)
- Most baked goods without meat
- Spices and dried herbs

## Family Travel Considerations

### Traveling with children requires additional preparation:

- All minors need proper documentation (a passport or a birth certificate, depending on the crossing method)
- Children traveling without both parents need notarized consent letters
- Be prepared to explain custody arrangements if questioned
- Have contact information for all adults readily available

## Weather Contingency Planning

### November weather creates additional complications. Northern crossings face snow and ice. Have:

- Alternate routes identified
- Emergency supplies in vehicle (blankets, water, snacks, first aid)
- Full tank of gas before approaching the crossing
- Weather apps with alerts enabled
- Flexibility in travel timeline

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## Technology Resources

### Critical apps for Thanksgiving border crossings:

- CBP Border Wait Times (real-time updates)
- Weather apps for crossing area
- Google Maps with offline maps downloaded
- SafelyArrived — set your expected arrival time before crossing
- International calling capability verified

## Final Preparation Checklist

### Before departing:

- Check wait times immediately before leaving
- Verify all documents readily accessible
- Prepare your declaration list in advance
- Ensure vehicle registration and insurance are current
- Charge all devices fully
- Pack patience and realistic expectations

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