



Alex, 14

Thanksgiving is an American holiday on the fourth Thursday of November. I met Alex at a coffee shop. She and her father had been running together.

What have you been doing this week?

Well, this week my cousins came down from New York* and we celebrated Thanksgiving* at my house with the other side of the family that is in Charlotte.* We had a turkey,* and everybody brought something, like a dessert, and we all just sat at the table and had fun. And afterward we played games.

Are there any other foods that are Thanksgiving traditions for your family besides the turkey?

We always have my grandmother's broccoli and cheese casserole, which sounds gross* but it's really delicious. We had mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes.* My mom made her amazing orange-cranberry* relish, and this year we also had ham, which was different. We also had pecan pie and pumpkin cheesecake.*

What kind of games did you play?

Well, this year we played Wii* basketball and tennis.

Did you go shopping on Friday?

We went to Charlotte because it was my aunt's birthday, so we hung out with them for a while and watched the football game between Auburn and Alabama. My mom went to a bookstore for a while, but we didn't do any other shopping.

What have you been doing today?

Well, my dad and I went for a run together, and then we decided to stop and take a break here to get something to drink. It's a little cold outside.

How far do you run?

Well, it'll be five miles* after we run back home from here.

Did you do anything else this week?

Well, I saw the new Harry Potter movie, which is very good, with a lot of my friends. Tonight I'll babysit my little brother and my sister so my parents can go see the Harry Potter movie together.

Is there anything that you would like to say to kids in other countries?

Well, I don't know if we're that different* or not, but it doesn't seem like we are. I would like to say, well, good luck and have a good time with your life.

A Few Words

Thanksgiving: This is an important holiday in the U.S. on the fourth Thursday in November. Families usually get together, eat a big dinner, and talk about all the things that they are thankful for. People travel long distances to be with their relatives. There are many football games on television. On Friday, many people like to go shopping, and stores have special low prices to encourage people to come to the stores.

New York, Charlotte: It takes about ten hours to drive from New York to Alex's home in Greensboro, North Carolina. It takes about two hours to drive to Greensboro from Charlotte.

Turkey: This is a large bird that is native to North America.

Gross: This is an informal word that young people use to say that something is unpleasant or disgusting.

Sweet potatoes: These are a yellow root vegetable originally from Central America.

Cranberry: This is a red berry that grows in North America.

Pecan, pumpkin: Pecan is a kind of nut, and pumpkin is a kind of squash. They come from North America.

Wii: A video game system.

Five miles: About eight kilometers.

That different: Some people say "that different" as a way of saying "very different."

Discussion Questions

1. Alex mentioned several kinds of food (turkey, cranberries, pecans, pumpkins) that are native to North America. Have you seen or eaten any of them? Do you like to try new foods? What are the special foods at your family's celebrations?
2. Alex and her father run long distances together as a sport. In the U.S., it is not surprising to see a father and daughter running together. Would it be surprising in your country? What kinds of things do fathers and daughters usually do together in your country?