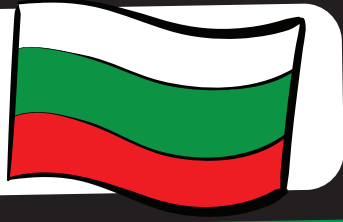


Bulgaria



Did you know:

- ✓ Bulgaria is the oldest country in Europe that has never changed its name since it was first established (in 681 AD).
- ✓ After Greece and Italy, Bulgaria has the third most valuable archaeological sites in the world, including over 15,000 Thracian tombs.
- ✓ Bulgaria has hot summers and long, cold winters. From December to mid-March, the country gets a lot of snow, especially high in the mountains.
- ✓ Bulgaria is home to about 170 plant species that are found nowhere else in the world, including species of tulips, a buttercup, a cornflower, and a baby's breath.

Culture

The majority of Bulgaria's citizens speak Bulgarian, a language that uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Turkish and Romani are also spoken, along with foreign languages such as Russian, English, Italian, and Spanish.

Bulgarian Orthodox is the main religion in Bulgaria, but the country is also home to Roman Catholics, Muslims (about 12% of the population), Protestants, and Jews.

The nation has a colorful culture of costumes, crafts, and traditional music and dance. It's a blend of Persian, Slavic, Greek, and Ottoman influences.



Bulgarian Food

- ✓ Traditional Bulgarian recipes often feature Bulgarian feta cheese, fresh and/or stuffed vegetables, yogurts, and grilled meats (especially lamb, pork, and veal).
- ✓ Popular dishes include kufte (spicy ground beef and pork formed into grilled patties), banitsa (pastries stuffed with meats and cheeses), and Shopska (the traditional Bulgarian salad of diced onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, and parsley).
- ✓ Bulgarians often start their meals with fresh salads, and these salads rarely include lettuce. Instead, popular ingredients are cabbage, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and feta cheese.

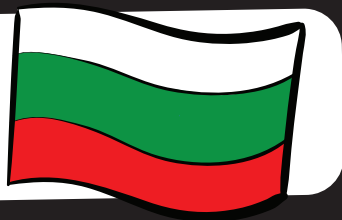
Bulgarian Kukeri

To celebrate New Year's Day in Bulgaria, dancing men dressed in costumes made of goat hair and wooden ram masks wake residents very early.

The costumed men wish the people good health and a good harvest in exchange for small gifts like beans or eggs. Eventually, everyone gathers in the town square for music, dancing, and food.



Bulgaria



Craft

How to make Kukeri masks!

What you need:

- Cardboard cut into oval face shapes plus extra!
- Cardboard for making eyes, noses, fangs, ears, spectacles and whatever else you like!
- Scissors
- PVA glue in small dishes
- Chalk markers or pencil to mark out cutting lines
- Colored Sharpies
- Craft supplies to decorate.
- Stretchy elastic to make a headband

1. Creating the eye-holes: Draw on two eyes with a sharpie (on the back), paying careful attention to placement so that their eyes line up with the holes. (Little kids might need help with this part). Cut the eyes out with the scissors (or if there is an adult helping a Stanley Knife)

2. Adding the spectacles & other facial features Choose what cardboard features you want to add. Cut out and paint or color it with sharpies & chalk



markers. They then glue it on using PVA. (You may need to enlarge the eye-holes a little so the holes line up). You might like to add cardboard lips, noses, ears and cheeks. Let creativity rule the process!

3. Decorating the cardboard mask: Here's the fun bit—decorate their masks using paint, sharpies, dot stickers, pastels, paint sticks, chalk markers, glitter, craft pompoms, foil, washi tape, patterned paper or crepe paper—whatever you have lying around.



4. Adding some 'wow factor'! Adding a 'starburst' of cardboard strips around the mask really ups the wow-factor! Create a symmetrical pattern and glue each strip neatly onto the back.



5. Finish off with a headband



6. Finally add some thick elastic to create a snug, durable headband. We were lazy and simply knotted some through the eye-holes for ease.

