



POTATOES AT TURTLE ROCK

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Annie's family creates their own family traditions around Jewish holidays – and they often take place at Turtle Rock. On the first night of Hanukkah, Annie takes the lead – and makes sure potatoes play a starring role.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

The eight-day holiday of Hanukkah begins on the 25th of the month of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, usually falling in December. It seems fitting that the holiday should come at the darkest time of the year. The circumstances in which the Hanukkah story took place were very dark as well: the invading Greeks were trying to make the people of Israel forsake the Torah and their Jewish way of life. They ransacked and defiled the holy Temple in Jerusalem. It would have been easy for the Jews to lose all hope and give up. We know that the story ends with the miracles of the few defeating the many and the Temple oil lasting for eight days, but *they* did not know what the outcome would be; and yet, they chose to fight back and kindle the lights of the menorah anyway. The Maccabees lit up the darkness with their faith.

In *Potatoes at Turtle Rock*, Annie and her family go into the woods on the darkest night of the year to celebrate Hanukkah. As it is a home-based holiday, Hanukkah can be a very meaningful time for families. Many families have their own holiday traditions; these might include making special foods, playing games, telling stories, giving gifts, or sharing things they're thankful for. Just as a menorah lit in the dark woods seems to shine with special brightness, so the love of family and friends can warm even the coldest winter night.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Hanukkah Travels - Following the example of the family in this book, create your own Hanukkah trip. You might travel around your neighborhood, or simply around your house. Plan different stops that involve activities such as sharing special family memories, making a craft, eating holiday foods, and of course, lighting the menorah! Encourage children to draw a map of the route to take along on your travels.

Potato Art - Potatoes play a big part in this story. Did you know they also make great stamps for art projects?

- Take a clean baking potato and cut it in half with a sharp knife.
- Choose a simple design for your stamp - in keeping with the Hanukkah theme, perhaps a dreidel or Star of David. Use the knife to carve the shape into the flat inside part of the cut potato, about ¼ inch deep.
- Cut away the parts of the potato surrounding the shape, so that the shape stands about ¼ inch higher than the rest of the potato.
- Put small amounts of paint onto a plate. Dip the potato stamp lightly into the paint, and press it onto paper. You can repeat with different colors by rinsing and drying the potato in between.