In Praise of Pilgrims

I recently came across an article that described what the original Thanksgiving dinner would have been like. It seemed to look down its long aquiline nose at the simpler fare of 1621, as if our modern smorgasbord actually could boast a superior culinary position. Today, typical meals include lavish, sweet pies made with vegetable oils as folks smear margarines across their white, yeasty, refined rolls. The vaccinated, domesticated, farm raised turkeys sit satiated with nutritionally vacant stuffing…often from a box.

Let me take you back to the feast that started it all. I'm grateful that we can imitate that 17th century wisdom and enjoy humble, pilgrim foods, even now, centuries later.

The Pilgrim's spread would have included organic venison, wild turkey, goose and duck. They had dibs on local seafood and cod, bass, lobster and clams could have been served, too.

Their thanksgiving feast wasn't infused with white sugars or corn syrup so don't expect to see bowls filled with cranberry jelly in the shape of the can or bright yellow, sweet corn. Instead, they munched on toothsome flint corn, which the Indians toasted.

Instead of rolls and breads made with from bleached and processed flours, expect to see hearty cornbread and sourdough bread.

Smart moms make these breads to this very day!

Pilgrims hadn't yet filled their gardens with potatoes, so instead they stewed and boiled their pumpkin with cinnamon,

ginger, butter and vinegar. Wholesome vegetables like radishes, carrots, beans, lettuces, parsnips and leaks would have been on their menu, too.

Likely, their seasonal and regional fruits, such as grapes and plums would have made a satisfying tart, seasoned with rosemary and cinnamon.

Yes, their foods were simple. Their foods were safe. They were not finessed and fussed, but they were wholesome, local, organic and smart. Animal fats and proteins were plentiful, tart flavors were added to the bland and their wheat was fermented.

Time may have provided us with convenient kitchen aids like the oven and Cuisinart, but good, nutrient dense, whole foods are not a fad.

Thank God.

May you and your family enjoy a happy and wholesome Thanksgiving.

Love,

