

HANUKKAH in Rhodes

Another eight day festival is Hanukkah (Dedication), the Festival of Lights, during which every night one kindled one light of the special eight branched lamp called hanukkiah. In the 1920's hanukkiahs were made by artisans of tine or copper, the tinsmiths. Some were artistically decorated. The candles were wicks placed in a small container of oil, but one could also simple use small glasses filled with oil.



"Hanukiya" from the island of Rhodes, 1906. From Bellina Hasson Gold family, Photo Taken from the Rhodesli Jewish Calendar of 2014 by Aron Hasson, ©The Rhodes Jewish Historical Foundation

Youngsters received no gifts but did not have to go to school on one day during the Hanukkah week. On that particular day, relatives, friends and parents would give a little money to the children and they would celebrate by buying whatever they wanted for lunch. Then all gathered together for a picnic. This was called "el dia di la Miranda"

Burmuelos, deep fried doughnuts were traditionally served during that festival, covered with tahini (a sesame dip) or honey. The oil symbolizing the miracle of the cruse of oil which was burned for eight days, after the victory of Judah the Maccabee (over Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid king of Syria) and the subsequent purification and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Source: "I Remember Rhodes" by Rebecca Amato Levy