



Make Thanksgiving fun for both you and your dog. *crspx/iStock/Thinkstock*

I know my dogs make every day better. My umbrella might be mangled, my clothes might be soaked and my hair might look like a mop, but one look at my little Dodger and Daisy's happy welcome-home dance, and I forget that I am a walking rain cloud — even if it's just for a second! So on a day all about giving thanks for our loved ones, why wouldn't I want to include them in the festivities?



CAITLIN ULTIMO
3 months ago

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Sure, including your pet at the Thanksgiving table may be a bit much, but you can still make your pup a part of the party and keep him safe at the same time. Here are a few ways Thanksgiving can be just as much fun for your dog as it is for you, along with safety hazards and solutions from Ann Hohenhaus, DVM, staff doctor at [The Animal Medical Center-NYC](#).

Food For Thought

You probably know that [certain foods are off limits for dogs](#), but many of them may be present at your party. Here's a list of common dishes and ingredients to keep out of reach of your pups, or off the menu if

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possible:

- **Raisins:** A popular ingredient in stuffing and desserts, raisins can cause kidney failure.
- **Turkey Bones:** Any kind of meat bones can cause splintering within your dogs' digestive tract, harm his mouth, teeth and throat — and lead to emergency surgery.
- **Onions and Garlic:** These go-to seasonings may make your bird and side dishes super tasty, but they can cause anemia in dogs.
- **Nuts:** Tasty to us, but toxic to dogs, some nuts can cause lethargy and vomiting.
- **Gravy:** Anything fatty can cause pancreatic inflammation.
- **Chocolate and Sweets:** A well-known no-no, chocolate and other desserts can cause vomiting, diarrhea, increased heart rate, excessive thirst and seizures.
- **Alcohol:** Whether he has the dog years to be of age or not, alcohol can cause upset stomachs and liver damage.

Given the sheer amount of fare available, you may think the Thanksgiving table poses the most potential harm for your dog, but really, it can be your guests who pass along handfuls of unapproved scraps. Make sure you let your friends and family know that sneaking your dog a bite here and there can cause harm to your pet. If they know how much your dog means to you, they won't want to be the caught in the act!

If you are okay with your pet partaking in the feast, stick to foods that are safe for him to eat. "Turkey is fine for dogs; so are plain [mashed potatoes](#) and most green vegetables like Brussels sprouts," Hohenhaus says.

Set aside a bowl for your pooch and still try to avoid random handouts from guests. An over-stuffed dog can make for an upset stomach later.

Another dangerous hub for your dog during Thanksgiving can be the trashcan, Hohenhaus says. The trash contains the uncooked eggs, leftover bones and other ingredients your pet shouldn't eat. Typically the can is in the kitchen away from the party, so if your dog wanders in while everyone else is busy at the table, he may feast on the foods that pose the most danger to his health. Hohenhaus suggests you keep your garbage on the counter or in a closed location out of reach.

Fun For All

Pumpkin place cards, coloring sheets for the kids and music playing are just a few details that make Thanksgiving more than just a gathering centered around food. It's a day for everyone to get dressed up — or down — cook, eat and enjoy. For your dog, having a day with you at home is probably a huge bonus for him, but what else can you do to include your dog in all the fun?

Special treat: When you head to the store to pick up all of your Turkey Day supplies, make a stop at the pet store. Does your dog like bones or squeak toys? Pick him up something special — and festive — so that he has something new to occupy his time while you cook.

Dressed to Impress: Not all dogs like to be dolled-up, but some love the attention! Daisy will prance around in a dress any day, while Dodger tends to hide under the couch if I put a sweater on him. This year, I plan to take Daisy to the store so she can pick — or sniff! — one out herself.

Doggie dessert: There are many dog biscuit recipes out there that use pumpkin and apples as ingredients, so save the pies for the people and bake your pup up a special treat of his own.

Comfy place: My boy Dodger is super social and loves people and being a part of the party. Daisy, on the other hand, can be more timid. You may need to move your furniture around for the party, so your pet's favorite spots may get disrupted. Set up a comfy corner with a bed, blanket and favorite toys so that he has a safe space to retreat to if he wants.



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On a day where being thankful is top of mind, we can take a cue from our dogs. No one shows appreciation quite like them! Cater to their needs and spoil them with a little fun and your Thanksgiving will be one for the books!

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