

The Menorah:

Candles are lit on a menorah, or Chanukiah, in Hebrew. A kosher menorah must have space for eight candles all lined up in a straight row. All eight candles must have the same height. A ninth, extra, space must be raised above the other eight candle branches.

So, the fancy candelabra you may have received from your grandmother may look pretty but it may not be suitable for performing the mitzvah of lighting candles of Hanukah.

Jews light the Hanukah menorah in memory of the Menorah which was used in the Temple. The Temple's Menorah was made from one piece of gold. Each of its *seven* branches, representing the days of the week, were topped by a container that held the oil that fueled the flames. The Menorah was lit on a daily basis by a *Kohen*, a Jew of priestly descent.

The Shamash: The Shamash, is the lead candle that lights all other candles. If the Hanukah menorah does not have a raised Shamash, it is not considered kosher and should not be used. Even though electric menorahs are widely used, they are not a kosher alternative.

Candles vs. Oil & Wick: Most menorahs use candles, but some take oil and wicks. Choose which ever you like best. Oil and wicks are more authentic, but candles give more light and are less trouble than oil.

First Night: On the first night of the Hanukah, the first candle is placed to the far right of the menorah. Each candle should reflect how many nights have passed. On each consecutive night, one additional candle is placed to the left of the candle lit on the previous night.

How To Light: Use the *Shamash* to light the candles from left to right, always lighting the new candle first. When you are finished, put the Shamash back in its holder.

Blessings: Two blessings are recited each night of Hanukah. On the first night one additional bracha, or blessing is recited.

First Blessing: *Baruch ata Adonai elohanu melech ha olam asher kiddishanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukah.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the world, who makes us holy through your mitzvot, and commands us to kindle the Hanukah lights.

Second Blessing: *Baruch ata Adonai elohanu melech ha olam, she asa nisim l'avoteinu, bayamim ha-hem, bazman ha zeh.*

Blessed are you Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the world, who worked miracles for our ancestors in days long ago at this season.

On the first night of Hanukah, we recite the third blessing, the *Sheheheyanu*.

Baruch ata Adonai, elohanu melech ha olam, sheheheyanu, v'kiymanu, v'higiyanu, lazman ha zeh.

Blessed are you Adonai, Ruler of the world, who has kept us alive and well, and has brought us to this season.

Shabbat: Since we light the menorah eight nights, one candle will coincide with Shabbat. Therefore, Friday evening, *Erev Shabbat*, light and recite the blessings over the Hanukah candles first, and then light Shabbat candles since candle lighting is not permitted once Shabbat has begun. Similarly, when Shabbat ends, make Havdalah, the blessing which signify the official end of Shabbat, before lighting the Hanukah candles.

When To Light

The candles are lit starting at nightfall, and should burn for at least half an hour. On Friday afternoon, the candles are traditionally lit before sunset, to avoid lighting on the Sabbath. By putting longer candles in the menorah (or thick Shabbat candles on tin foil), the lights will still be burning after it grows dark

After lighting all the candles of the day, it's traditional to sing upbeat Hanukkah hymns like "Ha'Nerot Ha'Lalu (Those Candles) or Maoz Tzur (Rock of Strength). Then enjoy homemade [latkes](#) with sour cream and apple sauce