

Definition: **Hanukkah** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(Chanukah or Feast of Lights) Eight-day festival celebrated in Judaism. It commemorates the re-dedication of the Jerusalem Temple in 165 bc and the miracle of a one-day supply of oil lasting for eight days.



Image from: [A menorah is one of the most widely... in Religious Holidays & Calendars](#)

Summary Article: **Hanukkah (Chanukah)**

From *Cultural Studies: Holidays Around the World*

Hanukkah commemorates the successful rebellion of the Jews against the Syrians in the Maccabean War of 162 B.C.E., but the military associations of this festival are played down. What is really being celebrated is the survival of Judaism. After the Jews' victory, they ritually cleansed and rededicated the Temple, then relit the menorah (“perpetual lamp”); hence one of the other names for this celebration, the **Feast of Dedication** (Hanukkah means “dedication” in Hebrew). The story is told that although there was only enough consecrated oil to keep the lamp burning for one day and it would take eight days to get more, the small bottle of oil miraculously lasted for the entire eight days. It is for this reason that Hanukkah is also known as the **Feast of Lights**.

Jewish families today celebrate this holiday by lighting a special Hanukkah menorah, a candelabrum with holders for eight candles, one for each day of celebration, plus a ninth, the shamash, “server,” used to light the others. One candle is lit on the first night, two on the second, three on the third, through to the eighth night when all are lit. A special prayer is recited during the lighting, and while the candles burn it is a time for songs and games, including the four-sided toy called the dreidel. Other customs include the giving of gifts, especially to children, and decorating the home—something like the CHRISTMAS celebrations in Christian homes around this same time of year.

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Hanukkah (Chanukah). (2018). In P. Jaikumar (Ed.), *Holidays around the world: detailing more than 3,400 observances from all 50 states and more than 100 nations : a compendious reference guide to popular, ethnic, religious, national, and ancient holidays, festivals, celebrations, commemorations, holy days, feasts, and fasts, including contact information and websites. Supplemented by special sections on words relating to time, calendar systems, phases of the moon, the world's major living religions, facts about the U.S. states and territories, legal holidays by state, facts about the U.S. presidents, facts about countries around the world, legal holidays by country, tourism information sources ; and by an annotated bibliography and chronological, historic, folkloric, calendar, promotional, sports, and subject indexes* (6th ed.). Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, Inc. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hanukkah>



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