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Last week, it was Thanksgiving in the States and millions of families and friends joined around their feasting tables to give thanks for each other and their many other countless blessings. I on the other hand, for the first time in my life, was without Thanksgiving. Just in case you were unaware, Thanksgiving is a holiday unique to the United States and Canada, as Farmers' Day is unique to Ghana. Therefore, there are no great holiday sales, or fighting for the last turkey at the grocery store. I couldn't even find a non-baked cheesecake- one Thanksgiving tradition I was bent on keeping, until I realized it didn't exist here. I don't know why I thought Sara Lee had made her debut in Ghana, but every girl has a right to dream; especially when it involves graham cracker crust and lemon infused cream cheese.

Now, for the record, I knew that there would be no Thanksgiving in Ghana. When I decided to move I knew I was writing off the holiday, to a certain extent, along with other holidays such as the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Memorial, Day, Veterans Day, and, well, a host of others. And I was ok with that. It's like Frederick Douglass once said, "Without struggle there is no progress." And, yes, it has been a struggle to let go some of my most favorite holidays, especially the ones that involve my favorite foods. But the one thing I didn't account for is how much I would miss it.

When I lived in the States, I was never much of a holiday person. I never felt the need to go home for major holidays or strive to spend it with my friends in the area. In fact, some holidays I was perfectly happy sitting on the couch, watching holiday movies and eating my cheesecake, straight from the dish. One thing though, I think I did take for granted was the spirit associated with it.

For most Americans, Thanksgiving is the official kick-off of the holiday season. We start to busily run around and shop for Christmas gifts and plan our holiday menus. We buy tickets to visit family and then anxiously await the day and, most importantly, the extended vacation. And

then once we arrive at our destinations, we are even more anxious to return to the solace and familiarity of our own homes and friends for the New Year.

This year though, there was none of that. When I woke up Thursday, it was just another day. No one smiled and said Happy Thanksgiving as I ran my errands and there was no grand dinner to look forward to. In fact, my Thanksgiving feast consisted of homemade spaghetti. Instead of going out Thanksgiving evening with friends and family, I sat at the beach and drank a few beers. Fortunately, the girls' uniforms and hair were enough to keep me entertained for the evening. And sadly enough, there were no great leftovers. I mean my spaghetti was good, but it definitely is not what I am used to the day after turkey day. I guess, in the end, I learned that I am thankful that Christmas is an in international holiday. If it wasn't, I think I would have to pack my bags and come home.