

Thanksgiving video message

I would like to share a beloved American tradition by wishing all of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

For Americans, Thanksgiving is one of the most meaningful holidays of the year, and it has a very distinguished pedigree: the first Thanksgiving proclamation was issued by President George Washington in 1789 and it has been observed annually in the United States since 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln declared it a national holiday. And Thanksgiving embodies values and practices that Belgians and Americans share. Thanksgiving is a day to get together with family members and dear friends, to share good food, and most of all to show humble gratitude for the blessings we have been given.

Thanksgiving also celebrates the diversity and inclusiveness of America, with Americans of all religious and ethnic backgrounds embracing it and making it their own. You may have heard about the traditional Thanksgiving foods – turkey with stuffing and gravy, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie for dessert. But many families adapt the menu to reflect their own heritage and background. Some Italian-American families serve turkey and lasagna, while Chinese-American families may choose to include rice dishes on the side. I can imagine that a good Belgian beer and a plate of chocolates might be on the Thanksgiving table among Belgian-American families.

The essence of Thanksgiving is thankfulness, and for me, as the American Ambassador to Belgium, it is an opportunity to reflect not only on the blessings and freedoms we enjoy as Americans, but also for the friends and allies that America has in the world. So this is my chance to say "thank you" to Belgium as well. The U.S. and Belgium share not just a rich history, with ties that go back more than 400 years, but also values and goals that will lead us to a more prosperous future. The Belgian-American partnership is one of the strongest on the planet, and at this time of Thanksgiving, I would like to convey the thanks of the American people for the support and friendship of the Belgian people.

Happy Thanksgiving and All the Best.

Watch the video at <http://usembe.ning.com/video/thanksgiving-message>