

The \$35,000 Thanksgiving dinner

Philip Guelpa
27 November 2014

Manhattan's Old Homestead Steak House, an upscale New York City restaurant located on the lower West Side, is offering a Thanksgiving dinner to its well-heeled clientele at a price of \$35,000 for four, or \$8,750 per person.

The nine-course meal includes "an appetizer of squab stuffed with rich foie gras soaked in a \$5,000-plus bottle of Courvoisier L'Esprit Cognac," a "roasted farm-raised organic turkey stuffed with a dressing of 7 pounds of \$200-per-pound imported ground Japanese Wagyu filet mignon," and "mashed potatoes with \$200-per-pound Swedish moose cheese," "whipped sweet potatoes topped with \$1,600-per-ounce of Royal Osetra caviar," and more, according to *USA Today*.

"What we've accomplished is to give the most outrageous, over-the-top Thanksgiving experience for a party of four that we could think up," Old Homestead co-owner Marc Sherry told *USA Today*.

The dinner also includes tickets to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, limousine service, lessons at a luxury dance studio, and a \$6,000 gift card for Bloomingdale's.

Only three of the dinner packages are being offered, two of which were already purchased as of Tuesday. Ordinary diners at the Old Homestead may purchase a more traditional Thanksgiving dinner for \$65 per person.

Placing this extravagance in perspective, the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual survey puts the cost of a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 10 this year at a national average of \$49.41, or less than \$5 per person.

The contrast between the conspicuous consumption of the city's super-rich, the highest concentration of such individuals in the world, and the vast majority of the population is mind-boggling.

The cost of the Old Homestead's sumptuous repast is equivalent to more than half of the median family

income in Manhattan, which stands at roughly \$68,000 according to recent statistics from the Census Bureau.

In a study released last year, the city's Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) reported that more than 20 percent of New York residents live in poverty, defined as an annual income of less than \$30,945 for a family of four (two adults and two children), as of 2011. That is, in a given year, more than a fifth of the city's population were forced to survive for a year on less than the cost of the Old Homestead's Thanksgiving dinner.

Some 46 percent of New Yorkers survived on less than 150 percent of the poverty line in 2011. In other words, nearly half of the city's population was living in or near poverty.

Some 64,000 people, including 22,000 children, are homeless in New York City, according to the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, released by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in November.

Food banks around the city have reported a dramatic increase in the number of families desperately seeking emergency food aid following last year's cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps. In September, 60 percent of NYC food pantries and soup kitchens reported running out of necessary food items, and 37 percent had to turn people away altogether due to the food shortage.

New York City residents were deprived of some 56 million meals during an 11-month period as a result of the SNAP cuts, according to research by the Food Bank for New York City (FBNYC). Tens of thousands of poor and homeless New Yorkers will rely on free Thanksgiving dinners this year, provided by soup kitchens, homeless shelters and churches across the city.

The US is ruled by a decadent elite, easily comparable in its limitless appetites and delusional

social outlook to the French and Russian ruling classes
on the eves of the greatest revolutions in history.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact