

Lingonberries are my favorite food when made into preserves that taste like cranberries

ALL ABOUT

My friend Elof found a giant moose antler among the moss & lingonberries. Once a moose looses one he has to pull the other off so he is not lopsided

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Hi Kids!

I like trolls! Traditionally in Scandinavia trolls were ugly, gruff, cruel creatures that come from Norse mythology. In our times, children's stories changed from scaring kids, to tales of hope and wonder and trolls changed too. Trolls are still rascally and scruffy but their antics are seen as funny. This is my 4th book about trolls.

I read about Hulder-maidens in *d'Aulaires' Trolls* a great book about trolls. Hulders were pretty girls who had cow's tails that dropped off if they married a mortal man. I asked myself "how could a troll loose his tail?"

This book tells how.

Jan Brett



Our friends, Gudrun and Elof Eriksson took us to their farm in southern Sweden. We saw 9 moose, including a bull (male), cow (female) and calf (youngster). Wolves sometimes appear in winter.

Next we went to Stockholm and visited Skansen, a beautiful open air museum with buildings from the olden days and native animals that would appear in my book. Go there and see lynx, grey owl, bear, moose, otter and a domesticated spotted pig!



A flight to Kiruna took us to Swedish Lapland, and a helicopter took us deep into the wilderness and the sacred mountains of the Lapps. By combining elements from all three places I had the setting for my book.



Cotton grass was used as bedding and lamp wicks in the olden days. Look for a big basket of it in the troll's house.



"Moses" with Gudrun, me, and Elof at Vittangi Elk Park, Kiruna, Sweden

When I wrote *Home for Christmas* I knew Rollo troll would be instantly transported from the high mountain down to his home valley on an antler toboggan. But would it be a reindeer or a moose antler? Both animals live in Sweden. I had my answer in Kiruna when I met Lars Bjork's tame moose, Foppa, Tuva, Moses and Hilma. Moses let us rub his hot velvety antler buds. It was spring and they were starting to grow after the old ones fell off in winter. My friend Elof found a huge antler as we searched the woods looking for Capercaillie birds.

There is a magnificent bird that lives in the Northern Pine and birch forests of Sweden called the Capercaillie. It is a very large grouse. The males fan their tails like turkeys when doing their courting dance, and when they gather together to show off to the females it is called a Lek. This happens in early spring, and since my book begins in early fall, I used my artistic license to picture the Capercaillie fanning his tail. The willow Ptarmigan is another ground bird with feathered feet that lives in wild places that I imagined trolls would live. I made the Capercaillie and the Ptarmigan take the place of turkeys and chickens on the troll's farm.



The mountains in the background are called Laplander's gate. The carved antler is carved in the shape of a Ptarmigan bird.

I put a hedgehog in every book, and it was easy in Home for Christmas because hedgehogs live in Sweden.

Skansen is an open air museum in the heart of Stockholm, where old buildings from all over Sweden are brought, restored, and displayed to the public. My favorite was this hut on "legs" where you could store food even in deep snow. I put one on the troll's farm. Lots of the old farms had potato cellars built into the earth and I modified one for the troll's house. I also got ideas for the troll's house on a trip to Iceland.

Skansen also keeps many of Sweden's wild animals. I saw a lynx, brown bears, otter, grey owl and moose up close.

Don't miss Skansen if you go to Sweden!



We saw this pig at Skansen. It reminded me of a cross country trip we took as children. We stopped at an intersection and spotted a giant pig in a red harness pulling a buggy. I've never forgotten it. We turned the car around and went back for a second look.

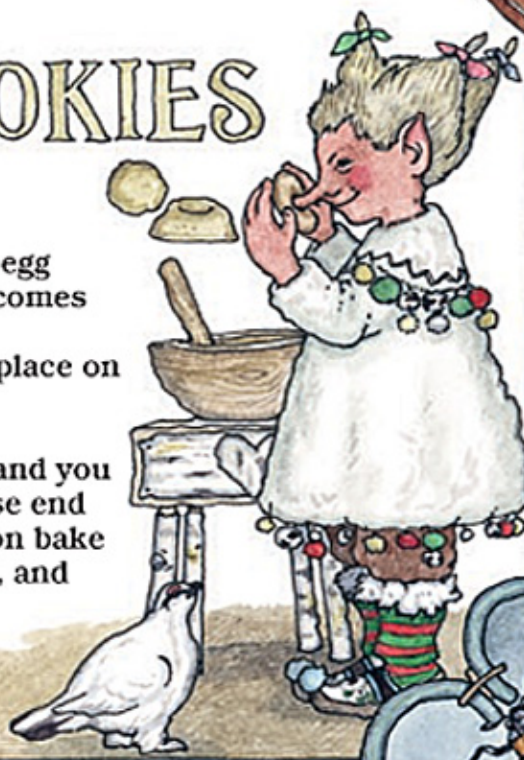


NOSEPRINT COOKIES

Preheat oven to 350° F

- 1 c butter
- 2/3 c sugar
- 1/4 t salt
- 1/4 t almond extract
- 1 egg
- 2 c flour
- 1/2 c seedless jam

- cream butter and sugar
- add salt, almond extract, egg
- mix in flour until dough comes together
- roll into 1 1/2" balls and place on cookie sheet
- make depression in ball
- If nose is under 3" long, and you are not a troll, use end of a wooden spoon to make 10 minutes, cool, and fill with jam.



The bumblebee that lives in arctic Sweden looks like it was dipped in white paint. It makes honey and builds its nest underground.