

“Hanukkah” means “Dedication” in Hebrew!

חנוכה

In 198 BC, the powerful King Antiochus III, ruler of the Seleucid Empire, took control of Jerusalem. Initially, the Jews welcomed him because he gave treasures to the Temple.

In 169-168 BC, the son of Antiochus III, Antiochus IV, became ruler of the Seleucid Empire. Antiochus IV was a very wicked man, and he gave himself the name “Epiphanes,” which means “god manifest.” However, the Jews called him “Epimames,” which means “the mad man”!

In 143 BC, after the conquest of Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes decided to Hellenize the Jews to better control them, and he marched his armies against the towns of Judea. When the soldiers entered Jerusalem, their commander offered the people terms of peace and completely deceived them. Without warning, he launched a fierce attack on the city, dealing it a major blow and killing many of the people. He then plundered the city, set it on fire, and tore down its buildings and walls. They took women and children as prisoners and seized the cattle.

Antiochus Epiphanes sent messengers with a decree to Jerusalem and all the towns of Judea, ordering the Jews to follow customs that were foreign to them. He ordered them not to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, or wine offerings in the Temple, and commanded them to treat the Sabbath and festivals as ordinary workdays. The Jews were even ordered to build pagan altars, temples, and shrines and ordered to sacrifice pigs and other unclean animals on the altar! They were forbidden to circumcise their sons, or “dedicate” them to God, and ordered to make themselves ritually unclean. Antiochus Epiphanes wanted the Jews to forget the Torah, disobey God’s commands, and worship him instead. The penalty for disobeying the king’s decree was death.

When the Seleucid army arrived in Modi’in, the commander approached Mattathias the Hasmonean and tried to bribe Mattathias to be the first one to bow down to a

statue of Antiochus Epiphanes. The commander recognized that Mattathias was a Kohen (priest) and the commander thought that the Jews would follow Mattathias' example. Before Mattathias could do anything, a Hellenized Jewish man stepped forward to comply with the order. Just as the man was about to bow to the statue, Mattathias thrust the man through with a spear and also killed one of the Seleucidan soldiers. Thus began the Maccabean revolt, which had long been simmering. The revolt was led by the brilliant Jewish military strategist, Judas Maccabee. After fierce fighting, the Maccabees defeated the larger Seleucidan army and delivered Jerusalem!



Unfortunately, the Temple had been deeply defiled, and the altar would need to be cleansed before it could be used by the Jews.

God told us the process that was necessary to sanctify the altar and the Tabernacle:

Leviticus 8:10-11: "Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled the oil on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, the basin with its stand, to consecrate them."

Ever since, the Jews have celebrated this time of deliverance and called it "Hanukkah," or "The Feast of Dedication"!

P.S.: "Chanukkah" and "Hanukkah" are interchangeable! It's a matter of personal preference.

Hanukkah Traditions

Chag Sameach Hanukkah!

It is tradition to eat fried foods on Hanukkah because of the miracle of the oil. This includes potato pancakes called "latkes" (pronounced "lot-kuhs" or "lot-keys.") and jelly-filled or glazed donuts called sufganiyot (pronounced "soof-gah-nee-oht).

Gifts aren't usually given, except to young children, and even then, only the first night. More than likely, good deeds are done during the season or gifts are given to neighbors or to the needy. (This is also done at Purim.)

Another tradition of the feast is the Dreidel game, which commemorates when the Jews had to disguise the fact that they were studying Torah. They would gather in caves or private places, posting a lookout to let them know when the authorities were coming, and spin the dreidel.

The dreidel is marked with four Hebrew letters: Nun, Gimmel, Heh, and Shin. The letters represent the Hebrew phrase, "nes gadol hayah sham": "a great miracle happened here." In Yiddish, the letters stand for "nit" (nothing), "gantz" (all), "halb" (half), and "shtell" (put), which are the rules of the game! To start the dreidel game, everyone puts a coin into the pot. (Traditionally, these are chocolate coins called "gelt." You can also use M&Ms, pennies, or whatever your family chooses.)



Next, spin the dreidel. If it comes up "nun," nothing happens. If it comes up "heh," you get half the pot. If it comes up "shin," you add a coin to the pot. If it comes up "gimmel," you get the whole pot!



Lighting the Candles

A Hanukkiah has nine cups: one for each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, plus a higher cup in the center. This center cup is for the Shamash or servant candle, **and it is used to light all of the other candles.** Our Messiah is the "servant," and the other candles are the nations: Messiah is the Jew who gives light to the world!



After sunset on each night of Hanukkah (except for Erev Shabbat/Friday, when the candles are lit shortly before sunset), we light one of the candles in the Hanukkiah. On the first night, we place a candle in the Hanukkiah on the right. Next, we light the Shamash candle with a match. Next, using the Shamash candle, **we light the wick of that night's candle on its left side.** Let the candles burn completely down and replace them with new candles every night.

We continue this for all eight nights, placing the candles in the Hanukkiah from the right, but lighting the candle wicks on their left side.

Blessings

The first blessing:

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and inspired us to
kindle the Hanukkah light.*

Amen.

Second blessing:

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.*

Amen.

Third blessing, recited only on the first night (or the first time lighting the Hanukkiah):

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.*

Amen.

Hanukkah Devotional

First night:

- ❖ Read: Isaiah 51:1-4; Proverbs 6:23; Matthew 25:1-4; Proverbs 13:9; Lamentations 2:9; Proverbs 29:18.
- ❖ Discuss: The importance of a new understanding of what Torah really means.
- ❖ Question: What was the light Messiah brought to the nations?
- ❖ Prayer: That God would bring His light into any darkness in our own lives.

Second night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:1-24.
- ❖ Discuss: How living out the Torah is what makes us light in this dark world.
- ❖ Question: What does Psalm 119:18 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That God would open our eyes to see wonderful things in His Torah.

Third night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:25-48.
- ❖ Discuss: Having borders or fences to protect us is good, not bad.
- ❖ Question: What is the significance of Psalm 119:44-45?
- ❖ Prayer: That we may see Torah as what God has given us to protect us.

Fourth night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:49-72.
- ❖ Discuss: What do we value more: riches or Torah?
- ❖ Question: What does Psalm 119:53 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That we may learn to put a higher value on what God says, than on what man says.

Fifth night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:73-96.
- ❖ Discuss: The faithfulness and longevity of God's Word.
- ❖ Question: What does Psalm 119:89-91 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That God would settle His Word in each of our lives.

Sixth night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:97-120.
- ❖ Discuss: How God's Word is what lights our path, so we won't fall.
- ❖ Question: What does Psalm 119:103-105 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That the anointing of the Messiah would fuel the flames of our faith, illuminating the Kingdom of God to those around us so they won't fall.

Seventh night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:121-141.
- ❖ Discuss: Why does God's servant want God to go to work?
- ❖ Question: What do Psalm 119:125-126 and Psalm 119:135-136 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That we can comprehend our new identity, respond to the call to be lights, and recognize our servanthood to the King.

Eighth night:

- ❖ Read: Psalm 119:145-176.
- ❖ Discuss: Peace comes from Torah.
- ❖ Question: What does Psalm 119:165-167 mean to you?
- ❖ Prayer: That the Lord will help you to be a shining light in Yeshua.



Recipes!

Latkes



4 medium potatoes
1 medium onion
2 eggs
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups matza meal*
Salt and black pepper
(to taste)
Vegetable or other oil

Peel and shred the potatoes and onion into a large bowl. Press out excess liquid. Add eggs and mix well. Add matza meal gradually, while mixing, until the batter is doughy, but not too dry. (You may not need the whole amount of matza.) Add a few dashes of salt and pepper. Note: The batter may turn slightly orange, but that will go away as it fries.

Heat about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil on medium heat. Form the batter into thin patties, about the size of your palm. Fry the patties in the oil and flip when the bottoms are golden brown (about 3-4 minutes). Be patient; this takes a little time. Too much flipping may cause the latkes to burn on the outside without cooking on the inside.

Place the finished latkes on paper towels to drain. Serve hot with sour cream, applesauce, or a favorite topping. Latkes will reheat in the microwave.

*You can also use regular flour, gluten-free flour, or breadcrumbs.

Sufganiyot



Dough:

1 cup milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 1 tsp. granulated sugar; divided

1 packet (or 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp) active dry yeast

4 cups flour, plus more if needed

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp kosher salt

6 tbsps melted butter

2 large eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

Vegetable oil for frying

Glaze:

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk

2 cups powdered sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

Coat a large bowl with cooking spray and set aside. Microwave milk in a small, microwave-safe bowl until lukewarm (approx. 40 seconds), Add a tsp of sugar and stir to dissolve. Sprinkle mixture over yeast and let it sit until frothy (approx. 8 mins).

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour and salt. In a large bowl, mix together remaining sugar, butter, eggs, and vanilla with a wooden spoon. Stir until a shaggy dough is formed. Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead until elastic and only slightly tacky, adding more flour a tsp at a time if needed (approx. 5 mins).

Pat the dough into a tight ball and place dough in the oiled bowl. Cover with a clean dish cloth and let the dough rise in a warm spot in your kitchen until it's doubled in size (approx. 1 hour).

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Punch down the dough and then turn it onto a lightly floured work surface. Roll out into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick rectangle. Using a donut cutter or 3" or 1" biscuit cutters, cut out the donuts and donut holes. Re-knead scraps, roll out, and cut them into donuts and/or donut holes. Place the donuts and donut holes, if any, onto baking sheets; cover with dish cloth, and let them rise again (approx. 40 mins.)

Make the glaze: in a large bowl, whisk together milk, powdered sugar, and vanilla; set aside.

In a large, Dutch oven over medium heat, heat 2" oil to 350°, Cook donuts in batches, until deeply golden brown on both sides (approx. 1 min per side). The donut holes will cook even faster!

Transfer the donuts to a paper-towel lined baking sheet to drain and cool slightly. Dip them into the glaze and place on a cooling rack -or eat them immediately!