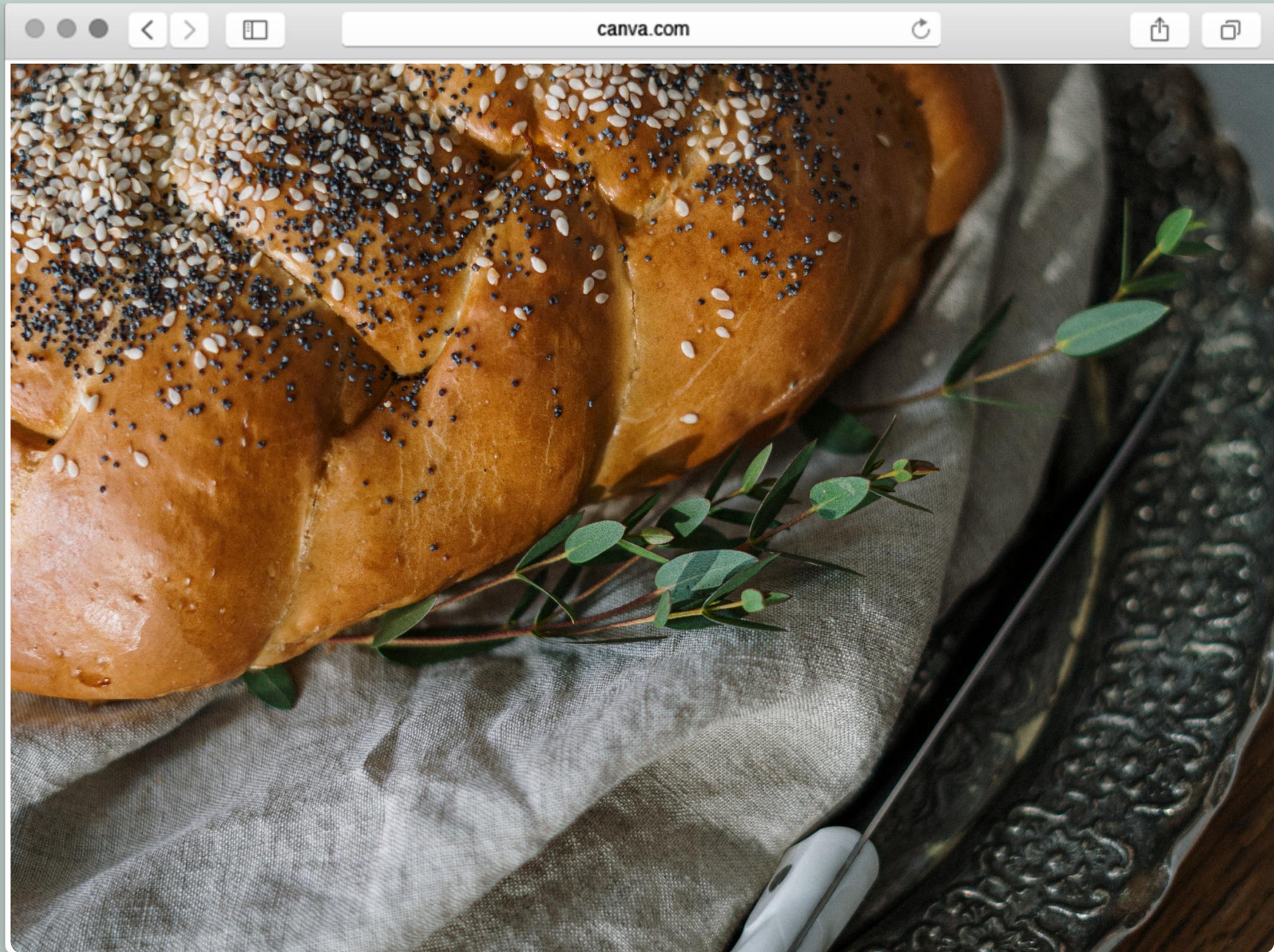


ROMANIAN TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS



Martisorul

One of the most beautiful Romanian traditions is the celebration of the coming of spring. Martisor is an ancient symbol, which marks the arrival of warm weather and it is celebrated all over Romania every year, on March 1st.

In popular belief, this talisman has magical powers. Men offer martisoare to women, and they wear them on their chests or on their hands throughout March. Martisor was designed as an amulet tied with a braided cord of two threads - one white (symbolizing divinity, health, purity of soul and fulfillment) and one red (as a symbol of love for the eternal beauties of life: friendship, fidelity and honor).



Bread and salt

As in Slavic countries, bread and salt is a traditional Romanian custom expressing hospitality, showing that the guest is welcomed. According to historians, the first testimonies of this ritualistic form of hospitality are pre-Christian, and the offering of bread and salt represented a sign of goodwill and acceptance towards those who came at one's house or territory.

The bread symbolises the wealth of the fields and the salt used to be the real gold of Antiquity, as it had been, for thousands of years, the most high-priced product on the market.



The dance of the goat

'Capra' ('The Goat') is a traditional dance, performed between Christmas and the New Year. It is executed by a young man dressed up as a goat, accompanied by a group of singers wearing colourful costumes. They wander on the streets of the village/town while performing the dance and loudly singing, in order to cheer up the householders and express best wishes on the occasion of the New Year.



Mosoii

In Dobrogea, winter customs were brought from all over the country by Romanians who settled here for more than centuries ago. The most common carols In Constanta and Tulcea are the ones that announce the birth of Jesus, such as, 'Craii', 'Capra' and 'Mosoaiele'.

Groups of children go from house to house, and at the same time, groups of youngsters or men join them and wish health and richness while the hosts welcome them in their houses and give them drinks and food (sometimes money).

The carol singers wish healthiness, abundance, happiness and peace in the family.





'Mosoi' are actually people dressed up in sheepskin costumes turned inside out, with fox or rabbit fur, with masks made from ram's horns, rabbit moustache, colored ribbons, immortal flowers and multicolored beads. The role of 'Mosoiu' dance is to protect Christmas against the evil spirits.