

Winter celebrations: Hanukkah

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Many holidays and festivals are celebrated in London by different communities. Take a quick look at Hanukkah then try an activity inspired by this winter celebration.

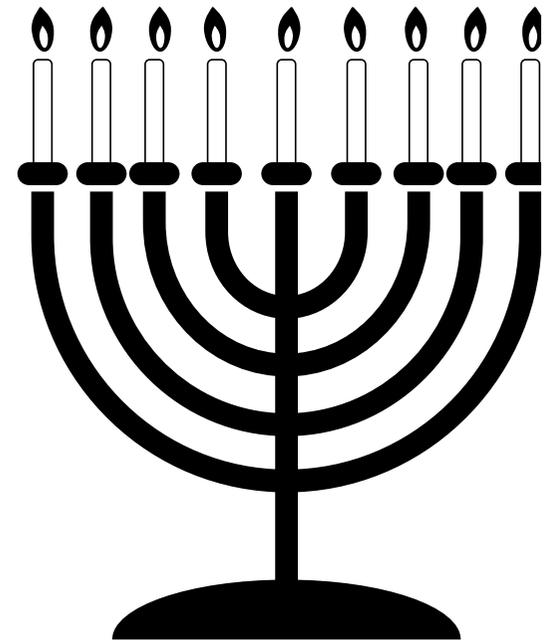
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Hanukkah is an eight-day festival celebrated by the Jewish community. It is celebrated by lighting a special candelabra called a menorah, which holds nine candles. This is to remember a miracle in the Jewish faith where a lamp in the Temple in Jerusalem stayed lit for eight days when there was only enough oil for one.

On the first night of Hanukkah, the middle candle, called the shamash, is lit. This flame is used to light one more candle. On the second night two candles are lit and so on until the eighth night when all are alight.

During Hanukkah, lots of food is fried in oil in remembrance of what happened in the temple. This includes potato latkes, eaten with sour cream or apple sauce, and sufganyiot, which are like donuts, filled with jam.

Families celebrate by giving each other small gifts each day. Songs are sung and games are played, such as spinning a four-sided top called a dreidl.





A medieval Jewish hanging lamp.

There was a medieval Jewish community in London until the 1290s. Records tell us that people of this faith owned houses and had their own businesses in the City. Items linked to this community have been found on archaeological digs. A ritual bath called a mikveh was even discovered in Milk Street in the City.

Collecting tin from the synagogue in Brick Lane, Spitalfields.



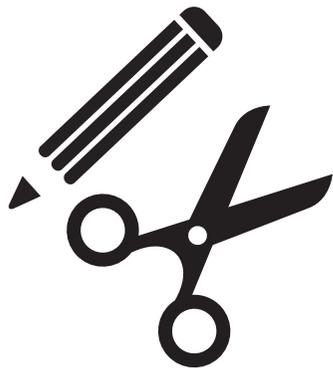
London's oldest synagogue, Bevis Marks, was built in 1701. By the 1800s, there was a large Jewish community in East London, especially around Spitalfields and Bethnal Green.

Try at home

Create your own marbled paper using oil and food colouring. Keep your artwork, give it away as a gift, or use it as wrapping paper for Hanukkah or any other holiday that you celebrate.

You will need:

- Any paper or card to decorate. Light colours work best to show off your designs
- Vegetable oil
- Liquid food colouring
- Small pots, like yogurt pots
- A shallow dish



1. Place a small amount of oil into a pot. Add a few drops of food colouring and stir until it is well combined. It won't completely mix together
2. Repeat the first step for all the colours you are using
3. Fill your shallow dish with a few centimetres of water
4. Spoon out some of the coloured oil and add it to the water. Add as many or as few colours as you like
5. Gently lay your paper on top of the water and let it soak the colours for a few seconds
6. Remove the paper and set it aside to dry
7. After a few goes, change the water to keep your designs crisp and clear