



Should stores open on Thanksgiving?

A titanic struggle is taking shape across America this Thanksgiving.

Many high-profile stores (from CVS to Safeway to Big Bass Pro Shops) will remain open on Thanksgiving Day -- a choice, they say, is dictated by their customers' desires.

Nordstrom, Costco, Crate and Barrel, Marshalls and others will remain closed so their employees can enjoy Thanksgiving with friends and family. These retailers boast that they're more family-friendly than rivals.

This issue — should stores open on Thanksgiving? — divides Americans, too.

The Thanksgiving-before-Christmas crowd (call them Thanksgiving Firsters) believe in savoring Thanksgiving for its full 24 hours, without a distracting scramble for Christmas door-buster sales.

Christmas Early Birds, however, believe that stores should fling their doors open before the last drumstick disappears, the better for the Early Birders to display their Christmas shopping prowess and coast into the holiday season, gloating about how they completed their gifting mission in record time.

Since we believe in a free market, we applaud *both* stances. And we think *both* are family-friendly ... in different ways.

Retailers that stay closed gain the appreciation of employees who want to spend the holiday with their friends and family. Those that stay open curry the favor of millions of American families who, having scarfed down the turkey, gorged on the football and relished family reunions, suddenly find themselves in need of a place to ... escape from their families. You know what we're saying. Movie theaters are open. Why not stores?

Fewer people say they expect to shop on Thanksgiving this year than last, according to a recent survey by the National Retail Federation. But that could — and likely will — change. "You're done with dinner, you've got family in town, you're bored, it's Thursday night at 7 p.m.," said Kathy Grannis, spokeswoman for the federation. "That's the same mentality that goes into a shopper's mind every year."

Sure, we've heard a lot of complaints about Holiday Creep. Halloween barely has time to say boo before the pumpkin pies appear. Long before the turkey is gobbled, stores are Yuletide-decked and Christmas carols hark. But holidays are bound to overlap in this dizzying 24/7 culture, if only because Americans are restless, easily bored and ever vigilant for bargains.

Is Holiday Creep really so bad? Nah. Last year's collision of Thanksgiving and Hanukkah — the holidays fell on the same day for the first time in more than a century — didn't leave any welts, did it? Americans are masters of the multitask.

We understand why tens of thousands of people have signed a petition on change.org urging Target to remain closed on Thanksgiving. Employees at stores that open on Thanksgiving may not get to choose how they'll spend the holiday. And those who get the day off because the store is closed? We bet some of them will spend it ... shopping at *other* stores.

Thanksgiving is a celebration of gratitude — for friends, family, a bounty of blessings and ... challenges. Whether you're an Early Bird marauding the aisles or a Thanksgiving Firster reveling in a day of rest and feast, take a few moments to say thanks.