

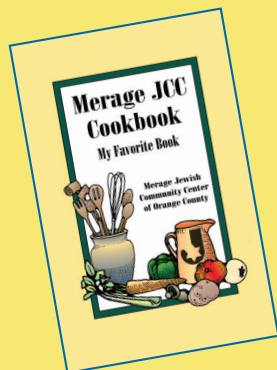
## Sweet Potato Latkes

2 lbs. sweet potatoes (about 2 large or 3 medium), coarsely shredded  
1 medium onion, finely chopped  
4 eggs, beaten  
2/3 C. all purpose flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1 1/2 salt  
1 tsp. cumin (optional)  
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)  
vegetable oil for frying



In a large bowl, combine the shredded sweet potatoes, onion, eggs, flour, baking powder and salt. (And if you're using the cumin and cayenne pepper, mix them in too). Toss everything together until it's very well mixed. Let sit at room temperature for about 10 minutes before using to allow the sweet potato to begin to soften. When ready to cook, pour vegetable oil into a large skillet to a depth of about 1/4-inch. Place over medium heat. When a shred of sweet potato dropped into the oil sizzles immediately, it is ready to use. Drop the sweet potato mixture into the hot oil by heaping tablespoons (smaller is better for these) and pat down very gently with the back of the spoon. Resist the urge to squish the mixture down while it cooks or to make the latkes neat and tidy - the raggedy edges are deliciously crisp. Cook until golden brown - about 1 1/2-2 minutes per side, turning over once. Place on a rack over a cookie sheet and keep warm in 250° oven until ready to serve. Makes about 24 2-inch latkes.

Recipe from Jeannine Shill, *The Merage JCC Cookbook*.



### MERAGE JCC COOKBOOK

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## How to Play Dreidel

A popular Chanukah game is **dreidel**, played with a four-sided top, each side with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The letters are *nun*, *gimmel*, *hey* and *shin* representing the phrase "nes gadol haya sham" (a great miracle happened there). • Each player begins with an even amount of small tokens such as pennies or nuts and puts one into the "pot" before starting a game. • Take turns spinning the dreidel. If you land on a *gimmel* (ג) you get all of what is in the pot; on a *nun* (נ) you get nothing; on a *hey* (ה) you get half the pot; and on a *shin* (ש) you put one more token in the pot. • Continue playing until one person wins by collecting all the tokens in

the pot.

**Fun tip:** If you play with Chanukah gelt (chocolate coins), you can eat your winnings when the game ends!



### HOLIDAY HOURS

Sunday, Jan. 1, 2012 8 a.m.-1 p.m.



**Merage Jewish Community Center  
of Orange County**

One Federation Way, Suite 200

Irvine, CA 92603

(949) 435-3400 • www.jccoc.org



**CHANUKAH - The Festival of Lights**

**Merage  
Jewish Community Center  
of Orange County**

# CHANUKAH - The Festival of Lights

Dec. 20 (first candle) - Dec. 27 (eighth candle), 2011 • Kislev 25 - Tevet 2, 5772

## WHY DO WE CELEBRATE?

**Chanukah**, or Festival of Rededication, celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its defilement by the Syrian Greeks in 165 BCE. Although it is a late addition to the Jewish liturgical calendar, the eight-day festival of Chanukah has become a beloved and joyous holiday. It is also known as the Festival of Lights and takes place in December, at the time of year when the days are the shortest in the northern hemisphere.

## HISTORY

Beginning in 168 BCE, the Jews of Judea rose up in revolt against the oppression of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Selucid Empire. The military leader of the first phase of the revolt was Judah the Maccabee, the eldest son of the priest Mattiyahu (Mattathias). In the autumn of 165 BCE, Judah and his followers were able to reclaim the Temple in Jerusalem, which had been turned into a pagan shrine. They cleansed and rededicated it. This event was observed in an eight-day celebration. Rabbinic tradition ascribes the length of the festival to a miraculous bottle of oil that burned for eight days, when it was expected to last for only one.

## AT HOME

Much of the activity of Chanukah takes place at home. Central to the holiday is the lighting of the **chanukiah**, a nine-branched candelabrum to which one candle is added on each day of the holiday until it is ablaze with light on the eighth day. In commemoration of the legendary bottle of oil, it is traditional to eat foods fried in oil. The most familiar Chanukah foods are the European (Ashkenazi) potato pancakes, or **latkes**, and the Israeli favorite, jelly donuts or **sufganiot**.

## THEOLOGY AND THEMES

Chanukah is a holiday that celebrates the liberation from oppression. It also celebrates the freedom of worship and religion, a value that resonates with American values as well.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

Since Chanukah is not Biblically ordained, it is considered a minor festival. However, it has become one of the most beloved of Jewish holidays. In an act of defiance against those in the past and the present who would oppress Jews or Jewish practice, the observance of Chanukah has assumed a visible community aspect. Jews will often gather for communal celebrations and public candle lighting. At such celebrations, Chanukah songs are sung and traditional games such as spinning of tops, or **dreidel** are played.

Adapted from [www.myjewishlearning.com](http://www.myjewishlearning.com) Text and contents courtesy of Peninsula Jewish Community Center, Foster City, CA.



1<sup>st</sup> night



2<sup>nd</sup> night



3<sup>rd</sup> night



4<sup>th</sup> night



5<sup>th</sup> night



6<sup>th</sup> night



7<sup>th</sup> night



8<sup>th</sup> night

## HOW TO LIGHT THE CHANUKIAH

(The special nine-branched *Menorah*)

1. Load the candles from right to left. One candle (the *shamash*) is used to light the other candles. The *shamash* is placed in a candle-holder slightly elevated from the other candles.
2. Light the *shamash*. On the first night, say Blessings 1, 2 & 3. On all other nights, say Blessings 1 & 2.
3. Light the candles from left to right, the newest candle first. Add a candle each night until all eight candles, plus the *shamash* are lit on the eighth night.
4. Enjoy!

## Chanukah Blessings

1. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד  
הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melch HaOlam Asher Kidshanu B'Mitzvotav, V'Tzivanu L'Hadlik Ner Shel Chanukah.*

Praised are You, the Eternal One, Sovereign of the Cosmos, who has made us holy with sacred obligations and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

2. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד  
הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ  
בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

5 *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melch HaOlam She'Asah Nisim La'Avoteinu, BaYamim HaHem Baz'man HaZeh.*

Praised are You, the Eternal One, Sovereign of the Cosmos, who performed miracles for our ancestors in days of old at this time of year.

3. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד  
הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחֲיָנוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ  
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melch HaOlam Shehechianu, V'Kiamanu, V'Higianu Laz'man HaZeh.*

Praised are You, the Eternal One, Sovereign of the Cosmos, who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.