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How to Play Dreidel

A [dreidel](#) [לדיידר](#) or [sevivon](#), is a four-sided spinning top. The game of dreidel is traditionally played during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, but can be enjoyed at any time.

The dreidel is a variant of the teetotum, a gambling toy found in many European cultures. Each side of the dreidel has a letter of the Hebrew alphabet: Nun נ Gimel ג Hey ה Shin ש which together form the abbreviation for Nes Gadol Hayah Sham [היה לודג טנ](#) which means “a great miracle happened there”.

Playing with the dreidel is a traditional Hanukkah game played all over the world, and rules may vary.

Here's how to play the basic dreidel game:

- Any number of people can take part.
- Each player begins the game with an equal number of game pieces (about 10-15) such as coins, nuts, chocolates, raisins, etc.
- At the beginning of each round, every participant puts one game piece into the center pot. In addition, every time the pot is empty or has only one game piece left, every player should put one in the pot.
- Every time it's your turn, spin the dreidel once. Depending on the side it lands on, you give or get game pieces from the pot. For those who don't read Hebrew, some dreidels also feature a transliteration of each letter. If yours doesn't, use the photo below as a cheat sheet:
 - **Nun** נ means “*nisht*” or “nothing.” The player does nothing.
 - **Gimel** ג means “*gantz*” or “everything.” The player gets everything in the pot.
 - **Hey** ה means “*halb*” or “half.” The player gets half of the pot. (If there is an odd number of pieces in the pot, the player takes half of the total plus one).
 - **Shin** ש (outside of Israel) means “*shtel*” or “put in.” *Peh* (in Israel) also means “put in.” The player adds a game piece to the pot.
- If you find that you have no game pieces left, you are either “out” or may ask a fellow player for a “loan.”
- When one person has won everything, that round of the game is over.

Adapted from www.myjewishlearning.com *How to Play Dreidel*