

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – *Written by Linda S Trapasso*

Let's Celebrate Hanukkah!

Now that we've changed the clocks and the days get dark early, it's wonderful to have the Hanukkah holiday to bring us light! Light in the dark to show us the way forward. Light in the dark to give our hearts hope for the future. Light in the dark to bring us together in community.

So why do we have light on this holiday? First, the holiday is rooted in our history when Antiochus outlawed Judaism in 167 BCE. This provoked a revolt by Mattathias, a Jewish priest, and his five sons Jochanan, Simeon, Eleazar, Jonathan, and Judah ([history](#)). His son Judah became known as Judah Maccabee ("the Hammer") and within two years led the Jews to drive out the non-Jews. Judah's followers cleansed and restored the Second Temple by rebuilding its altar and lighting its oil menorah of seven branches that were meant to kept burning at all times.

Second, when the Temple was reclaimed, there was only enough consecrated oil for one day. But the oil blazed for eight full days! This provided time to find a fresh, untainted supply of oil. And this inspired the Festival of Lights or Hanukkah and it was proclaimed a



yearly eight-day festival ([history2](#)).

Here are some words and phrases for Hanukkah (test your [knowledge here](#)): Al Hanisim; Dreidel, Gelt, Hanukkah, Hanukkiyah, Latkes, Maccabees, Menorah, Nes Gadol Hayah Sham, Sevivon, Shamash, and Sufganiyot.



We celebrate Hanukkah at home by lighting the Hanukkiyah for eight nights. We eat food fried or cooked in oil. We give small amounts of Gelt traditionally or other types of presents in our modern day. We sing songs. We play Dreidel. We also do these things as a community by gathering at the synagogue or in each others' homes ([customs, meaningful](#)).

Here are some places to find Hanukkah music and songs: [Hanukkah Song and Music Guide](#),

[4 Hanukkah Songs](#), [11 Great, Modern Hanukkah Songs](#), and [YouTube](#) (search on "Hanukkah Songs").

For information on Hanukkah recipes, check out these: [Hanukkah Recipes and Menus](#), [Hanukkah Food](#) – Traditional Food, Menus, and Recipes, [Recipes for Hanukkah](#), [8 Foods You Didn't Know Jews Eat During Hanukkah](#),

[Hanukkah Food from the Tablet](#), [Global Fry: 5 Hanukkah Treats from Around the World](#), and [Exotic Hanukkah Foods](#).

And look over this list for Hanukkah decorating ideas: [The Best Hanukkah Craft Ideas on the Internet](#), [25 Simple DIY Hanukkah Decorations](#), [17 Hanukkah Crafts and Decorations for Eight Nights of Fun](#), [19 Hanukkah Crafts for Kids](#), and [Hanukkah Decorating](#)



During this Festival of Lights, welcome family and friends, celebrate with community, and find your way with the Hanukkah lights! *Chag Sameach!*

FYI... if you are interested in a book about Mattathias and his five sons, I just finished reading *The Rise of the Maccabees: A Historical Novel (Lions of Judea Book 1)* and *The Maccabee Rebellion: A Historical Novel (Lions of Judea Book 2)* by Amit Arad. This sets the Hanukkah story in context and describes the situation in terms of geography, politics, ambition, Hellenization, and more.