

**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

**TRAVELING WITH JEWISH TASTE**

**Look What I Made – Loukoumades!**

**A Chanukah Treat**

By Carol Goodman Kaufman / Special to the BJV



My very creative friend Rhonda teaches in a Jewish day school. When Hanukkah rolled around last year, she planned a unique lesson for her students in the third grade. First, she taught the class about the debate between the houses of Hillel and Shammai as to the correct way to light the oil lamps on the hanukkiah. (Little boxes of multicolored candles were not available in supermarkets back then.)

Which way was right? To start with one light and progress to eight, or vice versa?

Rhonda divided her class into two groups, one to promote Hillel's position, the other to advocate

for Shammai's. While the Hillel group argued for the *minhag*, or custom, that we follow today (start with one and increase daily), one of Rhonda's little pupils had an entirely different take.

This third grader on the Shammai side of the debate reasoned that starting with eight lights and decreasing day by day serves as a metaphor for how our ancestors separated themselves from both the repression of enforced Hellenistic culture and its polytheism. He argued that, unlike the Seleucids who worshipped many gods, represented by the many candles, we Jews adopted the one true God. Hence, ending with one light.



IMAGE BY HARTMANN LINGE

Out of the mouths of babes, anyone? This kid will be appearing on a *bimah* near you soon.

So, who were these Seleucids? The executive summary: Following the breakup of Alexander the Great's Empire in the fourth century BCE, the Macedonian Greeks (a/k/a Seleucids) took possession of, and ruled over, a large area of

western Asia, including our ancestral homeland. Two centuries into their reign, their king Antiochus IV Epiphanes began a massive campaign to suppress Jewish practice. But the Judea-based Maccabees, of their own Hasmonian dynasty, revolted against him. And as we all learned in Hebrew school, the Maccabees prevailed. The festival of Hanukkah resulted.



Tetradrachm of Seleucus I – the horned horse, the elephant, and the anchor all served as symbols of the Seleucid monarchy.

Having said all that, Jews have lived on the land by the Aegean for millennia (not always in sunny times, but let's leave that for another article), so it makes sense that our Greek cousins would have their own take on a Hanukkah treat that riffs on the old cooked-in-oil theme. Their contribution to the holiday table is loukoumades, doughnut puffs drenched in orange-infused honey and sprinkled with cinnamon and nuts.

**Carol Goodman Kaufman** has just published the second picture book in what is planned as a series about nature for young children. Written under the name Carolinda Goodman, *Pirate Ships and Shooting Stars* is written in rhyme, and its lively stanzas encourage young children to use their imaginations when looking up at the sky. From rainbows to constellations to pictures in the clouds, Kaufman believes there is much to see if only they lift their eyes.

In addition to her work for children, Kaufman also writes under her "real" name about food history (including for the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*), and her first novel, a murder mystery, will drop in 2023.



**Loukoumades**

Makes about two dozen puffs

To quote an old potato chip commercial, bet you can't eat just one!

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1½ tablespoons of active dry yeast (or 2 packets)
- 1 cup warm water
- ½ cup warm milk
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 large eggs
- ⅓ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup honey
- Peeled rind of one orange
- ½ cup water
- 1 quart vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ cup crushed nuts of your choice

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Sprinkle yeast over 1 cup warm water in a small bowl and let stand until yeast softens and begins to form a creamy foam, about 5 minutes.
- Mix together warm milk, sugar, and salt in a large bowl until sugar and salt are dissolved.
- Pour in yeast mixture and stir to combine.
- Beat in flour, eggs, and butter until mixture forms a smooth, soft dough.
- Cover the bowl and let rise at room temperature until doubled in volume, about 30 minutes.
- Stir dough well, cover, and let rise again for 30 more minutes.
- Meanwhile, make the honey syrup by mixing together the honey, the orange rind, and 1/2 cup water in a small saucepan and bringing it all to a boil over medium-high heat.
- Turn off the heat and allow honey syrup to cool. Remove the orange rind.
- Heat 2 inches oil in a deep pot to 350 degrees F
- Wet your hands. With a large spoon that has also been dipped in water, scoop up about 2 tablespoons of the dough into the palm of your hand and roll it into a ball. Do not overhandle.
- Drop the dough balls into the hot oil in batches, wetting the spoon and your hands each time you make a dough ball. It's helpful to have a bowl of water handy for the spoon.
- Fry in the hot oil until the puffs are golden brown on the bottom, then turn them over.
- Gently set the loukoumades aside to drain on a paper towel-lined plate.
- After the oil has drained, place the loukoumades on a baking sheet. Drizzle with honey syrup and sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar and nuts. Serve warm.

## Hanukkah is almost here!

This Hanukkah, give your little ones the gift of the sun, the moon, and the stars! Use this QR code or go to [carolgoodmankaufman.com](http://carolgoodmankaufman.com) for books signed with a message to your special child.

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