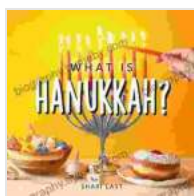


Your Guide To The Fun Traditions Of The Jewish Festival Of Lights

As the winter nights draw in and the air fills with a crisp chill, the Jewish people around the world prepare to celebrate one of their most beloved holidays: Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights. It is a time for family, reflection, and the celebration of resilience in the face of adversity.



What is Hanukkah?: Your guide to the fun traditions of the Jewish Festival of Lights (Jewish Holiday Series)

by Shari Last

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees, a small band of Jewish rebels, over the oppressive Syrian-Greek empire in the 2nd century BCE. After reclaiming their temple in Jerusalem, the Maccabees found only one jar of pure olive oil to light the eternal flame. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight nights instead of the expected one, a symbol of hope and divine intervention.

Today, Hanukkah is celebrated over eight days and nights with a variety of cherished traditions that bring joy and warmth to families and communities.

From the lighting of the menorah to the spinning of the dreidel, each custom has its own unique history and significance.

The Lighting of the Menorah

The central ritual of Hanukkah is the lighting of the menorah, a nine-branched candelabrum. On each night of the holiday, a new candle is lit, starting with the rightmost candle on the first night and progressing to the leftmost candle on the last night. A special candle, called the shamash, is used to light the others, and is placed at a higher elevation than the rest.

The menorah represents the miracle of the oil that burned for eight nights. It is also a symbol of the victory of light over darkness, both physically and spiritually. The menorah is typically placed in a window or doorway, where it can be seen by passersby, to share the message of Hanukkah with the wider community.

The Dreidel Game

Another popular Hanukkah tradition is the dreidel game. A dreidel is a four-sided spinning top with Hebrew letters inscribed on each side: nun, gimel, hey, and shin. These letters stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Haya Sham," which means "A great miracle happened there."

The dreidel game is played by spinning the top and betting on which letter will land face up. The winner of each round collects a pot of coins or candy, and the game continues until all the coins or candy have been won.

The dreidel game is a fun and engaging way for children to learn about Hanukkah and its traditions. It is also a symbol of the holiday's message of

hope and resilience, as it reminds us that even in the darkest of times, miracles can happen.

Hanukkah Food

No Hanukkah celebration would be complete without delicious food! Traditional Hanukkah dishes are often fried in oil to commemorate the miracle of the oil that burned for eight nights.

Some of the most popular Hanukkah foods include:

- Latkes: Potato pancakes served with applesauce or sour cream
- Sufganiyot: Jelly-filled donuts
- Hamantaschen: Triangular pastries filled with fruit or poppy seeds
- Rugelach: Crescent-shaped pastries filled with jam or nuts

Hanukkah Games and Activities

In addition to the traditional Hanukkah customs, there are many other games and activities that families and communities enjoy during the holiday season.

Some of the most popular Hanukkah games and activities include:

- Hanukkah charades or Pictionary
- Dreidel tournaments
- Hanukkah-themed crafts, such as making menorahs or dreidels
- Hanukkah concerts or plays

Hanukkah is a time for joy, celebration, and reflection. It is a holiday that brings families and communities together to celebrate the victory of light over darkness, and to remember the resilience of the Jewish people in the face of adversity.

Whether you are lighting the menorah, playing the dreidel game, or simply enjoying time with loved ones, we wish you a happy and meaningful Hanukkah!



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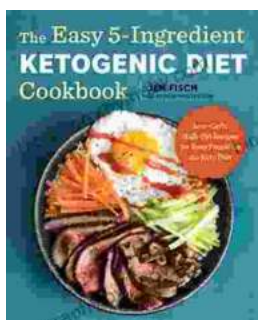
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