



POSTAL NEWS

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U.S. Postal Service Dedicates Hanukkah Stamp

WASHINGTON, DC — The U.S. Postal Service celebrates the joyous annual holiday of Hanukkah with a new stamp in 2024. The holiday, also called the Festival of Lights, spans eight days and nights, and is celebrated by Jewish people around the world. A dedication ceremony for the stamp was held today at the [Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum](#).

“This stamp, with its festive Hanukkah candles, warm our hearts and their intimate glow rekindles the family bonds that comfort and sustain us throughout the year. It also reminds us — as Americans — that we are joined in our diversity,” said Michael Gordon, the Postal Service’s government liaison director, who served as the stamp’s dedicating official. “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.”

Joining Gordon in dedicating the stamp were Bea Gurwitz, the museum’s executive director; Chris Wolf, the museum’s incoming board chairman; and Antonio Alcalá, who served as the stamp’s art director.

The origin story of Hanukkah stems from a struggle for religious liberty and human rights. It is a tale centered on the Maccabees, a small army of Jewish warriors, fighting for the right of all Jews to practice their religion freely. Around 167 B.C., the emperor Antiochus IV engaged in a brutal campaign to force Jews to convert to Greek polytheism. He persecuted those who continued to practice Judaism with the passing of many oppressive laws, and he also looted and desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, which was the holiest of shrines for the Jewish people. The outnumbered Maccabees revolted, and against all odds, prevailed over the much bigger armies of the emperor.

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for “dedication.” Tradition relates how a miracle took place after the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem. During the rededication of the Temple, Jewish worshippers discovered that only one small jar of consecrated oil remained, enough to last just one day. They lit the Temple menorah, which miraculously burned for eight days, providing enough time to produce more oil.

“The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum is honored to be part of the 2024 Hanukkah stamp unveiling ceremony,” said Gurwitz. “The museum tells the story of a community that is decidedly local but has a national impact, seeking to inspire all who visit to take action on behalf of their community values and this stamp ceremony fits perfectly with that mission. Thank you to the U.S. Postal Service for creating this impressive stamp.”

This miracle of the oil is celebrated during Hanukkah with the ceremonial lighting of the *hanukiah*, the menorah used at this time of year. Eight branches hold candles representing each of the eight nights and days of Hanukkah; the ninth, the *shamas* or “servant,” is used to light the other candles. The hanukiah, used only at Hanukkah, traditionally is placed at the entrance of the home or in a window to proclaim the miracle publicly.

After the lighting of the candles, some families play games and compete for prizes with four-sided spinning tops called dreidels. They may also sing holiday songs and eat traditional fried foods that commemorate the miracle of the oil. Two favorites are latkes (fried potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (yeasty doughnuts filled with raspberry or strawberry jelly and dusted with sugar).

The Hanukkah festivities begin on the 25th of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, a date that falls in late November or, more commonly, in December. In 2024, Hanukkah begins at sundown on Dec. 25.

The Stamp Design

“Designing the 2024 Hanukkah stamp is an honor and privilege,” said Alcalá. “The imperfect ink-drawn lines of the artwork are to lend a human presence to the image. The flames are shown, but the candles themselves are not present. They’re implied, and to me, that alludes to an aspect of faith that’s both tied to this ceremony and to the larger religious experience.”

The Hanukkah pane of 20 stamps are issued as Forever stamps, which will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. News of the Hanukkah stamps are being shared with the hashtag **#HanukkahStamp**.

Postal Products

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