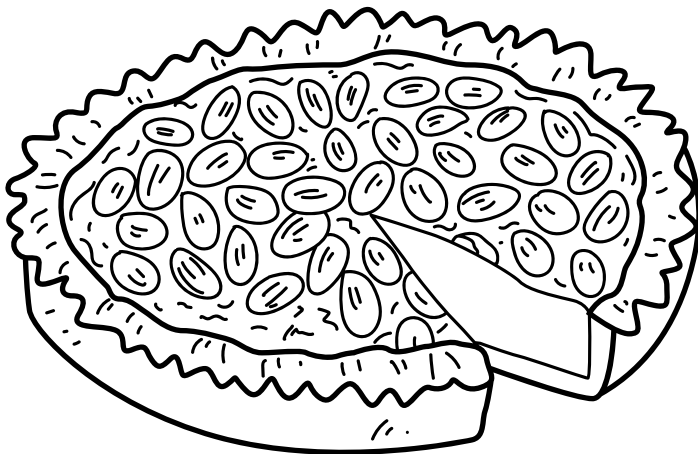
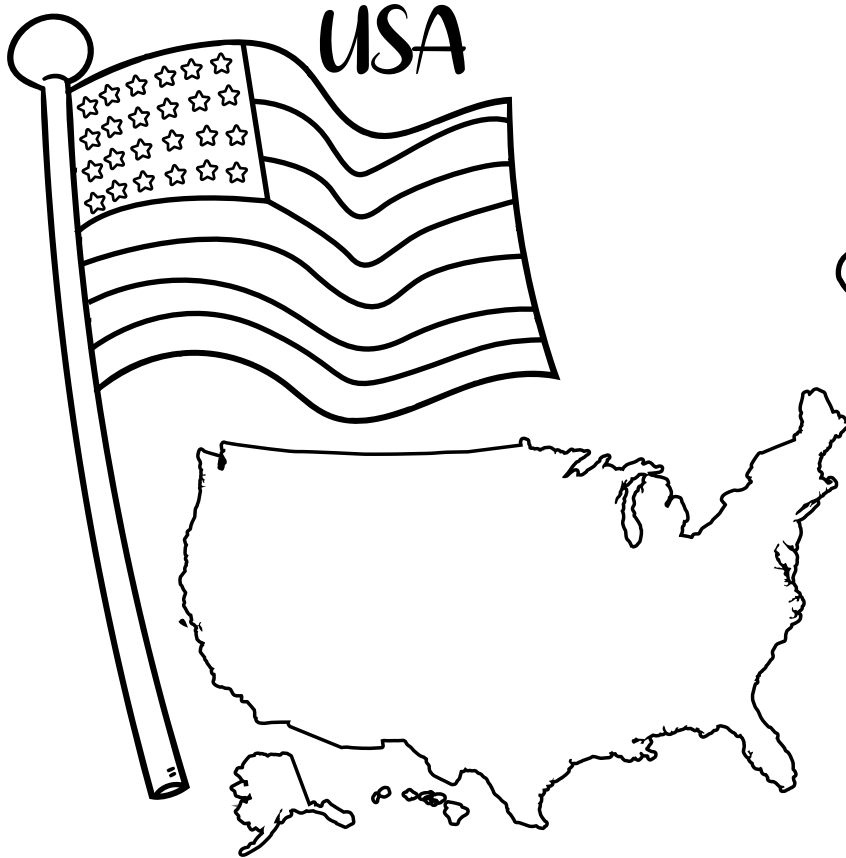


Greetings from USA

Merry Christmas



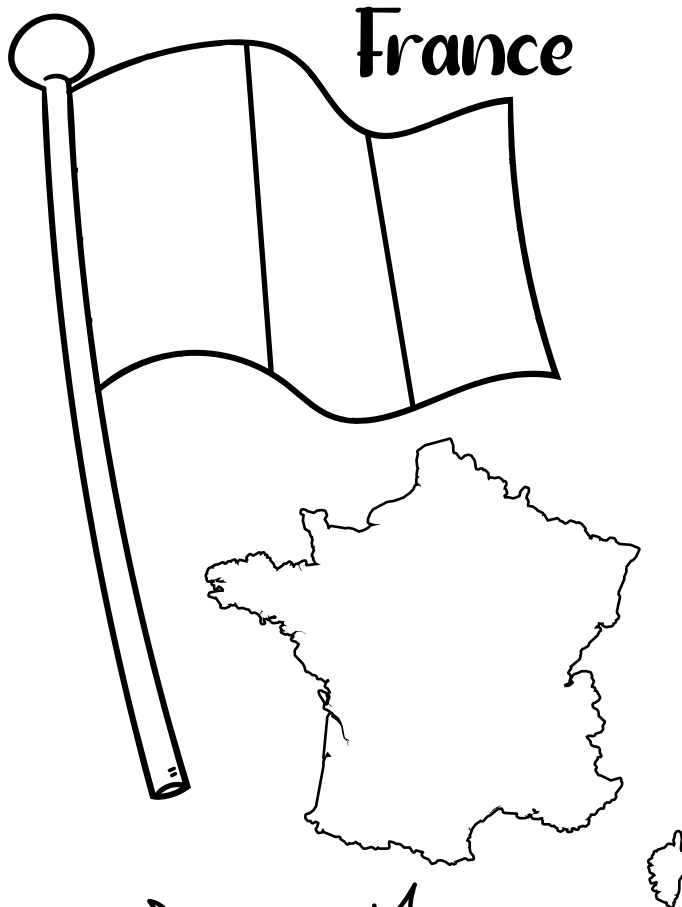
Pecan Pie

Father Christmas

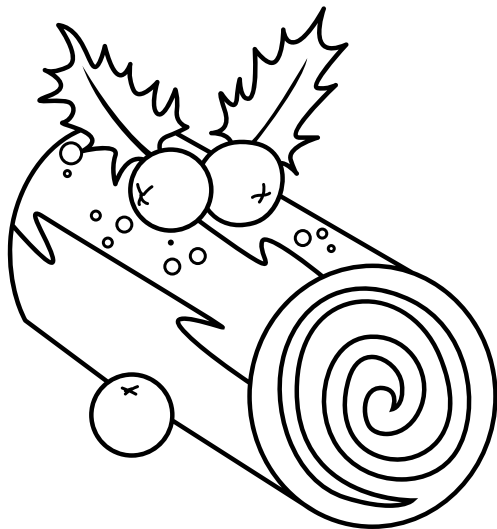
People decorate Christmas trees and hang their stockings by the fireplace because children believe that Santa Claus will fill them with gifts. People also exchange cards and gifts and go caroling.

Greetings from France

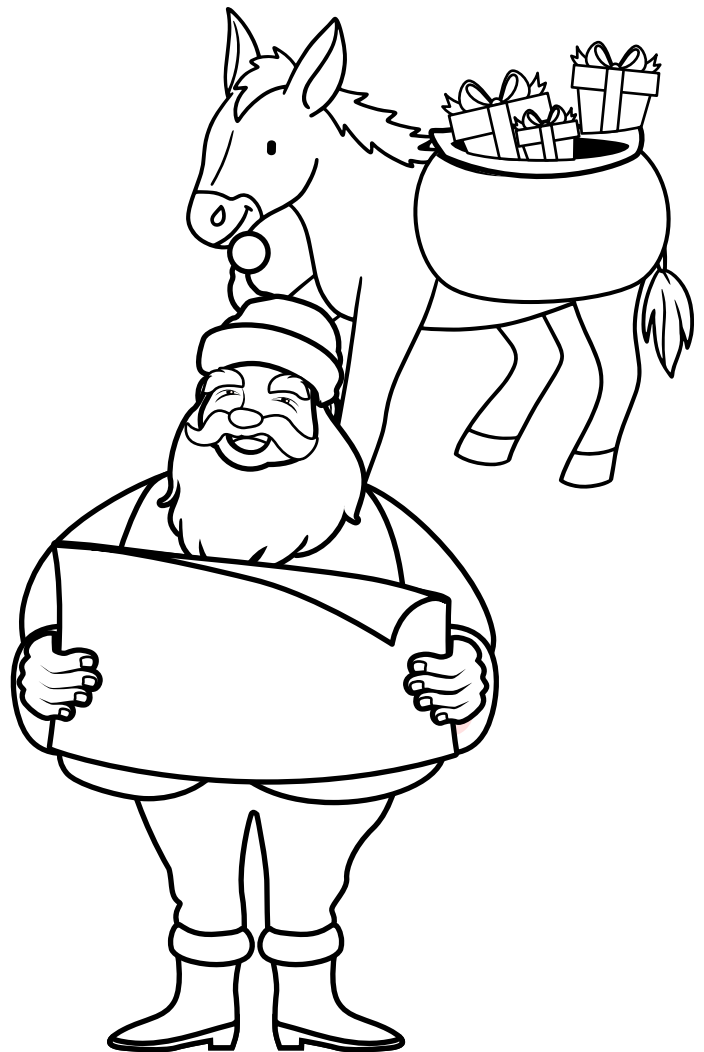
Joyeux Noël



France



Bûche de Noël

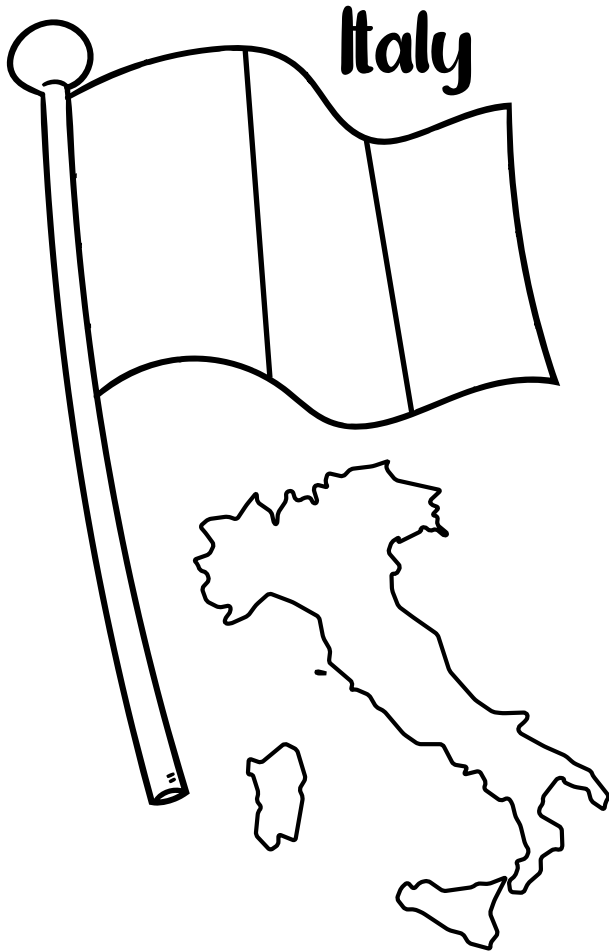


Père Noël

Père Noël is a well known version of Saint Nicholas from France. Uses his donkey known as Gui to travel and deliver presents. He brings presents only to good kids. Children put their shoes by the fire place to get gifts.

Greetings from Italy

Buon Natale!



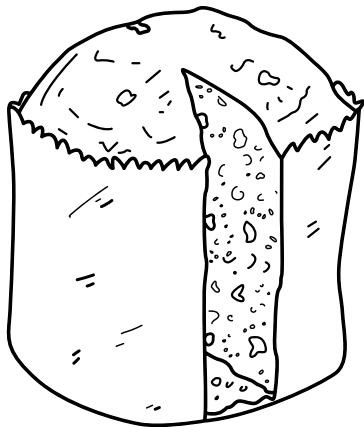
Italy



Nativity



Befana

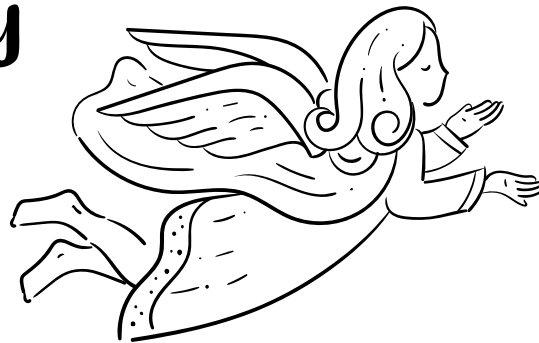
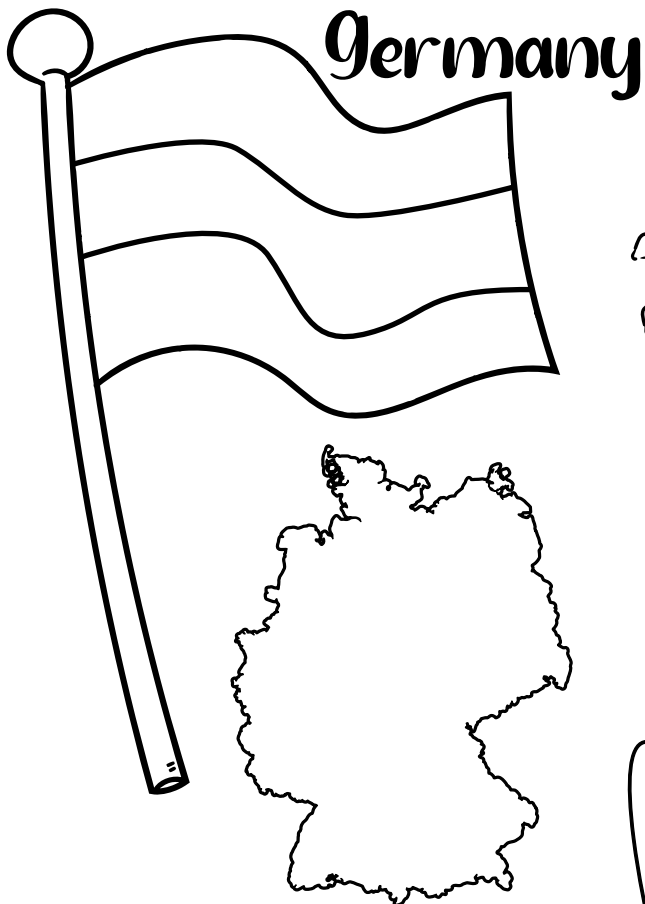


Panettone

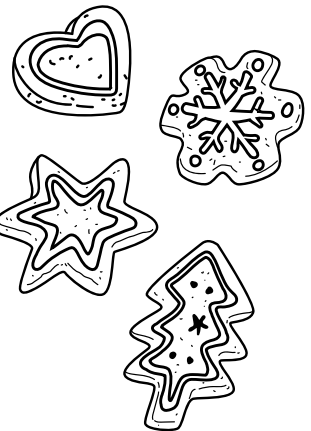
In Italian folklore, the Befana is an old woman who delivers gifts to children throughout Italy on Epiphany Eve in a similar way to Santa Claus or the Three Magi Kings. A popular belief is that her name derives from the Feast of Epiphany.

Greetings from Germany

frohe Weihnachten



Christkind



Lebkuchen



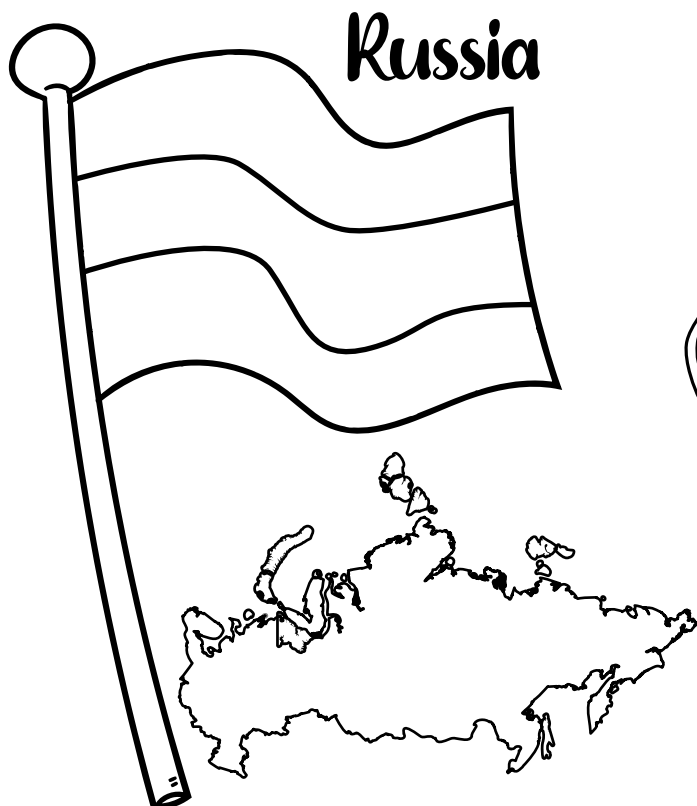
Adventskranz



Der Nikolaus

Greetings from Russia

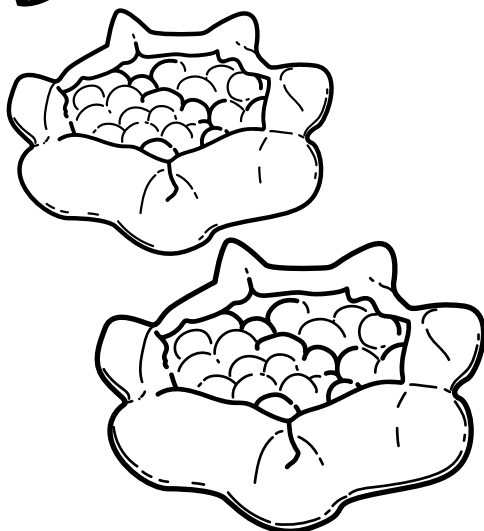
Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom



Russia



Ded Moroz & Snow Maiden

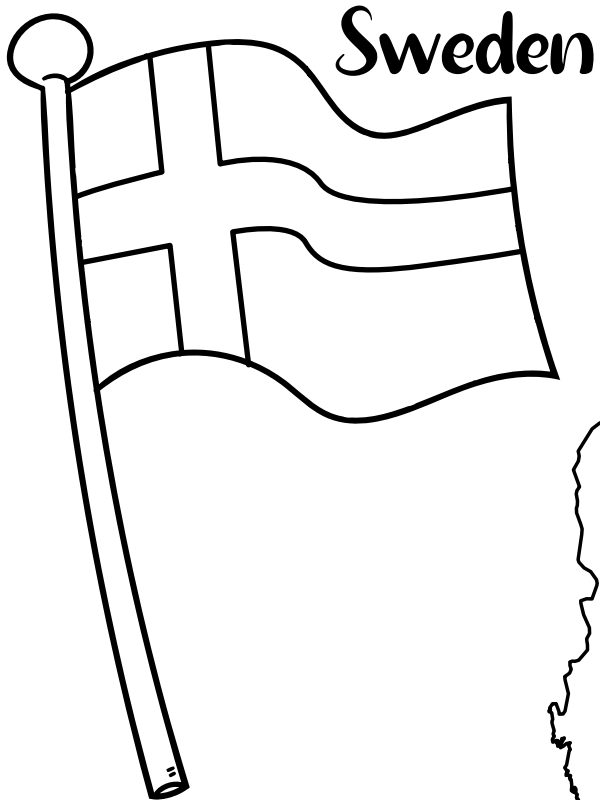


Kolyadki

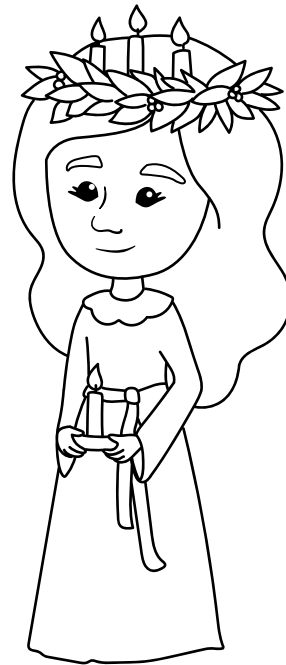
Ded Moroz carries a staff and wears a long white beard. His coat is sometimes red, but most often is blue. He wears tall valenki, traditional felted boots from Russia, to protect him from the cold. Instead of eight reindeer, Ded Moroz employs three horses that drive his Russian troika. Gifts are delivered on New Year's Eve rather than on Christmas Eve, a remnant of the Soviet transition to more secular holidays. Instead of the North Pole, the Russian Santa Claus officially makes his home at an estate in the Russian town of Veliky Ustyug.

Greetings from Sweden

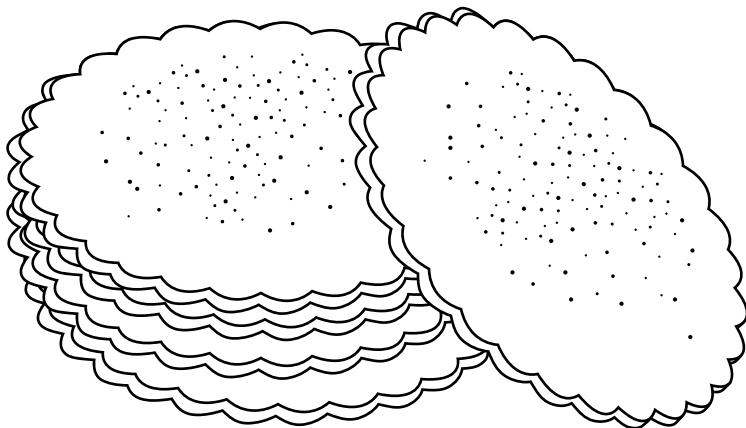
God Jul



Sweden



St Lucia

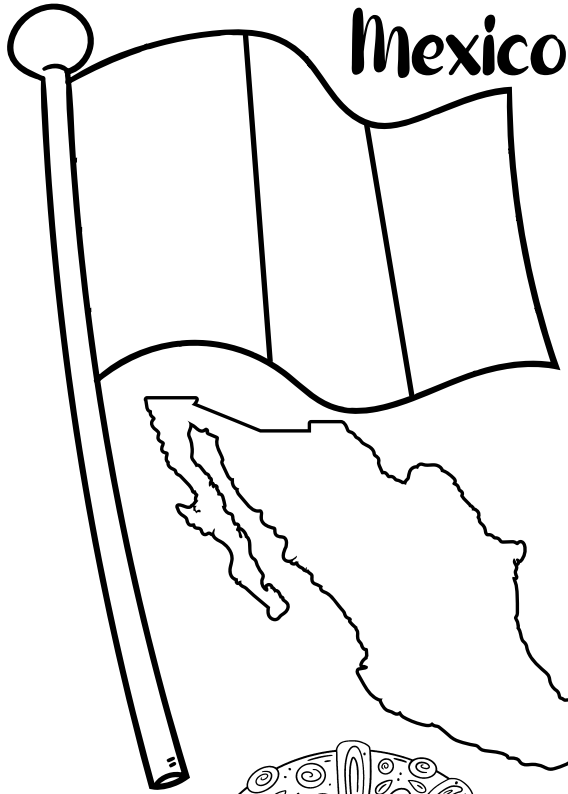


Pepparkakor

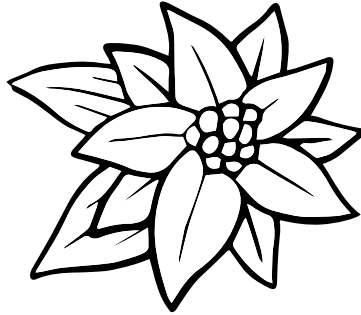
Each Sunday until Christmas, a candle is lit (and blown out after a while), until all four candles are alight. And on each of these Sundays, many Swedes enjoy glögg – a hot, spicy mulled wine with blanched almonds and raisins – and pepparkakor.

Greetings from Mexico

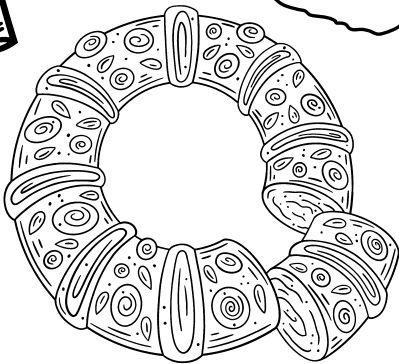
Feliz Navidad!



Mexico



la flor de
noche buena



Rosca De Reyes



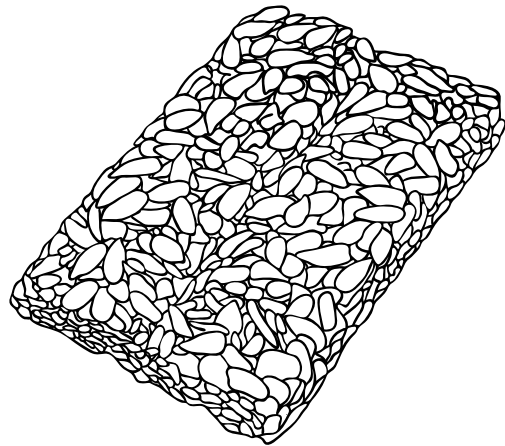
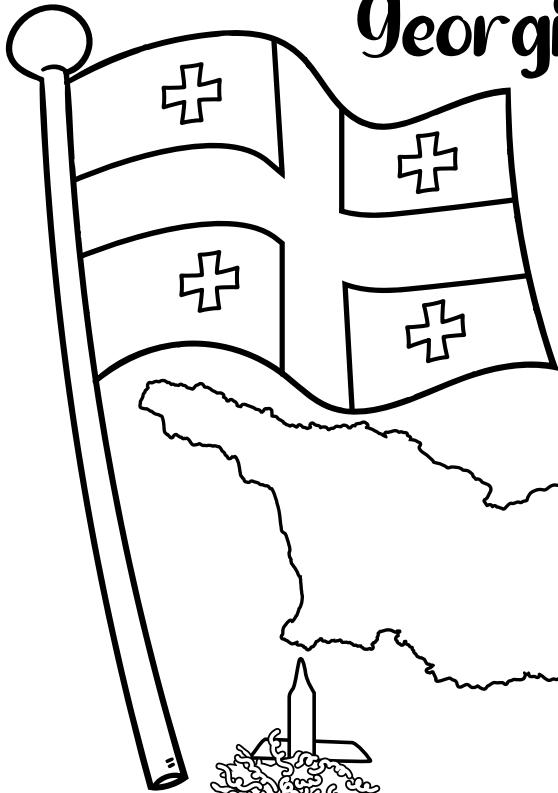
Three Kings

In Mexico, Christmas is celebrated from December 12th to January 6th. From December 16th to Christmas Eve, children often perform the 'Posada' processions or Posadas. Posada is Spanish for Inn or Lodging. There are nine Posadas. These celebrate the part of the Christmas story where Joseph and Mary looked for somewhere to stay. For the Posadas, the outside of houses are decorated with evergreens, moss and paper lanterns. Lighting the way for posadas might be 'luminarias' or 'farolitos'. These are paper sacks, with shapes cut into them, which are partly filled with sand and then have a candle put in them. They represent 'lighting the way' for somewhere for Mary and Joseph to stay.

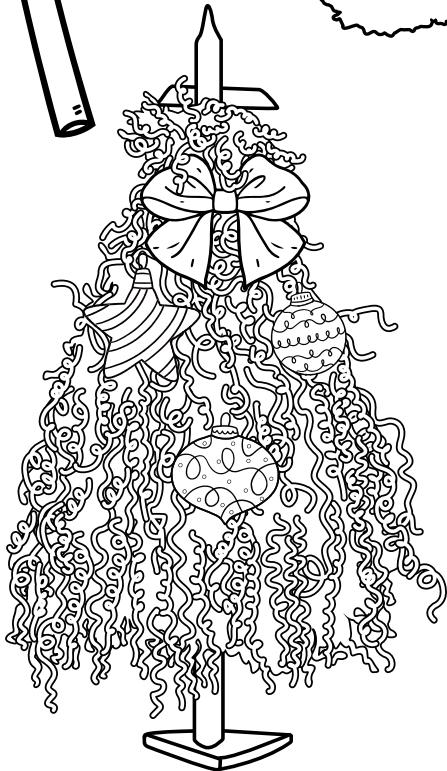
Greetings from Georgia

giltsav krist'eshobas!

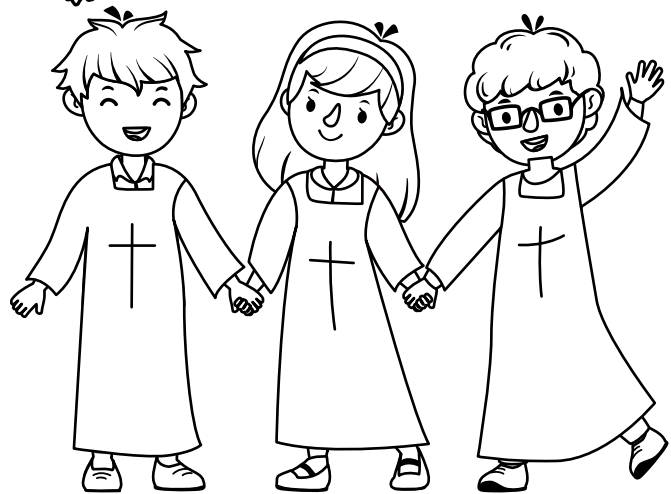
Georgia



Gozinaki



Chichilaki

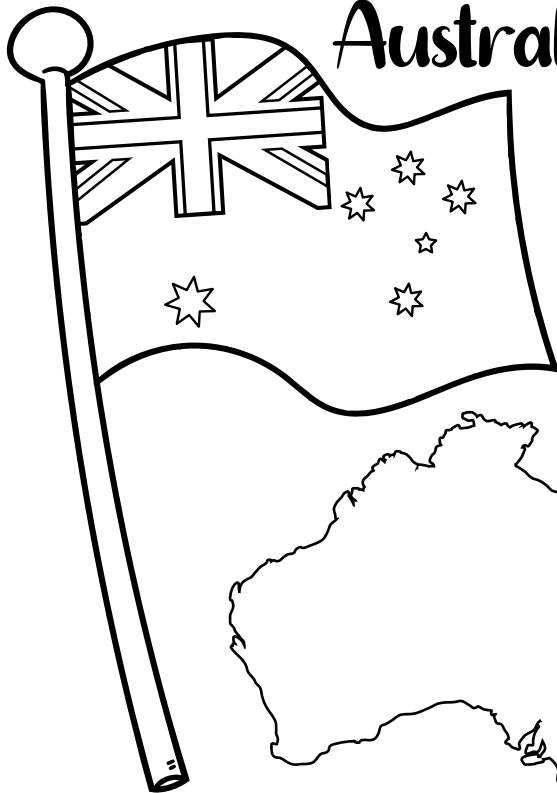


On Christmas Day, many people will go on a 'Alilo', a parade in the streets. They are dressed in special clothes and costumes to celebrate Christmas. Some people carry Georgian flags and others might be dressed as people from the Christmas story. Children like taking part in the Alilo as they're often given sweets!

Greetings from Australia

Frohe Weihnachten

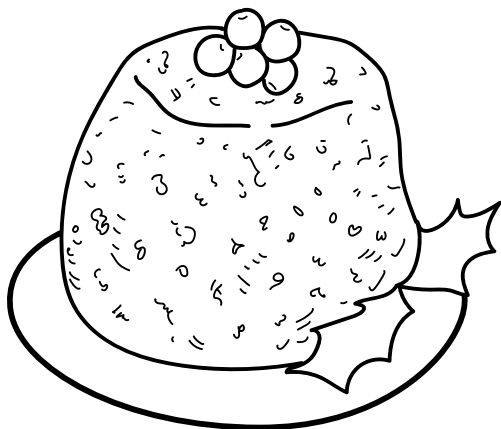
Australia



Krampus



St. Nicholas



Christmas
Pudding

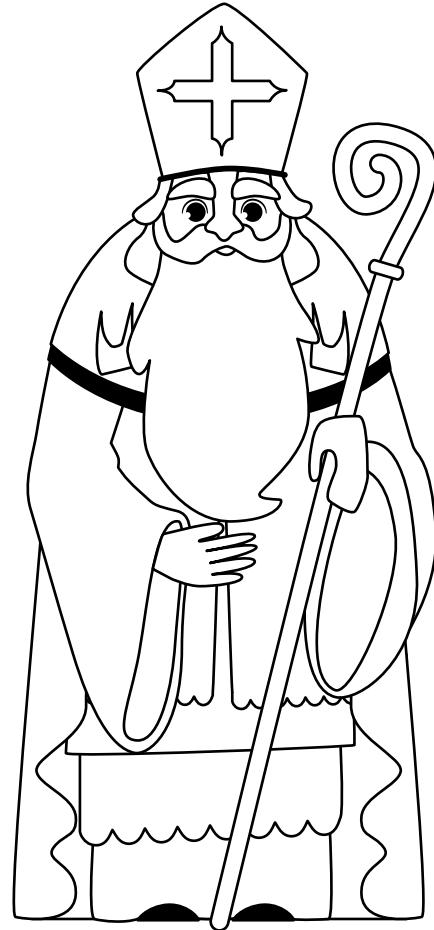
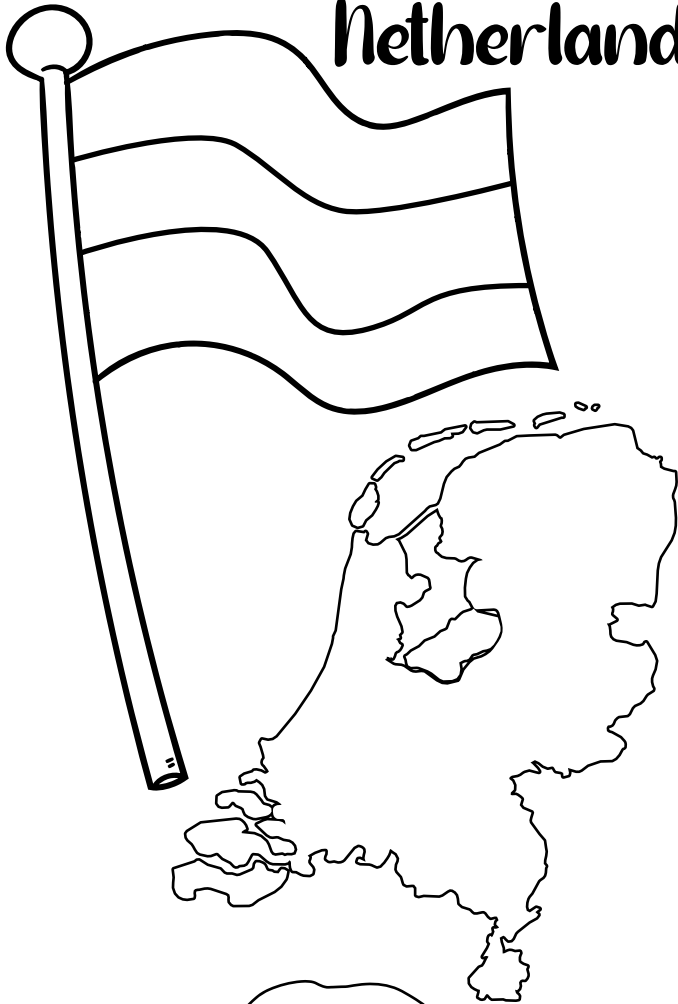
If you've been naughty in Austria, it's not going to be nice. Krampus, in central European popular legend, a half-goat, half-demon monster that punishes misbehaving children at Christmastime. He is the devilish companion of St. Nicholas.

According to alpine folklore here, good St. Nicholas rewards well-behaved children with presents while his demonic counterparts—called Krampus—punish miscreants by whipping them and hauling them off to his abominable lair. Austrians take this menacing tradition very seriously, and each yuletide season the horned, beast-like Krampus come out to play.

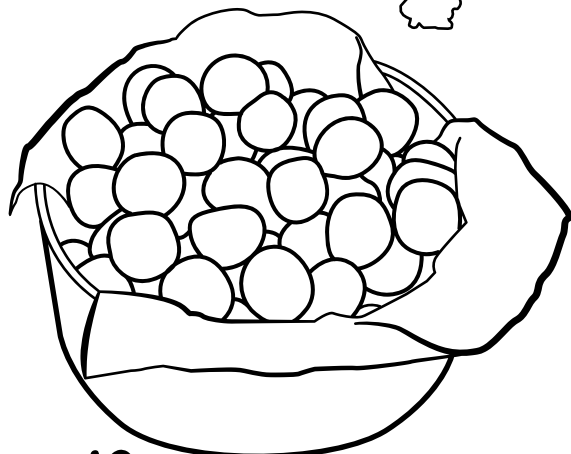
Greetings from Netherlands

Vrolijk kerstfeest

Netherlands



Sinterklaas



Pepernoten

Christmas traditions in Netherlands is typically defined by celebration of birth of Jesus, family gatherings, good food and drinks, arrival of Santa and the exchange of gifts. The unique tradition here includes Sinterklaas Avond which is celebrated annually on December 5 as St. Nicholas' birthday.

Greetings from Iceland

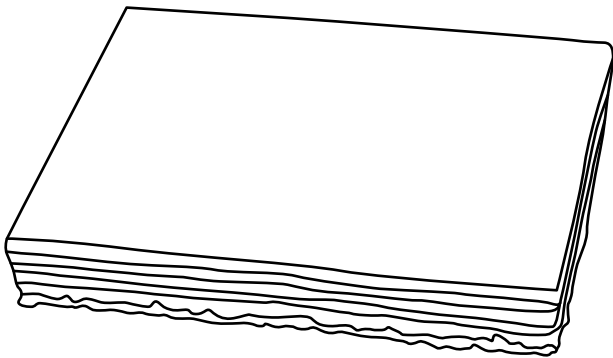
Gleðileg jól!



Iceland



Yule Lad

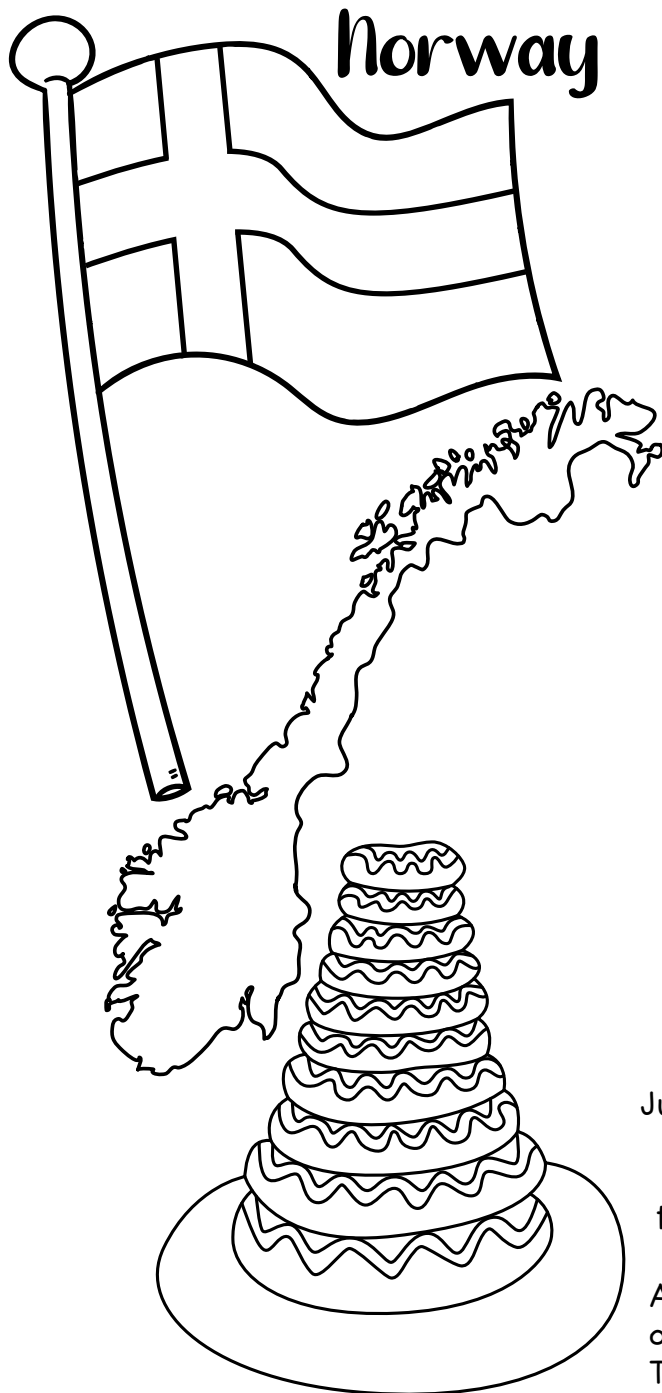


Lagkaka

Christmas in Iceland lasts for 26 days, from the 11th of December until the 6th of January. Iceland has 13 Santa Clauses or Yule Lads. The Christmas season starts when the first Yule Lad comes to town (13 days before Christmas Eve) and finishes when the last one leaves (Twelfth Night).

Greetings from Norway

God jul!



Kransekake



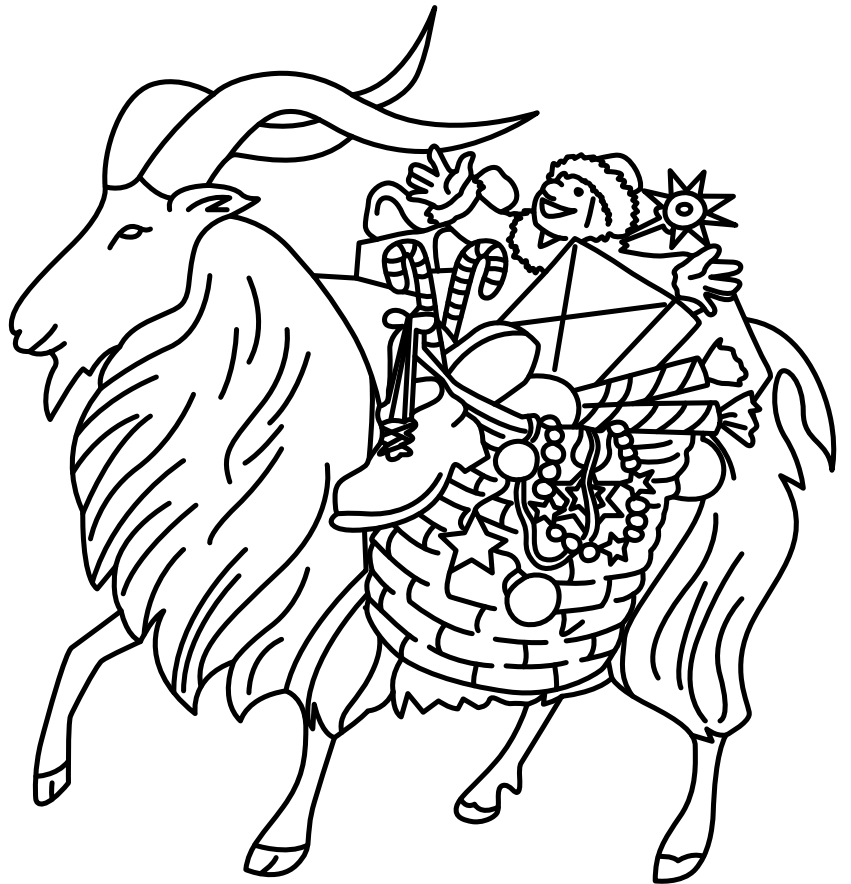
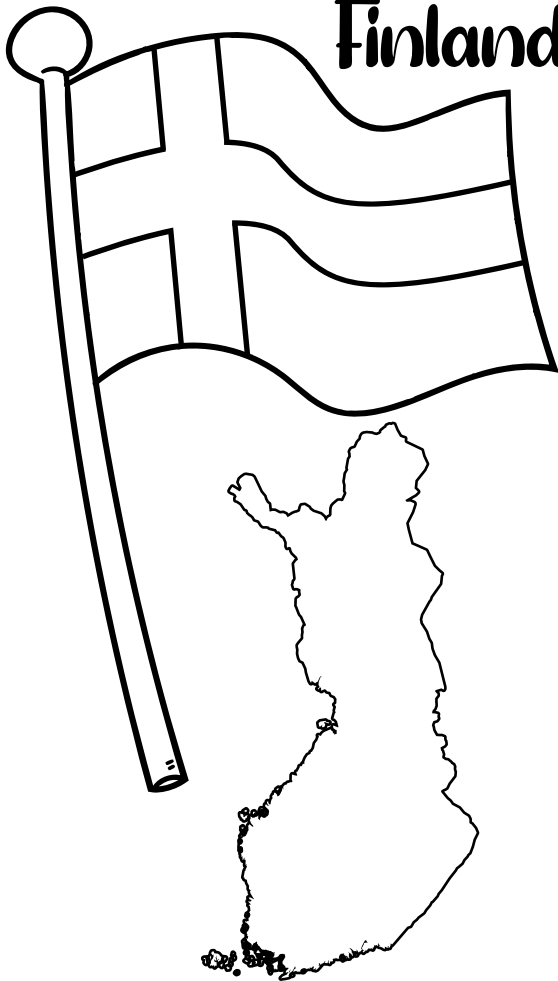
Julenissen

Christmas Eve is the time when presents are exchanged. The gifts are sometimes brought by Julenissen in Norway. Presents are also brought by the small gnomes called 'Nisse'. There are also hobgoblins (Nisse) decorations. Children pick up the presents from under the Christmas Tree and read the cards on the presents out loud. During Advent in Norway, sometimes small gifts are given on each day of December leading up to Christmas. These are known as Adventsgave or Kalendergave. There is a similar tradition in Denmark. The gifts are sometimes used together with a chocolate Advent calendar!

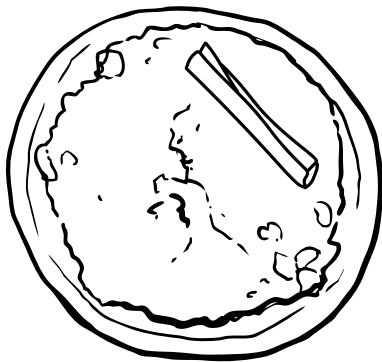
Greetings from Finland

Hyvää Joulua

Finland



Joulupukki

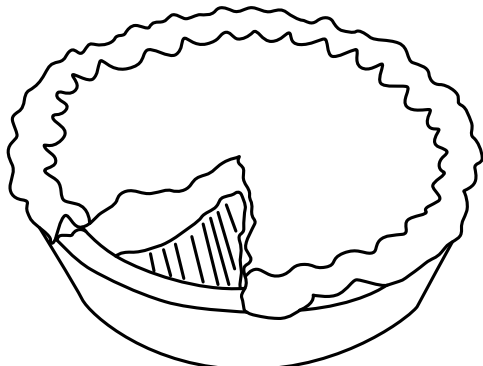
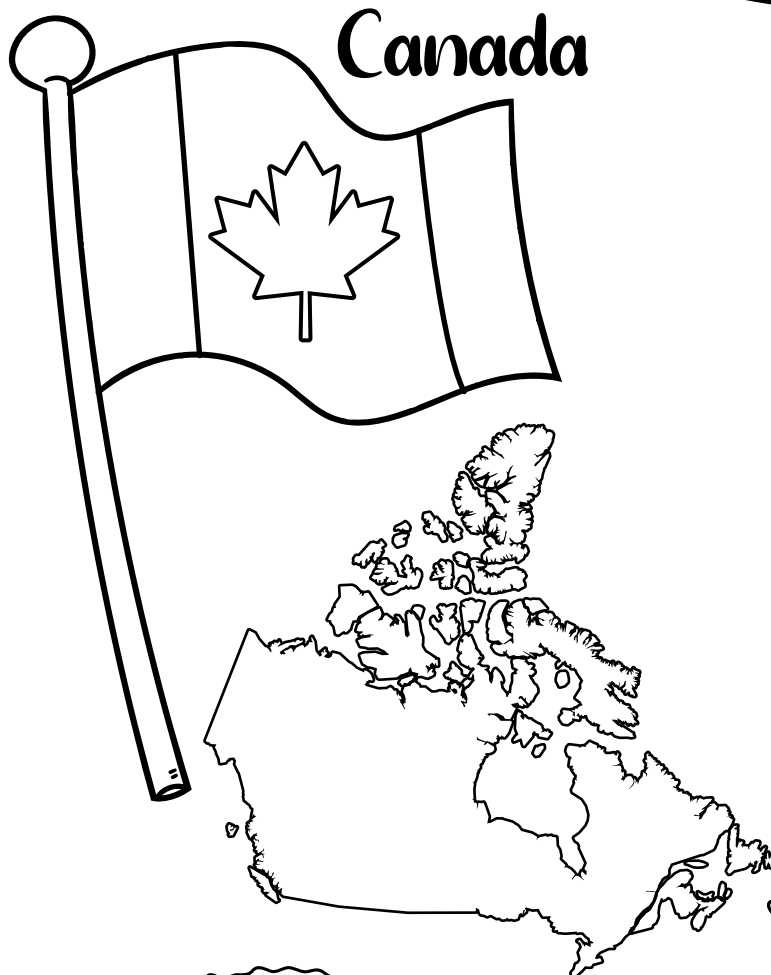


Riisipuuro

Finland originally took the opposite approach to Christmas. Instead of being a nice guy showing up with gifts, Joulupukki, "Yule Buck" was an evil goat-like creature who didn't bring presents and demanded that children behave. Winter festivals were held to keep him away. But his image was later softened and the legend was changed to more closely resemble the American Santa Claus.

Greetings from Canada

Merry Christmas



Christmas
Tourtiere

Santa Claus

Christmas in Canada is celebrated in much the same way as it is in other Western countries. As it is across the globe, December 25th is the official holiday in Canada, with many Canadians also taking time off on the afternoon of the 24th (Christmas Eve) as well as Boxing Day, celebrated on the 26th.

Greetings from Brazil

feliz Natal!



Brazil



**Papai Noel
& Bom Velhinho**

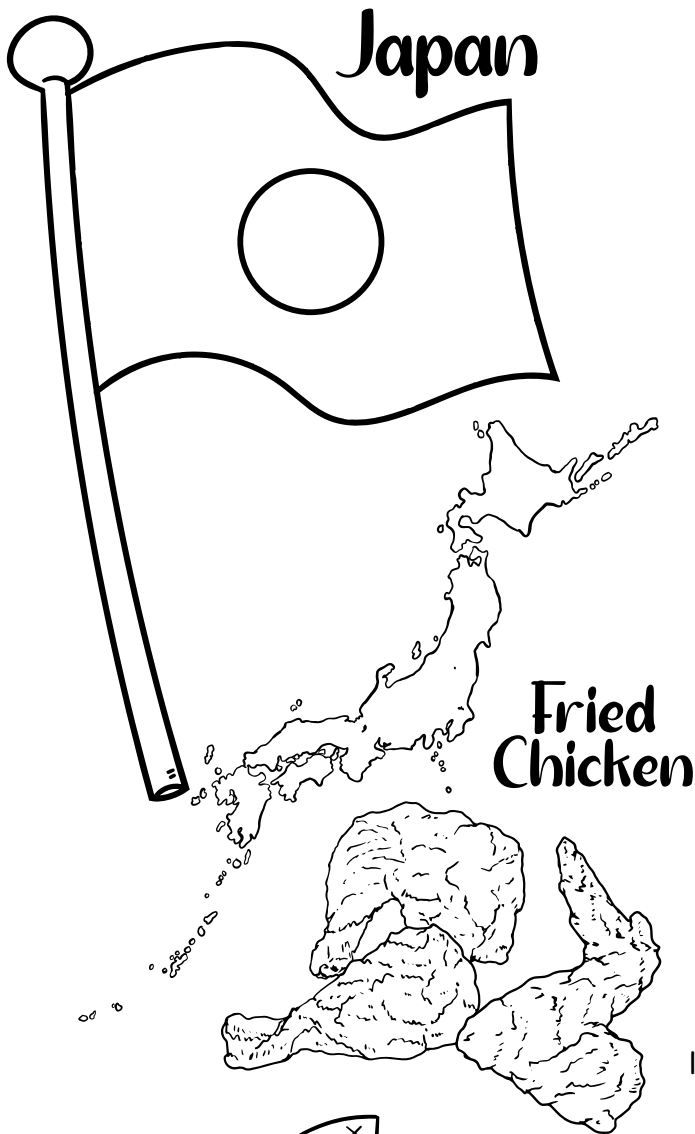
Christmas plays called 'Os Pastores' like the plays in Mexico, are also popular. In the Brazilian versions of the play, there's also traditionally a shepherdess and also a woman who tries to steal the baby Jesus! Most people, especially Catholics, will go to a Midnight Mass service or Missa do Galo. The mass normally finishes about 1.00am.

On Christmas day, people might go to church again, but this time the services are often in the afternoon.

Presépio

Greetings from Japan

Merii Kurisumasu



Christmas Cake

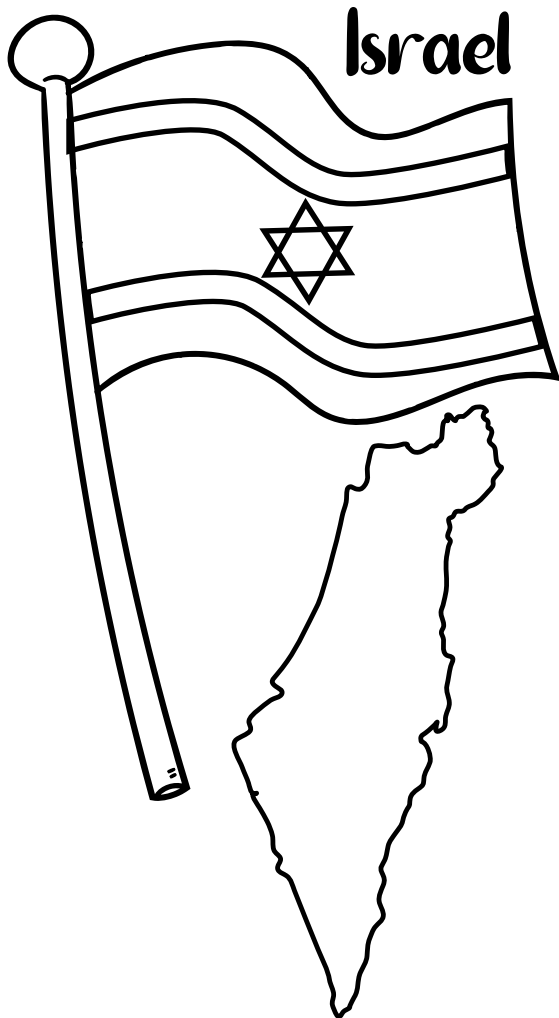


Hoteiosho

In Japan, Christmas is known as more of a time to spread happiness rather than a religious celebration. Christmas Eve is often celebrated more than Christmas Day. Christmas Eve is thought of as a romantic day, in which couples spend together and exchange presents. In many ways it resembles Valentine's Day celebrations in the UK and the USA. Young couples like to go for walks to look at the Christmas lights and have a romantic meal in a restaurant.

Greetings from Israel

Chag Molad Sameach



Israel



Baba Noel



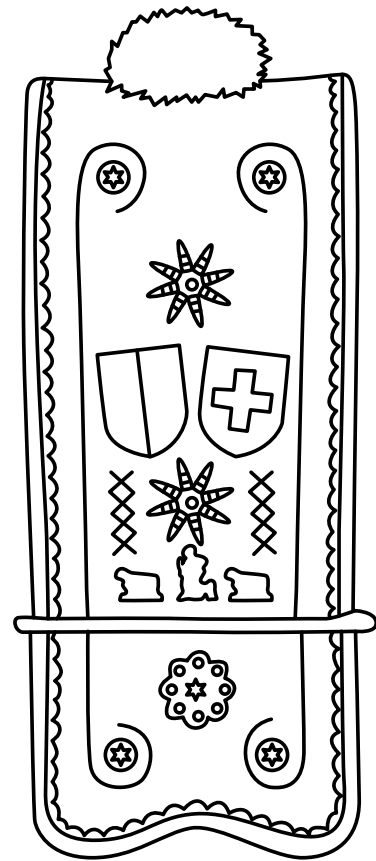
Kadorei Shokolad

The largest Christian population in Israel is in Nazareth. Nazareth has lots of Christmas lights on the streets and outdoor markets to celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah. There is a Christmas Eve parade which ends at the Church of the Annunciation. Then there's a big firework display and the Midnight Mass Service. The parade represents the journey that Mary and Joseph took in the Christmas Story, when they travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Different Christian groups take part in the parade including Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, and Maronites; as well as local Jews.

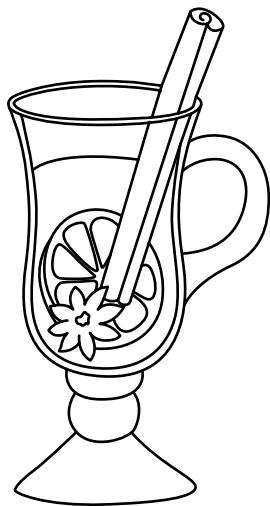
Greetings from Switzerland

Fröhliche Weihnachten

Switzerland



Trychle

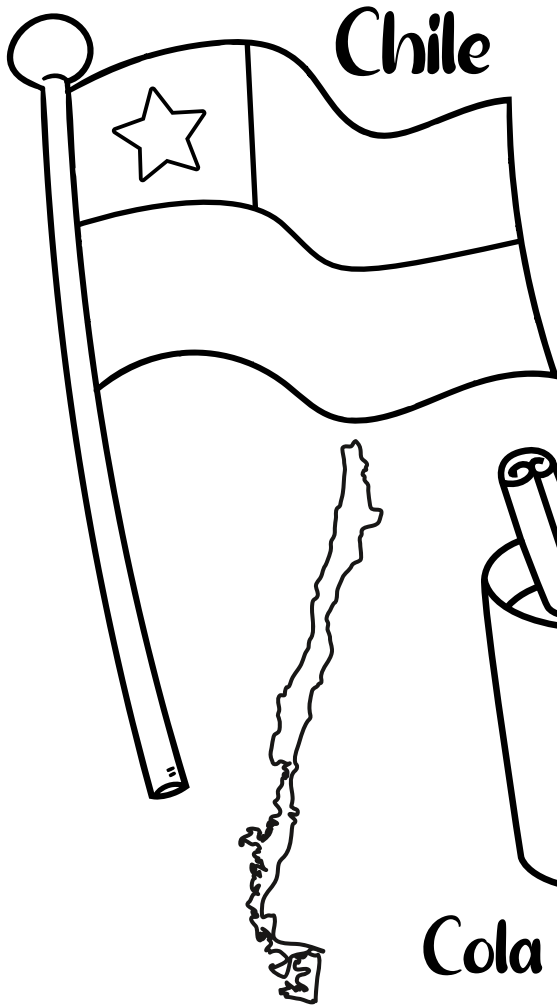


Glühwein

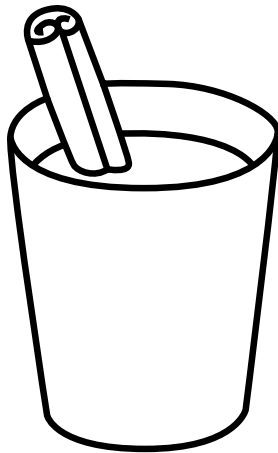
Advent marks the start of the Christmas preparations. Advent calendars and crowns are both popular. In some villages, there are 'real' advent calendars with different houses decorating an 'Advent Window'. On the day when it's your house with the advent window, you hold a party for the villagers in the evening. There's food, mulled wine (called Glühwein) and music.

Greetings from Chile

Feliz Navidad



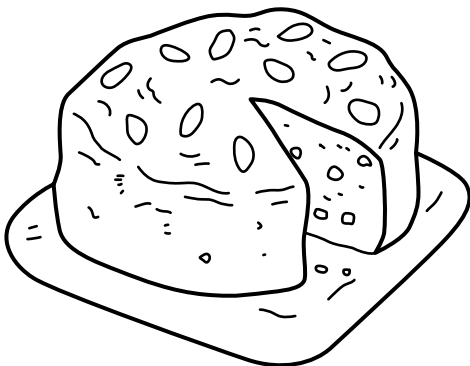
Chile



Cola de Mono



Viejito Pascuero

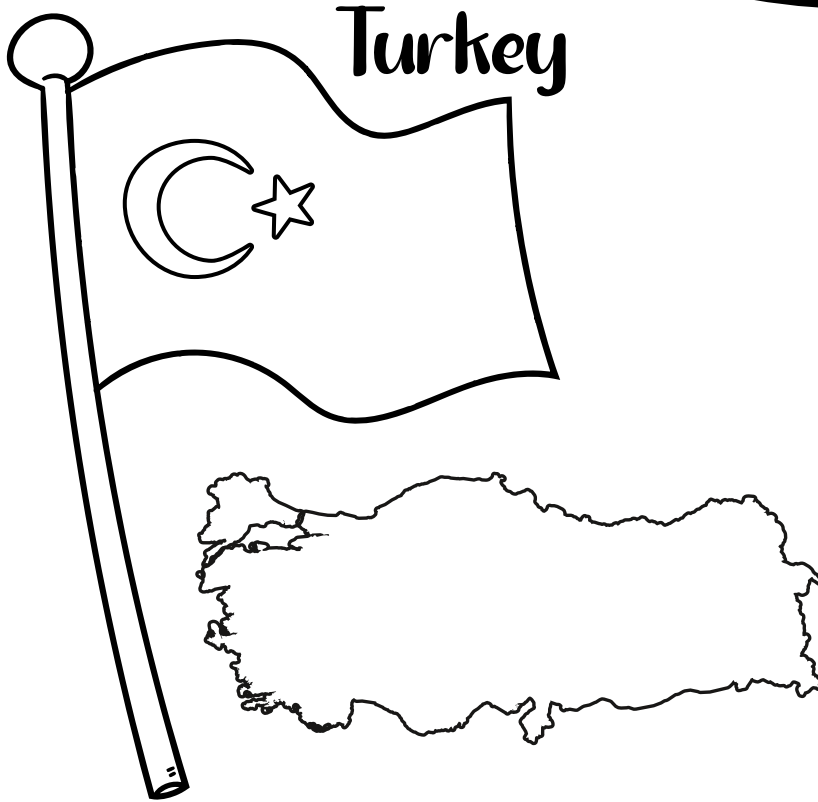


Pan de Pascua

Christmas in Chile is very warm as it's in the middle of summer! However, it shares many of the same Christmas customs as the USA. Many Catholics in Chile celebrate Advent and also go to special church services for nine days before Christmas. These services are known as a Novena.

Greetings from Turkey

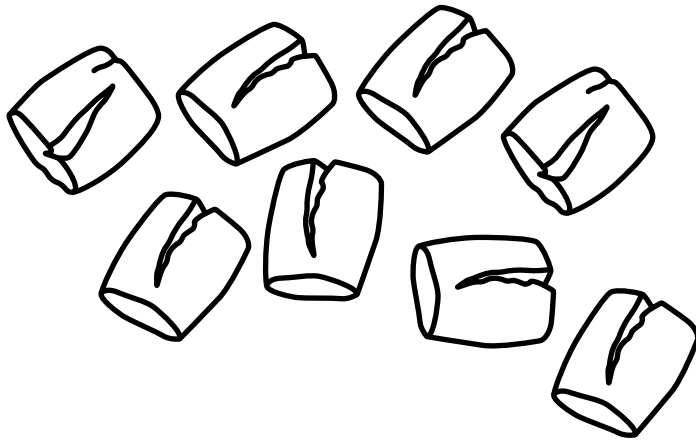
Mutlu Noeller



Turkey



Noel Baba



Un Kurabiyesi

In Turkey, the old guy is known as Noel Baba. According to legend, a shopkeeper was too poor to supply his daughters with brownies. When Noel Baba (Saint Nicholas) heard of their plight. He threw three bags of coins into the shopkeeper's yard, saving the daughters from a life of ill repute.