

Venture into Hanukkah



Hanukkah Celebrations around the World

In **North America**, Hanukkah is traditionally celebrated by lighting the *Hanukkiyah*, a menorah with nine candle holders: one for each of the eight nights of Hanukkah and one for the *Shamash* (or helper candle.) Giving a small gift to children on each of the eight nights is also customary, as is playing dreidel and eating potato *latkes* and *sufganiyot*.

In **Cuba**, plantains fried in oil — called *tostones* or *patacones* — are part of their Hanukkah celebrations.

Jews in Avignon, in southern **France**, make a toast with a bottle of local wine. They then walk to neighbors' homes to try their wines.

Jews in **Romania**, make menorahs out of potatoes. They scrape out potatoes, filling each space with oil and a wick.

The Jewish community of **Aleppo, Syria**, which is comprised of mostly Sephardic Jews, lights an extra *Shamash* (helper candle) on each night of Hanukkah.

In **Mexico**, children play a game called *toma todo* (winner takes all), which is similar to the version of dreidel that we play except the top has six sides instead of four. The *toma toda* dreidel is known as a *pirinola*.

Women and girls in some parts of **North Africa** have been celebrating "The Festival of Daughters" (*Eid Al Bnat* in Arabic or *Chag HaBnot* in Hebrew) for centuries. The traditions include lighting the Hanukkah candles, playing music, and dancing.

In some parts of **Morocco**, Jewish children spend the last day of Hanukkah going from house to house to collect the leftover cotton wicks that Moroccan Jews use in place of candles. At sundown, the wicks are ignited to create a large bonfire, and each community gathers to sing and dance.

Hanukkah in southern **India** is celebrated by making *gulab jamun*, a milk-based ball of dough that is deep fried and then drenched in sugar syrup. The treat is also eaten by non-Jewish Indians during celebrations like Diwali.

It is a mitzvah to place the *Hanukkiyah* outside for all to see. However, in parts of **Israel**, winters can be windy, so they make glass boxes to protect the flames. Some of Jerusalem's oldest homes have a shelf carved out of the home's exterior walls to place the glass boxes in.