Dreidel Rules and Hanukkah 2026 Candle Chart

How to play dreidel, plus the candle count for each of the eight nights

Friday

December 4, 2026

First night of Hanukkah 2026

Facts

- Everyone puts one unit of the currency (a penny, a nut, etc.) into the pot after the currency is divided equally among all players.
- After a gimel, everyone, including the spinner, puts another unit into the pot, and the player to the left spins.
- The game ends when there is one player left.
- The letters stand for nes gadol hayah sham, a great miracle happened there.

THE FOUR LETTERS: TICK EACH ONE WHEN IT LANDS

- [ ] Nun (nul, zero): nothing happens, play passes left
- [ ] Gimel (gantz, whole): the spinner takes the whole pot
- [ ] Hey (halb, half): the spinner takes half the pot
- [ ] Shin (shenk, give): the spinner puts one unit into the pot

CANDLE CHART: TICK EACH NIGHT ONCE THE CANDLES ARE LIT

- [ ] Night 1, Fri., Dec. 4: 1 candle plus the shamash, before sundown
- [ ] Night 2, Sat., Dec. 5: 2 candles plus the shamash, at nightfall after Shabbat
- [ ] Night 3, Sun., Dec. 6: 3 candles plus the shamash
- [ ] Night 4, Mon., Dec. 7: 4 candles plus the shamash
- [ ] Night 5, Tue., Dec. 8: 5 candles plus the shamash
- [ ] Night 6, Wed., Dec. 9: 6 candles plus the shamash
- [ ] Night 7, Thu., Dec. 10: 7 candles plus the shamash
- [ ] Night 8, Fri., Dec. 11: 8 candles plus the shamash, before sundown

Not yet confirmed

Candle-lighting clock times: they depend on the city; see the Hanukkah 2026 dates story

Our house rules and scores

Source: Chabad.org, How to Play Dreidel; Chabad.org, Hanukkah 2026; Hebcal, Chanukah 2026; Chabad.org, Printable Chanukah Guide 2026. The letter list and candle checklist restate those pages.