



Financial Frontline

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Hello! Below is the weekly Financial Frontline Information for 17 November 2011. This information is to provide you- the soldier, airman, veteran, retiree, family member or supporter of our armed forces financial readiness information. It does not replace the advice of your chain of command, your legal counsel or financial consultant. It does however, supplement, issues the National Guard Bureau finds important. Just so you know up front, I am not an attorney, a CPA, a financial planner or work for the IRS. If you have questions that are outside of my expertise, I do refer them to the appropriate person.

Did you know?

On this day in 1988 - Benazir Bhutto became the first woman leader of an Islamic country. She was elected in the first democratic elections in Pakistan in 11 years.

On this day in 1941 - Joseph C. Grew, U.S. ambassador to Japan, cabled the U.S. State Department that he had heard that Japan had prepared a plan to attempt a surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. The attack was "planned, in the event of trouble with the United States."

Thanksgiving Day Trivia

Test your knowledge on Thanksgiving Day:

1. In what year did the first American Thanksgiving celebration take place?
2. How many Pilgrims were on board the Mayflower?
3. The Native Americans who were invited to the first Thanksgiving feast belonged to the Wampanoag tribe. Who was the chief of this tribe?
4. Which drink was brought along in the Mayflower?
5. Which of the following foods was not served? A. Pumpkin pie B. Yams C. Vegetables D. Corn

Bonus Question: The Greek goddess of corn is?

You must answer all of them correctly to receive a booklet "A Salute to Smart Investing".

Food, Finances and Family

Everyone loves the holidays and spending time off with the family (well, almost everyone), but no one seems to like it when the cost of the holidays is much higher than just a year before. While overall inflation in the last year has remained tepid, buying the Thanksgiving dinner is going to be up considerably at the retail level in 2011 if the American Farm Bureau Federation is anywhere close to accurate. It is not just food that is higher this year. Gasoline is higher as well.



A classic Thanksgiving dinner with turkey, stuffing, cranberries, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, pumpkin pie, and the basic trimmings is going to cost 13% more in 2011 than it did in 2010. Thirteen Percent! If there was 13% real inflation we'd have real problems.

The average cost for a table of ten this year is expected to have risen by \$5.73 total to \$49.20. This sounds huge, but the Farm Bureau said this remains a bargain at under \$5.00 per person. It is also called a better value than fast-food value meals. If you go back to Thanksgiving of 2000, the Thanksgiving cost is actually up by more than 50%. Nice.

The big jump comes from the turkey, where a 16-pound turkey ran \$21.57 or \$1.35 per pound. That is roughly \$0.25 per pound more to total \$3.91 more for the turkey versus 2010. Whole milk rose by \$0.42 per gallon to \$3.66 this year, and the other large increases were in pumpkin pie mix, whipping cream, and green peas, with slightly higher costs in bread stuffing, brown-n-serve rolls, sweet potatoes, and fresh cranberries.

Those items which are said to cost less this year are coffee, onions, eggs, sugar, flour, evaporated milk and butter... which would have brought the average down by \$3.10 this year of the price hikes were not so large on the other items.

Unfortunately, even though gasoline is way down from the peak this last April it is higher today versus a year ago as well. A national average at Gasbuddy.com showed that the average gallon of unleaded gasoline was under \$2.90 around Thanksgiving of 2010 versus \$3.45 today with two weeks to go until the big day and with oil getting closer and closer to the \$100 per barrel mark again. If prices at the pump just froze then we have about an 18% gas price bump.

If none of that put you in the holiday mood look what I found:

The \$14 Stuffing Mix

Given that you can typically pick up a box of Stove Top for under \$3, this \$14 box of stuffing mix is certainly on the pricey end of the stuffing spectrum. The mix contains herb-seasoned croutons made from three different types of bread, toasted pecans and dried cranberries. Ever hear of day old bread?

The \$16 Turkey Gravy

Gravy tends to be one of the cheapest elements of the traditional Thanksgiving meal – but at \$16, the Classic Browned Butter Turkey Gravy is an exception. The gravy is said to have 'made-in-the-roasting-pan flavor and texture,' despite the fact that it's shipped frozen in a 14-ounce container. What a bargain! To save some money, try the juice on the bottom of the turkey pan or buy a jar of turkey gravy. I saw it on sale the other day 2 for \$3.00.

The \$50 Cranberry Sauce

This cranberry relish, may be the most expensive on the market – after all, its \$50 price tag doesn't even include a \$12.50 fee for delivery and processing. At 32 ounces, the relish contains a blend of cranberries, pineapple and chopped pecans and serves approximately 12 to 16 people. I don't know about you, but can you find 12 to 16 people that really like cranberry sauce? I prefer mine with the little lines on it, you know, the one that was forced out of a can.

\$55 Mashed Potatoes

Potatoes are a Thanksgiving Day staple, but at \$55, you won't find these Truffled Mashed Potatoes on every table. These fancy spuds, contain black truffles, truffle oil and cream and serve about 10 people. \$55 mashed potatoes? Are they nuts?

The \$65 Pumpkin Pie

"Velvety, mellow, and smooth," the pumpkin pie retails for \$65 serves eight to 10 people. Other fall favorites such as Southern Pecan Pie and Sour Cream Apple Walnut retail for the same price. It better



be more than velvety and smooth for me to dish out \$65 for some pie. I'm not Martha Stewart or Paula Deen, but I can read a recipe and make my own for about \$4.00!

The \$175 Turkey

No Thanksgiving dinner would be complete without a turkey, though not every turkey has to cost big bucks like this one. The 24 to 26-pound Willie Bird Fresh Organic Turkey retails for \$175 and has a delivery surcharge of \$15. (A 10 to 12-pound bird runs \$85 and also has a \$15 surcharge.) The turkey is said to have been raised on organic grains without the use of hormones or antibiotics and lived its life in the "golden, oak-shaded hills" of California's Sonoma County. I hope while it was in Sonoma County, it drank a bottle of vintage wine.

\$185 Cheese Plate

Cheese isn't a necessity for Thanksgiving, but it often makes an appearance. At \$185 plate is for cheese lovers with fat wallets. The collection contains about 3.5 pounds of cheese, as well as crackers, dried fruit, nuts and a sweet spread. I don't know about you, I love cheese. But for under \$10 at any local grocery store you can find some fancy cheese and crackers.

It's been... EXTENDED AGAIN!!!

In support of the National Guard Bureau, **Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), FINRA Investor Education Foundation (which is part of FINRA)** has once again provided us with the opportunity to check our credit score and credit analysis **free of charge**. From 15 September 2011 to **30 NOVEMBER 2011** every service member and family member alike, should take advantage of this wonderful service! Checking your credit through this site does NOT go against your credit history.

Go to:

www.saveandinvest.org/military

on the right frame is the link to get the credit score

Educator's code: **AAVN4QCT**

THANK YOU FINRA and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation for this wonderful program and supporting our service members!

A personal thought...

When I think of Thanksgiving, I think of Charlie Brown. Not sure why that is or if that is a clue as to where my state of mind is, but I think of Peppermint Patty inviting herself to a holiday feast, that was never supposed to be and yet, how family and friends all pulled together to create a meal. Maybe our forefathers didn't think Thanksgiving Day here in the USA, would be such an elaborate event as it is today. Maybe they initial intention was to celebrate the fall harvest. Now, Thanksgiving Day for me is waking up to the smell of dressing in the oven, Macy's Parade on television followed by my grandmother, who couldn't put lipstick on correctly arriving in our home, to watching the losing Detroit Lions on television, followed by the Dallas Cowboys, and my array of cousins, brother and I going through the "black Friday" advertisements and circling what we wanted for Christmas. That was 30 years ago. Now, my parents are deceased, my brother is in the Midwest with his family, my college aged daughter is with her boy friend's family and my dog Snoopy and I will be with family, friends and other loved ones. Being a part of the military lifestyle my entire adult life, I've grown to know, my friends are my family. When I spent 22 months in Iraq, I missed many holidays. At least that is what the calendar said. I would make the obligatory phone calls to loved ones because it was the right thing to do. I would go to Camp Liberty, or Victory, or wherever the most recent American



casualty was, and have dinner at the DFAC. It was always good. Oddly enough, dinner was never prepared by an American, it still tasted like home. Maybe the macaroni and cheese was runny and never baked and I prefer my string beans with some bacon fat in them, but hey, it was dinner. I spent dinner with those that would protect and serve my civilian presence in a combat zone. I was fortunate to eat in a DFAC. Many Marines and Soldiers ate MREs or a cold plate was reserved for them when they returned from a mission. Regardless of the food, it was the people that made Thanksgiving. So whether you're with Uncle Bob who continually says the same joke year after year, or Cousin Nick who thinks Thanksgiving Day football is a reason to finish that bottle of Crown and inevitably starts the argument over who's a better quarterback, look around. It's not the turkey, the dressing or the canned cranberry sauce that makes Thanksgiving. It's the people- your family, friends, and co-workers.

As we remember the faith and values that made America great, we should recall that our tradition of Thanksgiving is older than our Nation itself. Indeed, the Native American Thanksgiving antedated those of the new Americans. In the words of the eloquent Seneca tradition of the Iroquois, "give it your thought, that with one mind we may now give thanks to Him our Creator"

From the first Pilgrim observance in 1621, to the nine years before and during the American Revolution when the Continental Congress declared days of Fast and Prayer and days of Thanksgiving, we have turned to Almighty God to express our gratitude for the bounty and good fortune we enjoy as individuals and as a nation. America truly has been blessed.

This year we can be especially thankful that real gratitude to God is inscribed, not in proclamations of government, but in the hearts of all our people who come from every race, culture, and creed on the face of the Earth. And as we pause to give thanks for our many gifts, let us be tempered by humility and by compassion for those in need, and let us reaffirm through prayer and action our determination to share our bounty with those less fortunate.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Respectfully,
Jennifer

Until next time,

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