



POSTAL NEWS

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U.S. Postal Service Dedicated Hanukkah Forever Stamp Today

BOCA RATON, FL — The U.S. Postal Service's new [Hanukkah Forever stamp](#) — available nationwide today — features a warm, elegant illustration of a holiday menorah in the window of a home. The eight nights and days of Hanukkah begin on the 25th of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, a date that falls in late November or December. In 2016, Hanukkah begins at sundown Dec. 24.

The first-day-of-issue stamp dedication ceremony took place at the [Temple Beth El of Boca Raton](#). The public is asked to share the news of the stamp using the hashtag **#HanukkahStamps**.

"The Hanukkah stamp we're dedicating today honors a religious observance that is more than 2,000 years old — and how appropriate that the word itself — Hanukkah — means 'dedication' in Hebrew," said U.S. Postal Service Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President [David Williams](#). "This beautiful stamp depicts a warm, elegant illustration of a holiday menorah in the window of a home. The white window trim is visible through the branches of the menorah, which echo a tangle of snow-covered tree branches beyond the glass. Artist [William Low](#) added visual interest to the scene by highlighting the contrast between the hot candle flames and the cool snow, the vertical candles and the horizontal window frame, and the dark menorah with the brightly lit candles. Starting today, this beautiful image of remembrance, light and love will travel on letters and packages to millions of households and businesses throughout America and around the world."

Low, of Huntington, NY, worked under art director [Ethel Kessler](#) of Bethesda, MD, who designed the stamp.

Joining Williams in dedicating the stamp were Temple Beth El of Boca Raton Rabbi [Jessica Brockman](#), Senior Rabbi [Dan Levin](#) and Rabbi [Greg Weisman](#). U.S. Postal Service South Florida District Manager Jeffery Taylor served as master of ceremonies.

"We are deeply honored to host the Postal Service in unveiling this year's Chanukah stamp," said Levin. "The holiday of Chanukah is a celebration of the triumph of the spirit over oppression so deeply reflected in the story of America. All of us in the Jewish community are proud to see our heritage woven into the philatelic tradition of America."

Hanukkah is a transliteration or change of letters of the Hebrew word as written in the Roman alphabet. There are various spellings, though the most widely used in the United States are Hanukkah and Chanukah.

The Tradition

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for "dedication." Tradition relates how a miracle took place during the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, which had been desecrated by conquering armies. The sacramental oil, thought to be enough for only one day, burned for eight days.

The miracle of the oil is at the heart of the ritual of the lighting of the *hanukiah* a menorah — candelabra — with nine branches, eight that hold candles representing each of the eight nights and days of Hanukkah, and the ninth, the *shamash* or "servant," used to light the other candles. The *hanukiah*, used only at Hanukkah, traditionally was placed for all to see at the entrance of the home. At times in history when it was not safe for Jewish families to make a public declaration of faith, the menorah was set instead in a prominent place inside the home. Today in the U.S., many families have renewed the tradition of displaying the menorah in windows during the holiday.

Hanukkah is a time for gatherings of family and friends with feasting, games and other activities. Foods like latkes — potato pancakes — and *sufganiyot* — deep-fried doughnuts — are traditional. After the lighting of the candles, there may be singing and a gift exchange. Children play a game called dreidel. Competing for a pot of chocolate coins, nuts, pennies or other prizes, each player takes turns spinning the dreidel, a four-sided top with letters on each side. The letters form an acronym for the Hebrew saying "A great miracle happened there," referring to the miracle of the oil. Depending on the outcome of the dreidel's spin, the player either takes from or gives to the pot. The game ends when one player has won all the treats.

Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at local Post Offices, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-782-6724. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Hanukkah Stamp
Stamp Fulfillment Services
Cancellation Services
8300 NE Underground Drive, Pillar 210
Kansas City, MO 64144-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. There is a 5-cent charge for each additional postmark over 50. All orders must be postmarked by Jan. 1, 2017.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly "USA Philatelic" catalog, online at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Visit this [link](#) for information on upcoming stamp events.

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