

# So, what does it mean to be southern?

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Things are indeed changing in the South. And so is the notion of what it means to be "Southern."

In this most maligned and mused-upon of American regions, the term conjures a variety of images. Magnolias, front porch swings and sweet tea for some; football, stock cars and fried chicken for others; lynchings, burning cross-

es and civil rights marches for still others.

We've had the Solid South, the Old South and the New South.

But are we heading toward a "No South"?

As the South's population booms—projected to comprise 40 percent of the nation's population by 2030—a new Associated Press-Ipsos poll finds that the percentage of people in the region identify-

ing themselves as "Southerners" is slowly shrinking.

The AP-Ipsos poll conducted this past month found 63 percent of people living in the region identified themselves as Southerners. That mirrors a trend from a University of North Carolina analysis of polling data that found a 7 percent decline on the same Southern identity question between 1991 to 2001, to 70

percent. "Does it mean that being a Southerner no longer has any meaning? I don't think it does," says Larry Griffin, a sociologist at North Carolina who analyzed the AP polling data. "It just has a very different kind of meaning."

Are the qualities that have long been ascribed to the South really true anymore? Are Southerners really more hospitable than other

Americans? Does family really count for more down South? Are depth of faith, loyalty to home, reverence for history and sense of place identifiably "Southern" traits?

The South has become "sort of like a lifestyle, rather than an identity anymore," James Cobb, author of the newly published "Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity," would argue. "The things now we would base

Southern distinctiveness on are so ethereal."

And sometimes contradictory. In a region that once tried to break away from the Union, people are generally considered more patriotic than the rest of Americans; in a place where blacks were oppressed for hundreds of years, poll after poll shows them identifying themselves as "Southern" even more often than whites do.

## Government recommends turkey with trimmings, minus bacteria

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—When Thanksgiving arrives next week, people should be groaning from full stomachs, not food poisoning.

More than 200,000 Americans get sick each day from what they eat, and turkey dinner with all the trimmings complicates it all. The government is offering some tips to keep holiday cooking from becoming an intestinal curse.

At the top of the list is washing your hands often, followed by keeping raw food separate from cooked food, using a food thermometer and storing leftovers in small portions in the fridge.

"It's a little bit more dangerous, obviously, when you have large gatherings and food laid out like this," said Richard Raymond, the nation's top food safety official. "We tend to feast and nibble and snack all afternoon."

During a food-safety demonstration at a food bank, the Agriculture Department's undersecretary for food safety walked along a table laden with raw and

cooked turkey, stuffing, green bean casserole and pumpkin pie.

Raymond and Terrell Danley Jr., the chef at Washington's Creme Cafe, showed how to plunge a thermometer into the thickest part of the turkey leg. The government says the temper-


ature should read 180 degrees before the bird comes out of the oven.

That is easier said than done for people who look forward to a juicy bird. Chefs say the turkey can dry out at 180 degrees.

"I believe that's excessive," Please see **TURKEY** /4B

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