

Happy Hanukkah...Chanukah

1. Christmas is one day, same day every year: December 25. Jews also love December 5th. It's another paid day off work. We go to movies and out for Chinese food, and Israeli dancing. Chanukah is 8 days. It starts the evening of the 24th of Kislev, whenever that falls. No one is ever sure. Jews never know until a non-Jewish friend asks when Chanukah starts, forcing us to consult a calendar so we don't look like idiots. We all have the same calendar, provided free with a donation to either the World Jewish Congress, the kosher butcher, or the local Sinai Memorial Chapel (especially in Florida) or the Jewish funeral home. * FYI, this year Hanukkah starts the day after Thanksgiving....
2. Christmas is a major holiday. Chanukah is a minor holiday with the same theme as most Jewish holidays. They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat.
3. Christians get wonderful presents such as jewelry, perfume, stereos; Jews get practical presents such as underwear, socks, or the collected works of the Rambam, which looks impressive on the bookshelf.
4. There is only one way to spell Christmas. No one can decide how to spell Chanukah, Chanukkah, Chanukka, Channukah, Hanukah, Hannukah.
5. Christmas is a time of great pressure for husbands and boyfriends. Their partners expect special gifts. Jewish men are relieved of that burden. No one expects a diamond ring on Chanukah.
6. Christmas brings enormous electric bills. Candles are used for Chanukah. Not only are we spared enormous electric bills, but we get to feel good about not contributing to the energy crisis.
7. Christmas carols are beautiful. Silent Night, Come O Ye Faithful.... Chanukah songs are about dreidels made from clay or having a party and dancing the horah. Of course, we are secretly pleased that many of the beautiful carols were composed and written by our tribal brethren. And don't Barbara Streisand and Neil Diamond sing them beautifully?
8. A home preparing for Christmas smells wonderful. The sweet smell of cookies and cakes baking. Happy people are gathered around in festive moods. A home preparing for Chanukah smells of oil, potatoes, and onions. The home, as always, is full of loud people all talking at once.
9. Women have fun baking Christmas cookies. Women burn their eyes and cut their hands grating potatoes and onions for latkas on Chanukah. Another reminder of our suffering through the ages.

10. Parents deliver many gifts to their children during Christmas. Jewish parents have no qualms about withholding a gift on any of the eight nights.

11. The players in the Christmas story have easy to pronounce names such as Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. The players in the Chanukah story are Antiochus, Judah Maccabee, and Matta whatever. No one can spell it or pronounce it. On the plus side, we can tell our friends anything and they believe we are wonderfully versed in our history.

12. Many Christians believe in the virgin birth. Jews think, "Joseph, Bubela, snap out of it. Your woman is pregnant, you didn't sleep with her, and now you want to blame G-d. Here's the number of my shrink."

13. In recent years, Christmas has become more and more commercialized. The same holds true for Chanukah, even though it is a minor holiday. It makes sense. How could we market a major holiday such as Yom Kippur? Forget about celebrating. Think observing. Come to synagogue, starve yourself for 27 hours, become one with your dehydrated soul, beat your chest, confess your sins, a guaranteed good time for you and your family. Tickets a mere \$200 per person.

Better stick with Chanukah
