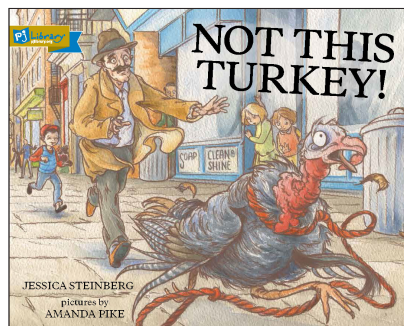


NOT THIS TURKEY!

Written by Jessica Steinberg

Illustrated by Amanda Pike



Mel's family is new to America, and they've never celebrated Thanksgiving. When Papa wins a live turkey at his job, they decide this is the year to start. But Mel grows fond of Indik, the turkey. He's desperate to know – is it possible to celebrate Thanksgiving without roast turkey?

JEWISH CONCEPTS

"New country, new celebrations." In *Not This Turkey!*, Mel's immigrant family tries to adapt to the American Thanksgiving practice of eating turkey but ends up sticking with kugel and stuffed cabbage, foods that feel special to them. They face the challenge of all immigrants: how much to assimilate, to conform to the ways of their new country. By eating their traditional foods while celebrating Thanksgiving gratitude, they strike a healthy balance between customs old and new.

Jews have been immigrating to North America since before the American Revolution, and there are plenty of Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants and refugees around today. The Torah reminds us that we were "strangers in the land of Egypt" and that we should be welcoming to strangers among us now. This gives us the opportunity to engage in the *mitzvah* (commandment) of *hachnasat orchim*, hospitality. A story tells of the Bible's Abraham generously welcoming an old man to his tent, only to kick him out when he finds that he is an idol worshiper. God rebukes Abraham for his poor manners, and Abraham seeks the other man's forgiveness. Our hospitality should also allow for strangers to bring their own traditions with them, as we share our customs with them.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Celebrate Jewish culture AND learn about the customs of others who have immigrated to America in these hands-on ways:

- Visit an ethnic market or restaurant and try some unfamiliar food.
- Take part in a local cultural festival or visit a museum that celebrates the heritage of any group of people.
- Read PJ Library and Sydney Taylor Book Award-winning books about Judaism, and read stories with diverse characters from other backgrounds. Find suggestions at the [We Need Diverse Books](#) website.

Think aloud with your children about these questions:

- What are our family traditions? Which of these is related to our heritage? How long have we been doing these things? Do you think you'll want to do these things when you grow up?
- What are we grateful for, on Thanksgiving and every day? What might our immigrant ancestors have been grateful for?
- Is there anyone in our neighborhood or school who seems like a "stranger" because they look or act or speak differently from others? What can we do to make them feel welcome?