

## Walmart giving 1 million employees who work on Thanksgiving extra pay, a turkey dinner and 25% off a future purchase

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While other major retailers are planning to start their Black Friday sales at 8 p.m. this Thanksgiving, Walmart will offer its first set of doorbusters at 6 p.m., the same time as Best Buy and an hour later than Toys R Us. But to soften the blow for its estimated 1 million employees working the holiday, the world's largest retailer will feed them a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings, give them a bit more pay and offer them 25 percent off a future shopping trip. *(Lynn Ischay, Plain Dealer file)*

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Not only are the hours getting longer, but more and more employers are requiring their employees to work on Thanksgiving.

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- In a long-awaited announcement about its Black Friday hours, **Walmart Stores Inc.** said it will open at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving, joining the **legion of retailers opening on the holiday.**

But to soften the blow for its estimated 1 million employees who have to work on Thursday, Nov. 28, the world's largest retailer is going to feed them a traditional Thanksgiving dinner during their shift, give them an extra day's pay, and offer them 25 percent off a future holiday shopping trip.

Calling Walmart employees "a critical component of our success throughout the year," Duncan Mac Naughton, chief merchandising and marketing officer for Walmart U.S., said Monday that Walmart will reward their hard work in ways it hasn't done before.

Because many Walmart stores are open 24/7 or nearly 'round the clock, many of those employees were already scheduled to work that Thursday. But they will receive wages for the average daily shift they worked during the previous two weeks in addition to their eight-hour shift on Thanksgiving.

"It's in essence an extra day's pay," Mac Naughton said.

Employees will be working extra hard for that turkey dinner, as Walmart has a number of promotions planned to "surprise and thrill our customers."

"Black Friday is our Super Bowl of retail," Mac Naughton

### **Retailers open this Thanksgiving**

- Aurora Farms Premium Outlets: Opening at 8 p.m.
- **Best Buy:** 6 p.m.
- Big Lots: 7 a.m.
- Kmart: 6 a.m.
- Kohl's: 8 p.m.
- JCPenney: 8 p.m.
- Lodi Station Outlets: 10 p.m.
- Macy's: 8 p.m.
- Office Depot: 8 p.m.
- OfficeMax: 8 p.m.
- Sears: 8 p.m.
- Staples: 8 p.m.

said. "And we think 6 o'clock (on Thanksgiving) is the exact right time for us to open the weekend. ... With six fewer shopping days until Christmas (than last year), Black Friday is going to play an even more important role for us."

- Target: 8 p.m.
- Toys "R" Us: 5 p.m.
- Walmart: 6 p.m.

The first Walmart door-buster deals -- the sales on highly desired items that have drawn long lines of shoppers in years past -- will be at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving, with deals to follow at 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. Friday.

Walmart has expanded its one-hour guarantee from three items last year to 21 this year. That means that any customer standing in line for a specific item from 6-7 p.m. or from 8-9 p.m. will be guaranteed to get it, either that day or at some point before Christmas.

Store maps showing where popular items will be sold in each store will be posted online at [walmart.com](http://walmart.com), and a limited number of wristbands will be issued to customers on some items, so customers can shop for other things between promotions. Walmart said store managers will be empowered to drop prices on in-demand categories from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, and that such deals may vary by store.



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Walmart announced on Monday that it was giving its estimated 1 million employees working on Thanksgiving extra pay, a turkey dinner with trimmings and a 25-percent discount off a future shopping trip.

Jae C. Hong, Associated Press

Walmart said it has also expanded its inventory of televisions by 65 percent, doubled the number of tablets it will sell, and bought five times more 700-thread-count sheet sets (\$24.95) than last year. **A**

**32-inch Funai LED 720p HDTV** that sold for \$148 on Black Friday last year will be \$98 this year. And **Garth Brooks' four-disc box set, "Blame It All on My Roots: Five Decades of Influences,"** sold only at Walmart, will be \$24.96.

A limited number of items, in smaller quantities, will be offered on [walmart.com](http://walmart.com), but the company is devoting most of its efforts to pulling customers into its stores.

"They certainly seem to be going all-out to get shoppers to come to their stores rather than the competition," said retail consultant Robert Antall, managing partner of **Consumer Centric Consulting LLC** in Shaker Heights. "I am speculating that they have made deals with their suppliers to be able to get the supply and the prices they are offering. This is kind of like 'The Godfather:' 'I am going to make you a deal you can't refuse.'" Walmart's size and power enable them to be able to do things other retailers cannot."

"Obviously Wal-Mart is not making much money on the specials, so they are banking on the customers

buying other things while they are there, and they are keeping the customers out of the competitors' stores," he added.

But as more stores announce their Thanksgiving hours, the number of petitions protesting the move on Change.org and other sites is also growing.

**Change.org**, which received more than 160 petitions on the topic last year, said **the number of petitions** is on pace to match or exceed that number this year. "We anticipate new petitions and signatures will roll in -- and likely intensify -- as Thanksgiving Day approaches," spokeswoman Shareeza Bhola said via email.

"Companies being petitioned so far this year include **Target**, the **Gap**, **Walmart**, **Kohl's** and **Simon Malls**. And this year even **Staples** and **Medieval Times** are opening on Thanksgiving.

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By opening its doors at 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving and offering deals throughout the evening and Friday morning, Walmart is hoping to draw the kinds of crowds that streamed into Macy's midnight opening at Fayette Mall in Lexington, Ky., last year.

Charles Bertram, Lexington Herald-Leader

"The employee who started the petition to Staples captured a common sentiment among the petitions, writing: 'I love my job at Staples (which is also why I've chosen to remain anonymous), but Staples is an Office Supply store. Do they honestly think people are going to be standing outside on Thanksgiving evening for bulk paper and pencils.

"I see no reason that Staples needs to be open on Thanksgiving other than pure greed. I'm very disappointed that Staples is not respecting one of the only days when its hardworking employees can relax and spend time (that is increasingly rare) with our families on this important national holiday."

Anthony Lazzaro, a Cleveland labor and employment attorney at **The Lazzaro Law Firm LLC**, said: "It seems every year the hours are getting worse and worse for employees. Not only are the hours getting longer, but more and more employers are requiring their employees to work on Thanksgiving."

"What it boils down to is they have to choose between the hours and their jobs, because **if they don't want to work those hours, they could be terminated.**"

He said that while Walmart's extra pay and discounts will no doubt be welcomed by those making minimum wage, "employees across the board would still prefer to be with their families than getting the extra perks, because that's what the holiday is all about."

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