

Celebrating the Sámi

Scandinavia's indigenous people are a vivid part of the area's history and culture. BY LUCY CASALE

For thousands of years, the Sámi (SAH-mee) have inhabited northern Scandinavia, in a region called Sápmi, which stretches across the high plains of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia's Kola Peninsula. The Sámi have their own flag, language and Parliament. February 6 marks Sámi National Day, and celebrations abound!

In Tromsø, for example, the festivities span all of Sámi Week, where visitors can watch reindeer racing and lasso-throwing, sample food, attend art exhibits and take language classes. Recognize this day by teaching the young people in your life about the Sámi.

Fun Fact:

The Sámi folk costume is called *kolt* or *gákti*. There are at least 12 different styles, depending on geographic region.

Activities for Young People

PRESCHOOL

Build a Lavvu

Used by Sámi past and present, a lavvu (LAA-vo) is a tent-like temporary shelter, ideal for reindeer herding. Help your little one build their own version from blankets, ribbons and other household items. Get inspiration from Northern Lavvu (lavvu.com), a company that makes both traditional and modern lavvus.

EXPAND IT: Read "Children of the Northlights," an illustrated book about the Sámi culture by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. upress.umn.edu

ELEMENTARY AGES

Draw a Flag

The Sámi flag was first used in 1986 and approved as the official flag in 1992. The colors reflect the Sámi national costume. Draw and color the flag with the appropriate colors. Find an example at norden.org and search "Sámi flag."



EXPAND IT:

The symbols on the flag represent elements such as fire, moon, nature, sun and water. The red half of the circle stands for the sun and the blue half represents the moon. Identify which parts of the flag symbolize the elements.

TEENAGERS

Jam to Joik

Sámi traditional singing is called joik. Introduce your teen to Mari Boine, a famous Norwegian artist whose music is influenced by her Sámi background and the folk music of Northern Scandinavia. Watch a performance at atomicsoul.no/management/mari-boine/.

EXPAND IT: The Sámi are known for their crafts. Attend a class to make Sámi bracelets at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in April and November 2016 or make your own at home (see sidebar). vesterheim.org

LEARN MORE

SIIDA,
the national museum
of the Sámi
siida.fi

"Sámi, Walking with Reindeer"
by Erika Larsen
amazon.com

Sámi Bracelet Tutorial
[pinkponydesign.com/
2012/09/sami-bracelet-
tutorial.html](http://pinkponydesign.com/2012/09/sami-bracelet-tutorial.html)

Sámi Bracelet Kit
buengerstudios.com



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