

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

**HANUKKAH—FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**  
(late November to late December)

**1. What is Hanukkah?** Hanukkah is an 8-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.

**2. When is Hanukkah?**

Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar.

The festival is observed by the kindling of the lights of a unique candelabrum, the nine-branched *Menorah* or *Hanukiah*, one additional light on each night of the holiday, progressing to eight on the final night. The typical Menorah consists of eight branches with an additional raised branch. The extra light is called a *shamash* (Hebrew: שמש, "attendant")<sup>[1]</sup> and is given a distinct location, usually above or below the rest. The purpose of the *shamash* is to have a light available for use, as using the Hanukkah lights themselves is forbidden.



A Hanukkiya or Hanukkah Menorah

The holiday is celebrated beginning the 25th day of the month of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar, which is currently in the year 5762. Hanukkah usually falls in the month of December on the Gregorian calendar.

This year, Hanukkah begins at sunset today and continues until sunset Dec. 17.

Is Hanukkah like Christmas?

“Hanukkah is a minor festival,” Causey says. American Jews make a bigger celebration of Hanukkah than Jews in other countries because Christmas is so prominent here, she says.

“It’s been celebrated more in the past 75 years or so because of competition from Christmas,” Causey says. “We didn’t want our children to be left out.”

Major Jewish holidays are Rosh Hashana (the start of the New Year on the Hebrew calendar), Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) and Passover (the celebration of the deliverance from slavery of the Jewish people in Egypt).

<b>Official name</b>	Hebrew: חנוכה or חנוכה English translation: "Establishing" or "Dedication" (of the Temple in Jerusalem)
<b>Also called</b>	Festival of Lights, Festival of Dedication
<b>Observed by</b>	Jews
<b>Type</b>	Jewish
<b>Significance</b>	The Maccabees successfully rebelled against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. According to the Talmud, a late text, the Temple was purified and the wicks of the menorah miraculously burned for eight days, even though there was only enough sacred oil for one day's lighting.
<b>Begins</b>	25 Kislev
<b>Ends</b>	2 Tevet or 3 Tevet
<b>2012 date</b>	Sunset, December 8 to nightfall, December 16