

# FESTQUEST

HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD:  
A CHALLENGE PACK



THE  
ADVENTURE  
SQUAD



# HALLO, ADVENTURER!

IT'S JARED HERE FROM SNOWY GERMANY! HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW PEOPLE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD? SPOILER ALERT: NOT EVERYONE EATS GINGERBREAD AND SINGS CAROLS LIKE WE DO HERE (THOUGH, LET'S BE HONEST, THEY SHOULD).

THE ADVENTURE SQUAD AND I HAVE COOKED UP SOME FUN CHALLENGES TO TAKE YOU ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF FESTIVE TRADITIONS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE. SO, GRAB SOME HOT CHOCOLATE—OR WHATEVER YOUR HOLIDAY DRINK OF CHOICE IS—AND GET READY FOR SOME SERIOUS HOLIDAY FUN. TRUST ME, THIS IS ONE ADVENTURE YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS!



HAVE A GREAT FESTIVE SEASON! LET'S GO!

**JARED**





Alex's

## CHALLENGE: THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Did you know that festivals celebrating light have been around for thousands of years? For this challenge, you'll explore the ancient Greek festival of Lenaia, a winter celebration honouring Dionysus, the god of wine, theatre, and revelry. People lit torches, told stories, and danced to bring warmth and joy during the darkest time of the year.

Your mission is to create your own "light" craft inspired by this ancient tradition. You can design a festive lantern, decorate candles, or even craft a glowing ornament to brighten up your home. While you work, imagine the flickering lights of ancient Greece, where myths came alive under the stars.

### DECODE THIS GREEK RIDDLE:

I light the way in ancient halls,  
With golden glow on shadowed walls.  
I'm fed with oil, not wood or coal,  
In Greece, I played a vital role.  
What am I?



Mia's



## CHALLENGE: UNDERWATER HOLIDAYS

Explore how marine animals adapt to the colder months.

Research one of these creatures to see how they adapt: Humpback whale, Arctic cod, Emperor Penguins, Sea otters, Harp seals



## CHALLENGE: THE YULE LADS

In Icelandic folklore, the Yule Lads—mischievous trolls who visit children during the 13 days before Christmas—are said to be the sons of Grýla, a fearsome troll who lives by the sea. According to the myth, Grýla's pet sea monster, Hafgúfa, guards her home and devours anyone who dares to trespass. Some versions of the tale describe Hafgúfa as a giant whale-like creature that can swallow entire ships whole.

Can you find out more about Hafgúfa?  
And who are the 13 Yule Lads?  
Explore them and find out!



Kaley's

## CHALLENGE: NATURE'S WINTER MAGIC

As the cold months roll in, nature has its own way of celebrating the season. Trees, animals, and even the ground itself adapt to the chilly winter temperatures. Evergreens stay green, animals hibernate, and certain plants use the cold to rest and prepare for spring.

But how do these changes help nature thrive through the winter? It's all about survival, and every part of the ecosystem plays a role in the seasonal shift. From animals that sleep through the winter to those that stay active, ecosystems are full of fascinating adaptations!

Your challenge is to learn how the wildlife in your area prepares for the winter and what changes happen in the environment to help everything survive the season.



# CHALLENGE:

## BIRDSEED ORNAMENT

Now that you know how wildlife adapts to winter, let's give a little help to the creatures around you! Many animals rely on food sources like seeds and berries to survive the cold months. For this activity, you'll create a simple birdseed ornament that you can hang outside to feed winter birds.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

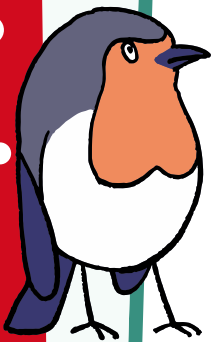
- Pinecones (or any natural object like a log or stick)
- Peanut butter (or lard if you're allergic)
- Birdseed
- String or twine



### STEPS:

- Spread a generous layer of peanut butter (or lard) over the surface of the pinecone or object.
- Roll the pinecone in birdseed, making sure it's fully covered.
- Tie a string to the top of the pinecone and hang it outside on a tree branch or in your yard.

This simple ornament will provide food for local birds during the winter months and help them stay nourished. Plus, it's a fun way to bring a little nature into your holiday season!



Jared's

## CHALLENGE: CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND

Germany is famous for its magical Christmas markets, called Weihnachtsmärkte. These markets, filled with twinkling lights, handmade crafts, and delicious treats, bring towns and cities to life during the holiday season. Wander through the market stalls in your imagination, savouring the smells of roasted nuts, warm pretzels, and spiced Glühwein (non-alcoholic for you, of course!). Why don't you research these markets and see what they look like for yourself?

But there's more to Germany's festive spirit than just markets! Have you heard of the legend of St. Nicholas? Long before Santa Claus became the star of Christmas, St. Nicholas was celebrated on December 6th for his kindness and generosity. German children leave out their shoes, hoping St. Nicholas will fill them with sweets and gifts—if they've been good!

And of course, no German Christmas is complete without tasty holiday treats. Lebkuchen (spiced gingerbread cookies) and Stollen (a sweet fruit bread with powdered sugar) are must-haves. Each bite is like a taste of Christmas history, as these recipes have been enjoyed for hundreds of years. Your challenge is to make your own Lebkuchen with the recipe below!



# CHALLENGE: LEBKUCHEN

## INGREDIENTS

### Dry Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ cups (280g) all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom (optional but traditional)

### Wet Ingredients:

- ½ cup (120g) honey
- ½ cup (100g) brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons (30g) unsalted butter, melted

### Glaze (Optional):

- 1 cup (120g) powdered sugar
- 2–3 tablespoons water or lemon juice



# CHALLENGE: LEBKUCHEN

## INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the Dry Ingredients:

- In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and spices.
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Prepare the Wet Ingredients:

- In a large mixing bowl, combine the honey, brown sugar, egg, and melted butter. Stir until smooth.

Combine Wet and Dry:

- Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, mixing until a sticky dough forms.
- Cover and chill the dough in the fridge for at least 1 hour (or overnight) to make it easier to handle.

Shape the Cookies:

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll the dough into small balls (about 1 tablespoon each) and place them on the baking sheet, leaving space for spreading. Slightly flatten each ball.

Bake:

- Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly golden and firm to the touch. Cool completely on a wire rack.

# CHALLENGE: LEBKUCHEN

## INSTRUCTIONS

Glaze (Optional):

- Mix powdered sugar with water or lemon juice to create a smooth glaze. Brush the glaze over the cooled cookies and let them set. Add decorations like almonds or candied peel before the glaze hardens.

Tips:

- Lebkuchen tastes even better after a day or two as the spices meld together.
- Store in an airtight container to keep them soft and flavourful!





# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## CHALLENGE:

## RESEARCH TIME!

We're going to take a quick trip around the world and give you some ideas to research and learn about the festive season in different countries around the world.

### GERMANY:

- Find or draw a gingerbread cookie (Lebkuchen) or a Christmas market stall.
- Bonus: Share what you know about St. Nicholas Day.

### MEXICO:

- Find something that looks like a piñata or a star to represent the Las Posadas tradition.
- Bonus: What is a Posada, and why is it important?

### SWEDEN:

- Find a candle or create a Lucia crown using paper or drawings.
- Bonus: What role does light play in Sweden's Lucia Day celebration?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## PHILIPPINES:

- Find or make a star-shaped lantern to represent the Parol.
- Bonus: What material is traditionally used to make these lanterns?

## AUSTRALIA:

- Find something beach-related (e.g., a toy surfboard or sunglasses) to show how Christmas is celebrated in the summer.
- Bonus: Describe an Australian barbecue (or "barbie") at Christmastime.

## ITALY:

- Find or draw a broom to represent La Befana, the kind-hearted witch.
- Bonus: Who is La Befana, and what does she do during the holiday season?

## UNITED STATES/CANADA:

- Find or craft a candy cane, a classic North American Christmas treat.
- Bonus: What do the colours of the candy cane symbolise?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## ICELAND:

- Find or draw a cat to represent the Yule Cat (Jóla-kötturinn).
- Bonus: What does the Yule Cat do, and why do Icelanders give warm clothes as gifts?

## JAPAN:

- Find or create a picture of fried chicken to represent Japan's Christmas dinner tradition.
- Bonus: Which fast-food chain made this a Christmas trend?

## ENGLAND:

- Find or make a cracker (the party kind, not the snack!) to represent British Christmas crackers.
- Bonus: What's usually inside a Christmas cracker?

## FINLAND:

- Find a sauna symbol (a towel, bucket, or steam image) to represent their Christmas Eve tradition.
- Bonus: Why do many Finnish families visit saunas on Christmas Eve?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## NORWAY:

- Find a broom or mop to represent their superstition of hiding brooms on Christmas Eve.
- Bonus: Why do Norwegians hide their brooms during the holiday?

## SOUTH AFRICA:

- Find or draw a sun or braai (barbecue) grill for their summer Christmas.
- Bonus: What traditional Christmas dessert do South Africans often enjoy?

## POLAND:

- Find or create a star to symbolize the breaking of Oplatek, a traditional Christmas wafer.
- Bonus: What does the sharing of the wafer represent in Polish households?

## ETHIOPIA:

- Find a candle or draw a star to represent the traditional Ganna celebration.
- Bonus: What calendar do Ethiopians use, and why is their Christmas celebrated on January 7th?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## BRAZIL:

- Find or draw a nativity scene (Presépio), a central part of Christmas in Brazil.
- Bonus: What other summer tradition do Brazilians pair with their Christmas celebrations?

## INDIA:

- Find a string of lights to represent how Indian Christians decorate banana or mango trees for Christmas.
- Bonus: What other festivals of light are celebrated in India?

## RUSSIA:

- Find or draw a Christmas tree and Ded Moroz (Grandfather Frost).
- Bonus: Why is Russian Christmas celebrated on January 7th, and who is Ded Moroz?

## FRANCE:

- Find or draw a Yule log (Bûche de Noël) to represent their iconic Christmas dessert.
- Bonus: What is the origin of the Yule log tradition in France?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## GREENLAND:

- Find or draw an ice block to represent Greenland's snowy Christmas.
- Bonus: What is mattak, a traditional dish eaten during Christmas in Greenland?

## KENYA:

- Find or draw a candle or an image of a church to represent their festive processions.
- Bonus: How do Kenyan families typically celebrate Christmas Day?

## DIWALI:

- Find or draw a diya (oil lamp) to represent the Festival of Lights.
- Bonus: Why do people light lamps and decorate with rangoli during Diwali?

## HANUKKAH:

- Find or draw a menorah with candles to symbolize the eight nights of Hanukkah.
- Bonus: What is the story behind the oil lasting for eight nights?



# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## DONGZHI FESTIVAL:

- Find or create a picture of dumplings or a bowl of tangyuan (sweet glutinous rice balls).
- Bonus: What does the Dongzhi Festival celebrate, and why is it linked to the winter solstice?

## KWANZAA:

- Find or draw a Kinara (candle holder with seven candles) or something that represents the seven principles of Kwanzaa.
- Bonus: What are two of the seven principles celebrated during Kwanzaa?

## SHAB-E YALDA:

- Find or draw a pomegranate or watermelon, two fruits traditionally eaten during this Persian winter solstice festival.
- Bonus: Why are these fruits significant during Shab-e Yalda?

## YULE:

- Find or draw a yule log or an evergreen wreath, symbols of this ancient winter solstice celebration.
- Bonus: What does the lighting of the yule log represent in ancient traditions?

# **CHALLENGE:** **BECOME A HOLIDAY SKY EXPLORER**

Did you know that the night sky plays a big role in holiday traditions? From the Star of Bethlehem to Santa's sleigh soaring across the sky, people have been looking up in wonder for centuries.

Your challenge is to become a holiday sky explorer! Research the constellations you can see in the winter months, and learn about the science of the Northern Lights. If you want to go full-on sleigh-tracking mode, join the NORAD Santa Tracker and see how technology helps "spot" Santa on Christmas Eve!

**ON 24TH DECEMBER, CLICK HERE TO TRACK SANTA VIA THE NORAD TRACKER!**

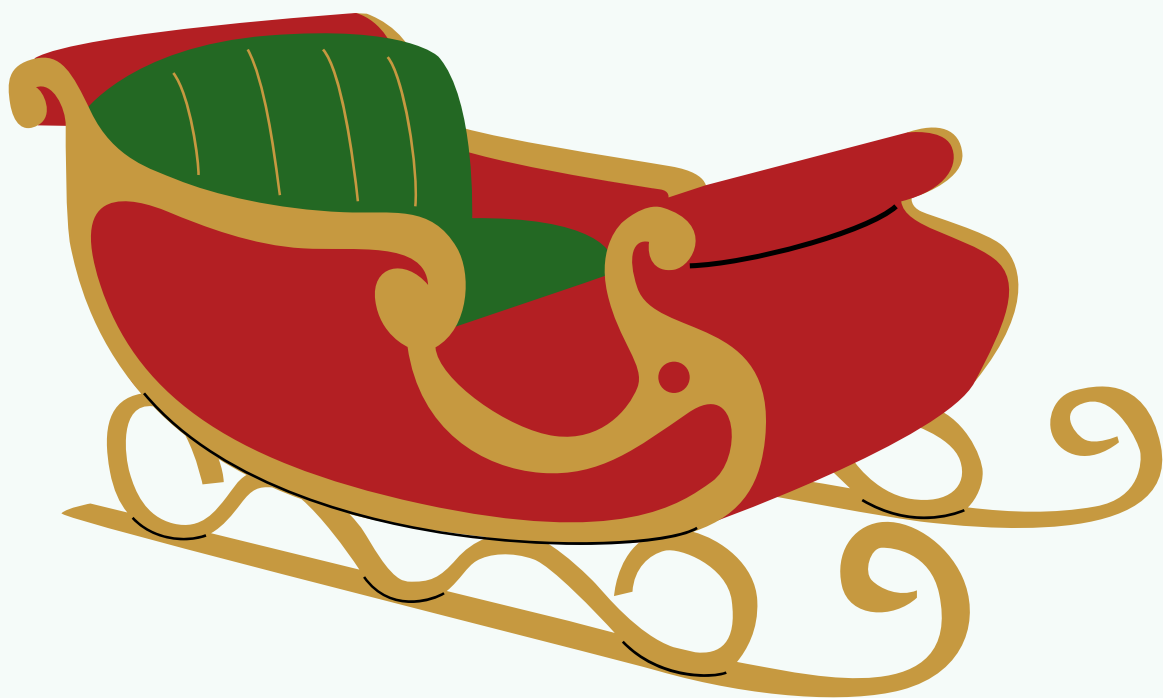


## CHALLENGE:

## SANTA'S WILD RIDE

Santa's sleigh is pretty impressive—but what if he needed an upgrade? Maybe his sleigh should look more like a dinosaur or even use modern technology like hover engines!

Your challenge is to design a new sleigh for Santa. Think about how it could work: Would it be powered by wind, solar energy, or something magical? Create a drawing or build a model out of materials you have at home. Don't forget to include a secret feature to help Santa deliver gifts even faster!





## CHALLENGE:

## HISTORY OF SANTA

Santa Claus might seem like a modern figure, but his origins are steeped in history and myths from around the world! From the generous St. Nicholas of ancient Greece to the snowy Sinterklaas of the Netherlands, Santa has had many names and forms.

Your challenge is to uncover a lesser-known story about Santa Claus or a similar figure. Where did this version of Santa come from, and how does it compare to the one we know today? Create a short story or mini-booklet to share your discoveries with others!

Ho ho ho!



# THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

EMILY HERE! I JUST WANTED TO SAY MERCI BEAUCOUP FOR JOINING US FOR THIS FUN FESTQUEST. WE HOPE YOU HAD A LOT OF FUN WITH THESE CHALLENGES.

DID YOU KNOW THAT IN OUR TRAILBLAZERS MEMBERSHIP, YOU CAN GET CHALLENGE PACKS TO GO WITH EVERY SINGLE ONE OF OUR ADVENTURE QUEST LETTERS? I THINK THAT IS A PRETTY COOL THING TO BE ABLE TO HAVE EACH MONTH!

ALSO, FOR 2025, MITCH, ALEX, JARED, MIA AND MYSELF ARE GOING TO BE JOINED BY A FEW OF OUR NEW SQUAD RECRUITS, INCLUDING KALEY (WHO LOVES ALL THINGS ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT RELATED) AND ALSO MERLIN WHO IS OUR MUSICAL MAESTRO! WE'RE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE ARTS WITH HIM!

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US HERE AT THE ADVENTURE SQUAD, WE WANT TO WISH YOU HAPPY ADVENTURING FOR 2025!

Your fellow adventurer,  
Emily

