

Hanukkah Traditions

We light the menorah. Hanukkah menorahs can be made of many different materials, including metal, ceramics, or glass. Some can be used with candles, others with oil. All have space for eight candles or oil containers plus the *shamash*. Some families light one menorah for the whole family; others light one menorah for each family member.

We eat foods cooked in oil. Fried potato pancakes, or latkes in Yiddish, and jelly doughnuts, or *sufganiyot* in Hebrew, remind us of the legend of the oil that miraculously lasted for eight days. Jewish cookbooks, newspapers, and Web sites offer yummy recipes for these and other Hanukkah treats.

We play dreidel. One of the most popular ways to celebrate Hanukkah is to play dreidel. (Directions are given below.) On each side of the dreidel is a letter representing one word of

the Hebrew saying *Nes gadol hayah sham*, meaning “A great miracle happened there.” (In Israel, they say, *Nes gadol hayah po*, meaning “A great miracle happened *here*.”)

We give gifts. Some families not only give gifts to their loved ones but also to people in need—perhaps a pair of gloves to the homeless or a toy to the children’s ward of a local hospital.



Playing Dreidel



Start with an equal number of tokens—pennies or chocolate coins called “Hanukkah gelt” in Yiddish—for each player. Have each participant put one token into the “pot.”

Give each player a turn spinning the dreidel—or *s’vivan*, in Hebrew. If it lands on:

- ◡ *Nun*, the player gets nothing.
- λ *Gimmel*, the player gets everything, and the other players refill the pot by each putting in a token.
- ⌒ *Hay*, the player gets half of the pot.
- ◡ *Shin*, the player puts one token in the pot.

At the end, the person with the most pennies or chocolate coins wins.



For Hanukkah songs and activities that will engage both young and old, go to www.behrmanhouse.com/family



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