12 Thanksgiving Brain Teasers

Riddles and logic puzzles for the Thanksgiving table — easy to devious. Answers at the back.

1. The Turkey Timer

EASY

Aunt Rosa's 16-pound turkey needs 15 minutes per pound in the oven and then 30 minutes to rest before it's carved. Dinner is at 5:00 p.m. sharp. What's the latest the turkey can go in?

2. Double Discount

EASY

On Black Friday a coffee maker is marked 50% off, and the register takes another 50% off the sale price. Uncle Lou says that makes it free. Is he right?

3. The Missing Drumstick

EASY

Grandpa came back from the kitchen to find one of the turkey's drumsticks gone. "All right — who took it?" Cousin Theo shrugged: "Don't look at me. I can't stand dark meat, and I'd never take the one nearest the window anyway." Who took the drumstick?

4. The Mislabeled Leftovers

EASY

Three containers of leftovers sit in the fridge, labelled STUFFING, CRANBERRY and MIXED. Your aunt mixed up the lids, so every label is now wrong. You're allowed one spoonful from one container. Which one do you taste to relabel all three correctly?

5. Handshakes All Round

EASY

Ten relatives arrive for dinner, and every one of them shakes hands with every other relative exactly once. How many handshakes is that?

6. The Pie Thief

MEDIUM

Grandma's pecan pie vanished from the windowsill, and one of four grandchildren took it. The thief lies; the other three tell the truth.

- **June:** "Lou took it."
- **Kip:** "June is lying."
- **Lou:** "Kip is telling the truth."
- **Mae:** "I didn't take it."

Who took the pie?

7. Who Brought What?

MEDIUM

Abby, Ben, Carmen and Dev each brought one dish: pumpkin pie, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes or cranberry sauce.

- Abby brought neither a dessert nor anything made with potatoes.
- The cranberry sauce came from someone whose name has more than three letters.
- Ben brought the pie or the potatoes.
- Carmen's dish was served last, after the main course.

Who brought the green bean casserole?

8. The Seating Chart

MEDIUM

Five relatives sit on one side of the long table, in seats 1 to 5; seat 1 is nearest the kitchen.

- Grandma sits in seat 1.
- Ty sits right next to Grandma.
- Ray and Bev must not sit side by side (football).
- Jo sits closer to the kitchen than Bev.

Who's in the seat at the far end?

9. The Turkey Trot

MEDIUM

Five cousins ran the Thanksgiving morning Turkey Trot.

- Joan finished ahead of Hank.
- Kate crossed the line right after Lars.
- Iggy finished second or fourth.
- Hank wasn't last, and Lars finished behind Hank.

Who won, and who came last?

10. The Empty Whipped Cream

HARD

Someone emptied the can of whipped cream before the pie was even served. Exactly **one** of these three statements is false.

- **Nell:** "Otis did it."
- **Otis:** "Pearl did it."
- **Pearl:** "I didn't do it."

Who emptied the can?

11. The Broken Gravy Boat

HARD

Grandma's gravy boat is in pieces. Two cousins are lying — the one who broke it and the one covering for them. The other two tell the truth.

- **Quinn:** "Rosa didn't break it."
- **Rosa:** "Quinn broke it."
- **Sid:** "Tess broke it."
- **Tess:** "Rosa broke it."

Who broke the gravy boat, and who's covering?

12. Pilgrims and Pranksters

HARD

At the harvest fair, every stall-keeper is either an honest farmer, who always tells the truth, or a prankster, who always lies.

- **Abner:** "Exactly one of us three is honest."
- **Bea:** "Abner and Cyrus are both pranksters."
- **Cyrus:** "We're all pranksters."

Who's honest?

Answer key

1. **The Turkey Timer. 12:30 p.m.** Sixteen pounds at fifteen minutes is 240 minutes — four hours — plus half an hour of resting: four and a half hours before five o'clock.
2. **Double Discount. No.** Half of half is a quarter: you pay 25% of the original price. That's 75% off, not 100%.
3. **The Missing Drumstick. Theo.** Nobody had said which drumstick was missing — but Theo knew it was the one nearest the window.
4. **The Mislabeled Leftovers. The one labelled MIXED.** Its label is wrong, so it holds only one thing — say stuffing. Then the container labelled CRANBERRY can't be cranberry (wrong label) or stuffing (you just found it), so it's the mixed one, and the one labelled STUFFING holds the cranberry sauce. (If your spoonful was cranberry, swap the two.)
5. **Handshakes All Round. 45.** Each of the ten shakes nine hands, which makes 90 — but that counts every handshake twice (once for each person), so it's 45.
6. **The Pie Thief. June.** If Kip were the thief, his lie would make June honest — and June says Lou did it, giving us two thieves. If Lou were the thief, his lie would make Kip a second liar. If Mae were the thief, honest June would be accusing the wrong person. Only June works: she lies about Lou, and Kip and Lou tell the truth.
7. **Who Brought What?. Dev.** Carmen's dish came after the main course, so she brought the pie, which leaves Ben the potatoes. The cranberry sauce came from Abby or Carmen (Ben and Dev only have three letters), and Carmen has the pie, so Abby brought the cranberry sauce — leaving the casserole for Dev.
8. **The Seating Chart. Bev.** Grandma and Ty take seats 1 and 2. Ray and Bev can't be neighbours, so they take seats 3 and 5 with Jo between them in seat 4 — and since Jo is closer to the kitchen than Bev, Bev is in seat 5.
9. **The Turkey Trot. Joan won and Kate came last.** Joan, Hank, Lars and Kate must finish in that order, with Kate right behind Lars. If Iggy were fourth, he would split Lars and Kate, so Iggy was second: Joan, Iggy, Hank, Lars, Kate.
10. **The Empty Whipped Cream. Otis.** Nell and Otis accuse different people, so one of them is wrong — and that's the only false statement. So Pearl is telling the truth: she didn't. Then Otis's accusation is the false one, and Nell is right.
11. **The Broken Gravy Boat. Tess broke it; Rosa is covering.** Rosa, Sid and Tess accuse three different people, so at most one of them is right: two of them are the liars, and Quinn is honest. So Rosa didn't break it, which makes Tess a liar. If Sid were the other liar, Rosa would be honest and Quinn the breaker — but the breaker lies, and Quinn is honest. So Rosa is the other liar, Sid is honest, and Tess broke it.
12. **Pilgrims and Pranksters. Only Abner.** An honest farmer would never call himself a prankster, so Cyrus is a prankster and his statement is false: somebody is honest. If Bea were honest, Abner would be a prankster and Bea the only honest one — which would make Abner's statement true, impossible for a prankster. So Bea is a prankster too, and Abner is the one honest farmer, just as he says.

Want a bigger mystery?

A new free floor-plan murder mystery every day at **roomformurder.com** — place the suspects, find who was alone with the victim. Free printable cases with answers at roomformurder.com/printable.