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Hanukkah Barbie Is Here — And She Actually Got the Jewish Holiday Right

There's something pretty powerful about finally feeling seen.

[Yael Buechler](#) October 9, 2026



Barbie Holiday Sweater Doll (Mattel)

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The miracle of Hanukkah came early this year: Hanukkah Barbie is here.

Mattel would like us to call her “Holiday Sweater Barbie.” Respectfully, no. This is Hanukkah Barbie.

She is dressed in the blue-and-yellow color palette that retailers have apparently decided belongs exclusively to Hanukkah. Her sweater is covered in Jewish stars and dreidels, with a light-up hanukkiyah built right into the front.

As if the sweater isn't Hanukkah enough, she also dons blue-and-white gingham pants. And then there are the tiny tan shearling boots, because Hanukkah Barbie understands comfort.

Naturally, I bought her immediately.

Unboxing her involved approximately 613 tiny plastic ties, but once I finally freed her, I was even more delighted than I expected to be. I have spent an unreasonable amount of my adult life thinking about [Hanukkah merchandise](#), and holding an actual Hanukkah Barbie feels slightly surreal.

This story also has a wonderfully Jewish twist: Barbie was created by Ruth Handler, the daughter of Jewish immigrants, who co-founded Mattel and introduced Barbie in 1959.

It feels almost bashert that a doll created by the daughter of Jewish immigrants, which became woven into American childhood, is finally celebrating a Jewish holiday — more than six decades after her debut!

I'm not sure Handler ever imagined this particular outfit, but I like to think she would have loved it.

And judging by the frenzy around her, plenty of people seem to agree.

She has repeatedly sold out at major retailers, sometimes within hours of appearing online. Clearly, I wasn't the only one determined to bring her home.

I understand the impulse.

There are few shopping instincts stronger than a Jewish person unexpectedly encountering genuinely good Hanukkah merchandise. You see it. You buy it.

Which is why I was particularly disappointed when some other outlets decided that the big Hanukkah Barbie story was apparently her nose.

The articles drew on a handful of Reddit comments questioning whether Mattel had intentionally given its Jewish Barbie a larger nose. Hanukkah Barbie had barely arrived, and somehow the conversation had already turned to one of the most tired stereotypes about Jewish appearance.

So, for reasons I absolutely did not anticipate when I ordered this doll, I have now become familiar with Barbie face sculpts.

The Barbie face many of us probably picture is known in collector circles as the Millie sculpt. Another existing Mattel face sculpt, known as Violet, dates to 2018 and has appeared on other Barbies for years. It has pronounced dimples, fuller cheeks and a somewhat more prominent nose.

To my eye, Hanukkah Barbie's face looks like an iteration of Violet, but it does not appear to be the exact same sculpt. When I put her next to a Barbie with the Violet sculpt, Hanukkah

Barbie's face looks more petite. And while Violet dolls are marked "2018" on the backs of their heads, the back of Hanukkah Barbie's keppe reads "2026."

That doesn't tell us exactly what changed, or why. Mattel has not identified Hanukkah Barbie's face sculpt publicly, as far as I can tell. But based on my own side-by-side comparison, I see similarities to a face already used on other Barbies, not evidence that Hanukkah Barbie was designed around a stereotypically Jewish nose.

If we're going to scrutinize the choices Mattel made with Hanukkah Barbie, I'd rather focus on the ones the company actually got right.

The Hebrew letters on the dreidels are accurate. Her hanukkiyah has the correct number of branches. The sweater lights up. Technically, the illumination reads more like three glowing sections than nine individually blazing candles, but I'm willing to give Barbie a pass for imperfect light-up-sweater technology.

Those details may seem small, but Mattel itself knows how quickly one mistake can become the story. In 2023, packaging for its Barbie honoring the Cherokee Nation's first woman principal chief famously contained an error in the Cherokee text that turned "Cherokee Nation" into "Chicken Nation."

This time, Mattel did its homework. And maybe that's part of why the response from the Jewish community has been so extraordinary. There's something pretty powerful about finally feeling seen.

I just have one more pressing question for Mattel: When are we getting the Hanukkah Dreamhouse?