Your Thanksgiving meal is more international than you may think! Squashes came from Central America and the Andes Mountain region in South America. Corn was domesticated in Mexico; wheat originated in the eastern Mediterranean region; and potatoes came from southern Peru and northwestern Bolivia.

Most of the food grown and consumed in the United States originated in other countries. Blueberries, cranberries, and pawpaws are examples of foods that originated in the United States.

Around 70% of the food we eat crosses at least one national border before getting to our plates.

The Vaults for Our Future

- More than 1,700 seed banks worldwide safeguard agricultural biodiversity, ensuring farmers have the best seeds to grow our food.
- The Vavilov Institute of Plant Industry in Russia was established in 1894 and is one of the world's largest repositories of crop genetic diversity. During World War II, scientists at the institute died guarding seeds from the Nazi forces.
- The Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, dubbed the "doomsday vault," stores the world's most diverse seed collection. An international seed bank was destroyed during recent conflicts in Syria, but thankfully, many of the seeds in that repository had duplicates in the Svalbard vault.
- The National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS), managed by the USDA–ARS, stores seeds for nearly 15,000 species of plants in banks around the United States. Scientists worldwide use these seed banks to improve crops.

Sources: