



Norman Rockwell



Audubon



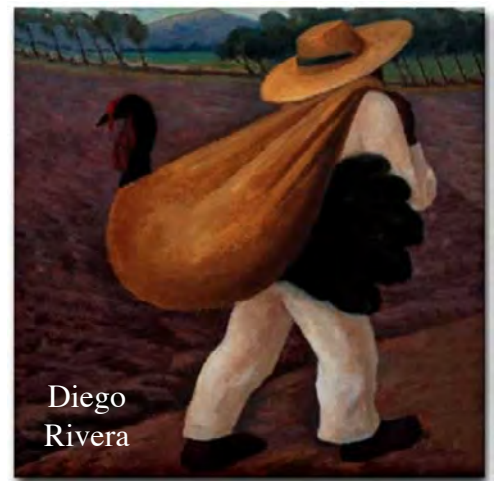
fingerpaint



Erin R. Burkett



Norman Rockwell



Diego Rivera

Did you know? The Thanksgiving and Christmas turkey originated in Mexico.

by Tony Burton

[[link](#)]

Strange but true; the bird now so closely associated with many festive meals is a direct descendant of the wild turkeys still found in many parts of Mexico. How is it possible that a Mexican bird acquired the name turkey?

The most likely explanation derives from the fact that the merchants who traded in the Middle Ages between the Middle East and England were based in the Turkish Empire and hence known as “Turkey merchants”. Turkey merchants are believed to have introduced the guinea fowl, a native of Madagascar, to European dinner tables.

Later, the larger New World bird, the present-day turkey, was brought back to Spain by the conquistadors. The rearing of New World birds gradually spread to other parts of Europe and North Africa. The Turkey merchants capitalized on the new opportunity, and began to supply the new birds instead of the guinea fowls to the English market, and the rest is history.

The first use in English of the word “turkey” to describe the bird dates back to 1555. By 1575, turkey was already becoming the preferred main course for Christmas dinner. Curiously, the Turkish name for the turkey is hindi, which is probably derived from “chicken of India”, perhaps based on the then-common misconception that Columbus had reached the Indies.

Mexico’s wild turkeys had been domesticated by pre-Columbian Indian groups long before the Spanish conquistadors arrived. Several archaeological sites provide tantalizing clues as to precisely how turkeys were reared. One such site is Casas Grandes in the northern state of Chihuahua, an area where modern, large-scale turkey-rearing is an important contributor to the local economy.



Wild Turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*
Painting by John James Audubon, 1830

Taste Of Art

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Date	Day	Time	Location
11/19	Thursday	7:30-9:30pm	Y Center

