

# Raisins and Almonds

written by  
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## Where are you going?

### Mamaloshen (“Mother Tongue”)

The song “Raisins and Almonds” was written in Yiddish, which is mainly a combination of German and Hebrew. Although not as old as Hebrew, the ancient language of the Jewish people, Yiddish is no new kid on the block; it has been around since the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. For the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, Yiddish was the air they breathed, infusing their everyday life — and over time, a rich literary, theatrical, and musical culture — with warmth and vibrancy. Though not as widespread as it once was, Yiddish is undergoing a revival, with its music, art, and theater enjoying renewed popularity. “Raisins and Almonds” might be the most well-known of all Yiddish songs. How many sleepy heads have been carried off to dreamland with this very lullaby?

### Sing Me to Sleep

Parents of all backgrounds and cultures know the power of a sweet lullaby. A well-chosen song at the end of the day can help calm and soothe even the most energetic little one. Yiddish lullabies do the same, enchanting listeners with their rich melody and language. They also often hold an extra dimension of hopes for a child’s future. Another verse of “Raisins and Almonds” predicts that the child listener will be a successful merchant someday — just like the shopkeeper goat under the child’s cradle! To learn more visit [pjlibrary.org/raisinsandalmonds](http://pjlibrary.org/raisinsandalmonds).

### Got Your Goat

Goats were common residents in *shtetls* (Yiddish for “little towns” that used to dot Eastern Europe) and lived much more closely with people than many of us would imagine doing so today — though they probably didn’t keep shop under beds! A little goat is also featured in a song that’s sung at the end of a Passover seder (ritual meal). The song — “*Chad Gadya*” (“One Little Goat”) — is an allegory in which a baby goat may represent the people of Israel. Perhaps “Raisins and Almonds” follows in that tradition, calling upon a small white goat to nurture the next generation with rich gifts — sweet raisins and almonds.

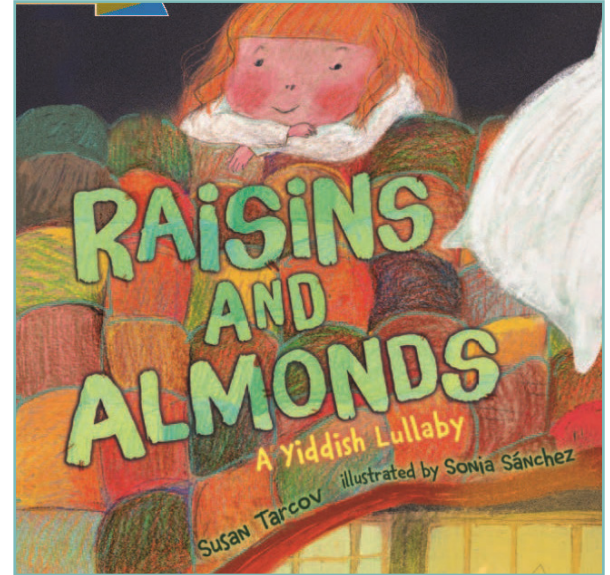
## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

What pretend world might exist under your bed?

If you were going on an adventure like Bella’s, what friends would you take with you?

What special things would you hope to find in the little goat’s store?

What are your family’s special bedtime songs? How do the songs make you feel?



## HANDS ON!

### Make Chewy Raisin and Almond Cookies

#### Ingredients

1 cup butter (2 sticks)  
1 ½ cups packed brown sugar  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
2 large eggs  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
¾ tsp baking soda  
¼ tsp salt  
1 cup raisins  
1 cup rolled oats  
½ cup chopped almonds



- 1 Mix butter, vanilla, and sugar in a large bowl. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition.
- 2 In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt. Empty small bowl into large bowl and mix well. Add raisins, oats, and almonds, mixing until combined.
- 3 Chill dough in fridge for at least 20 minutes, or overnight.
- 4 Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Place inch-diameter balls of dough on a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing evenly.
- 5 Bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Yields 3 dozen.