

Henna Around the World

Name _____

Date _____

Henna celebrations are shared by many cultures. Neighbors often influenced one another, and each community gave the tradition its own meaning.

Community	When henna is used, and what it means
Jewish communities of the Middle East and North Africa	Henna celebration before a wedding; also for other joyful milestones in some communities. Blessing, joy, protection from the evil eye.
Muslim communities across North Africa and the Middle East	Laylat al henna, the henna night before a wedding; henna also on holidays such as Eid. Beauty, celebration, blessing.
Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities of South Asia	Mehndi ceremony before a wedding, with very detailed designs on hands and feet. Joy, love, and good fortune.
Amazigh (Berber) communities of North Africa	Henna for weddings, births, and festivals, often with geometric designs. Protection and celebration.

1 What do all these henna traditions have in common?

2 What makes the Jewish henna celebration distinct? Name at least two elements and what they mean.

3 Why do you think neighboring communities share customs like henna?

4 How is the henna celebration like or unlike a celebration in your family?

5 What surprised you today, and what would you like to learn more about?

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