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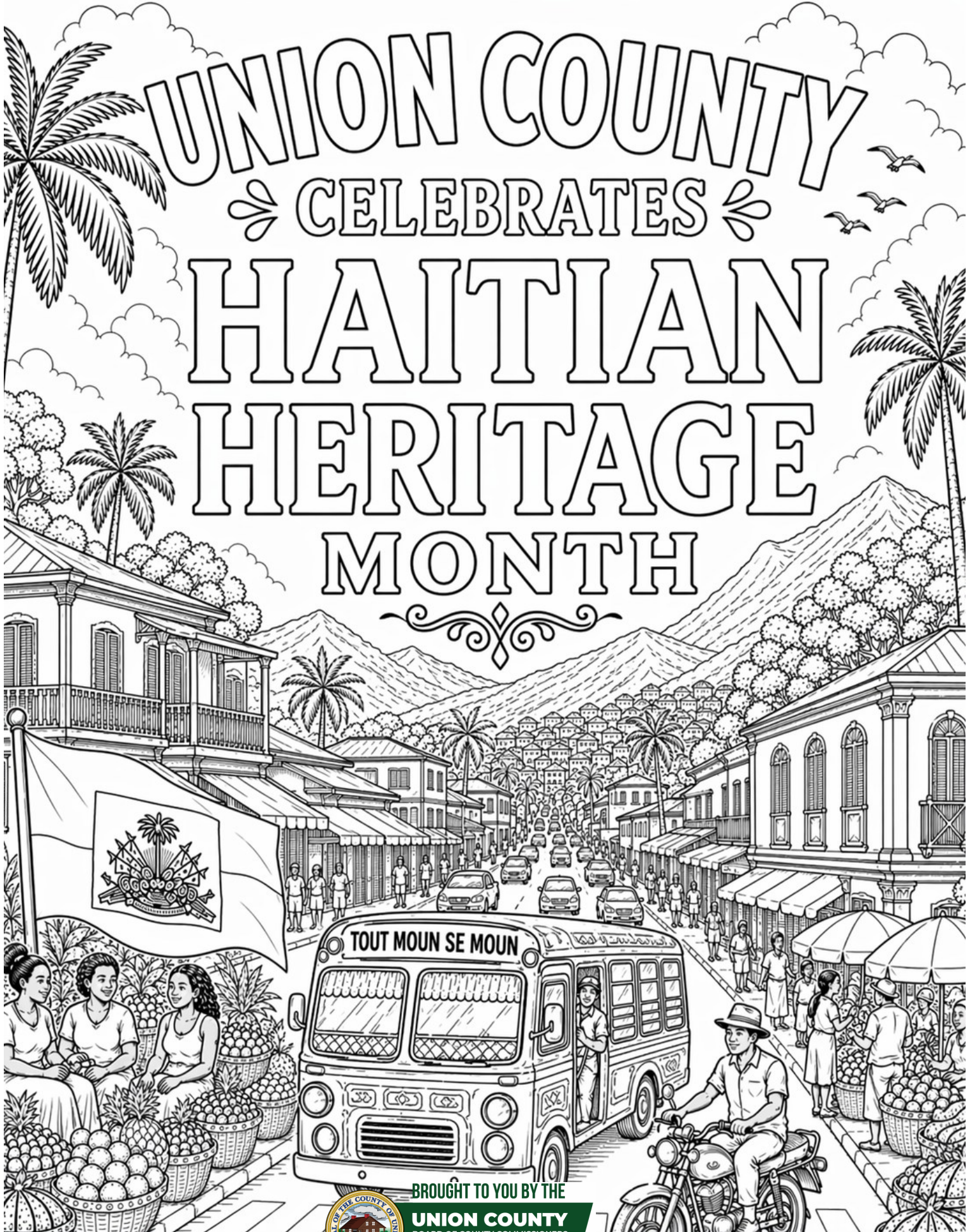
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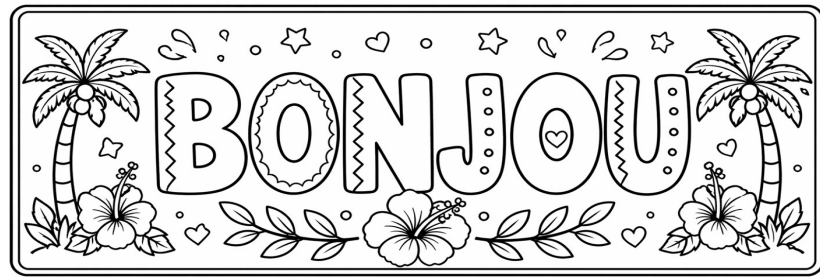


EXPLORE
UNION COUNTY



UNION COUNTY CELEBRATES HAITIAN HERITAGE MONTH

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE
UNION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Department of Economic Development



Dear Boys and Girls of Union County, NJ,

I'm excited you have a copy of the 2026 Union County Haitian Heritage Coloring Book! A fun and meaningful way to celebrate the history, culture, and contributions of the Haitian community. Through these pages, you'll explore important symbols, traditions, and inspiring figures that reflect Haiti's rich heritage and resilience. As we celebrate Haitian Heritage Month, I hope this book encourages you to learn more, embrace diversity, and enjoy the beauty of different cultures.

Sincerely,

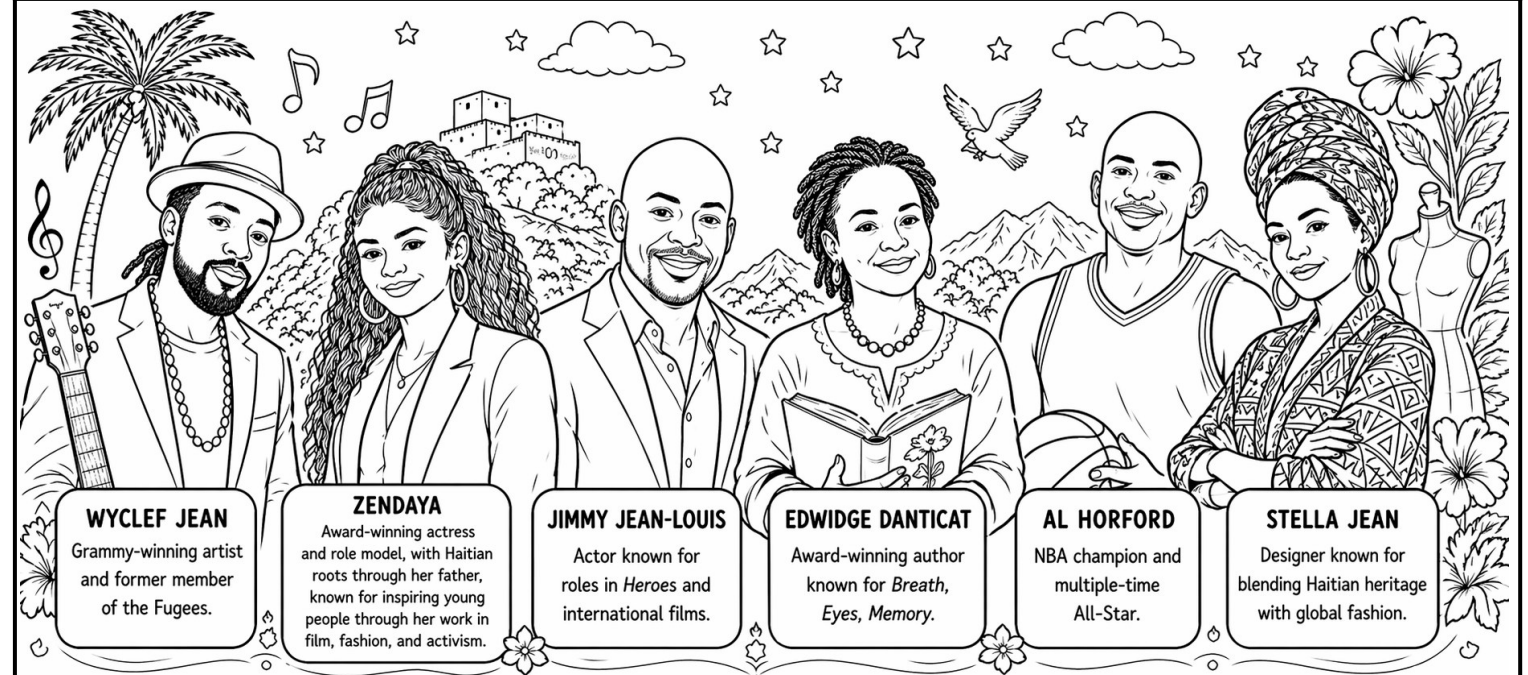
Joseph C. Bodek

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Chairman, Union County Board of County Commissioners



Recognizing famous Haitian-Americans is important because it celebrates their achievements, inspires future generations, and highlights the powerful influence of Haitian heritage around the world. From music and sports to literature, film, and activism, Haitian-Americans have made lasting contributions across many fields. Their stories reflect resilience, creativity, and pride, serving as powerful reminders that greatness can grow from strong roots. Here are just a few of the many Haitian-Americans who have made a meaningful impact.



WYCLEF JEAN

Grammy-winning artist and former member of the Fugees.

ZENDAYA

Award-winning actress and role model, with Haitian roots through her father, known for inspiring young people through her work in film, fashion, and activism.

JIMMY JEAN-LOUIS

Actor known for roles in *Heroes* and international films.

EDWIDGE DANTICAT

Award-winning author known for *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

AL HORFORD

NBA champion and multiple-time All-Star.

STELLA JEAN

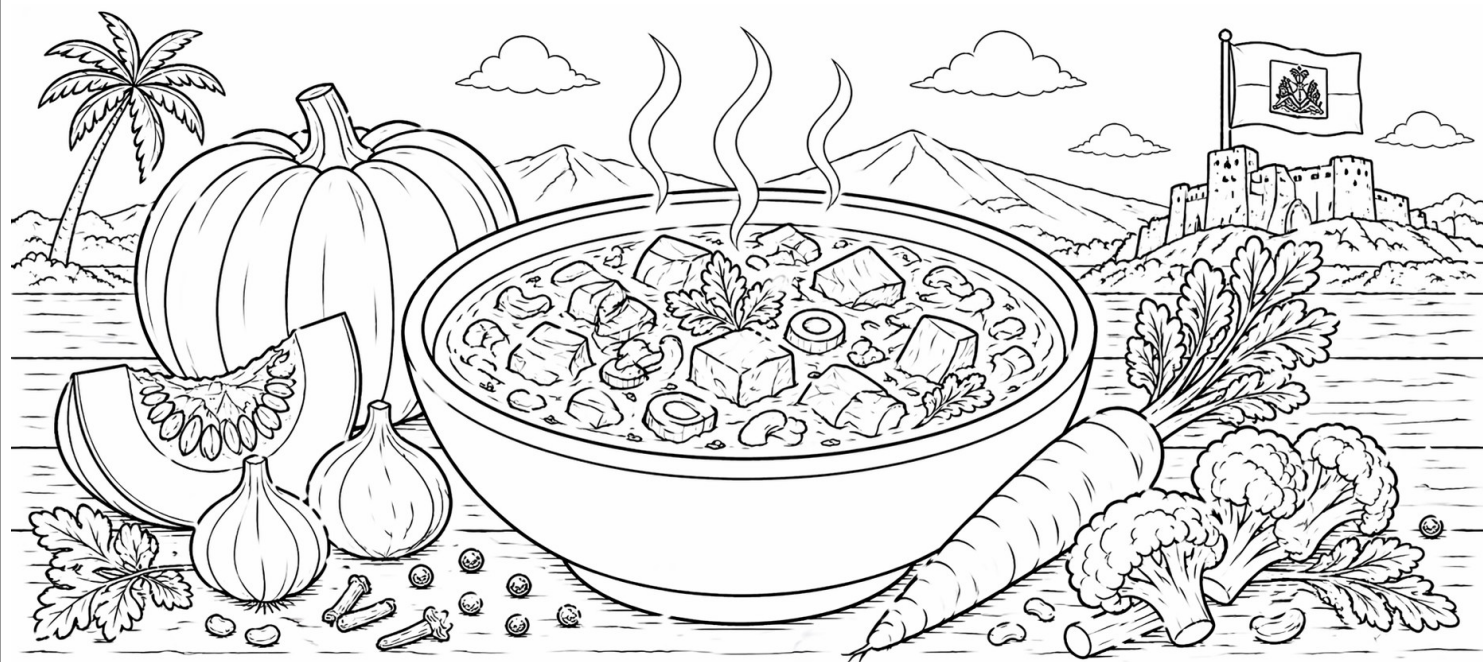
Designer known for blending Haitian heritage with global fashion.

Haitian-Americans, rooted in a rich heritage, proudly celebrate their culture while strengthening communities across the United States. Haiti's official language, Haitian Kreyòl, plays an important role in preserving cultural identity and connecting generations. Their story reflects the values of freedom, unity, and collective strength. Their culture continues to inspire understanding, pride, and connection across generations.

Thank you for exploring the rich culture, history, and achievements of Haiti through this coloring book. We hope it has inspired you to learn more about the strength, resilience, and contributions of the Haitian people throughout history. To discover more resources, events, and ways to celebrate Haitian Heritage Month, visit ucnj.org/community for additional information. Keep coloring, keep learning, and keep celebrating the vibrant spirit and lasting impact of Haiti—past, present, and future!



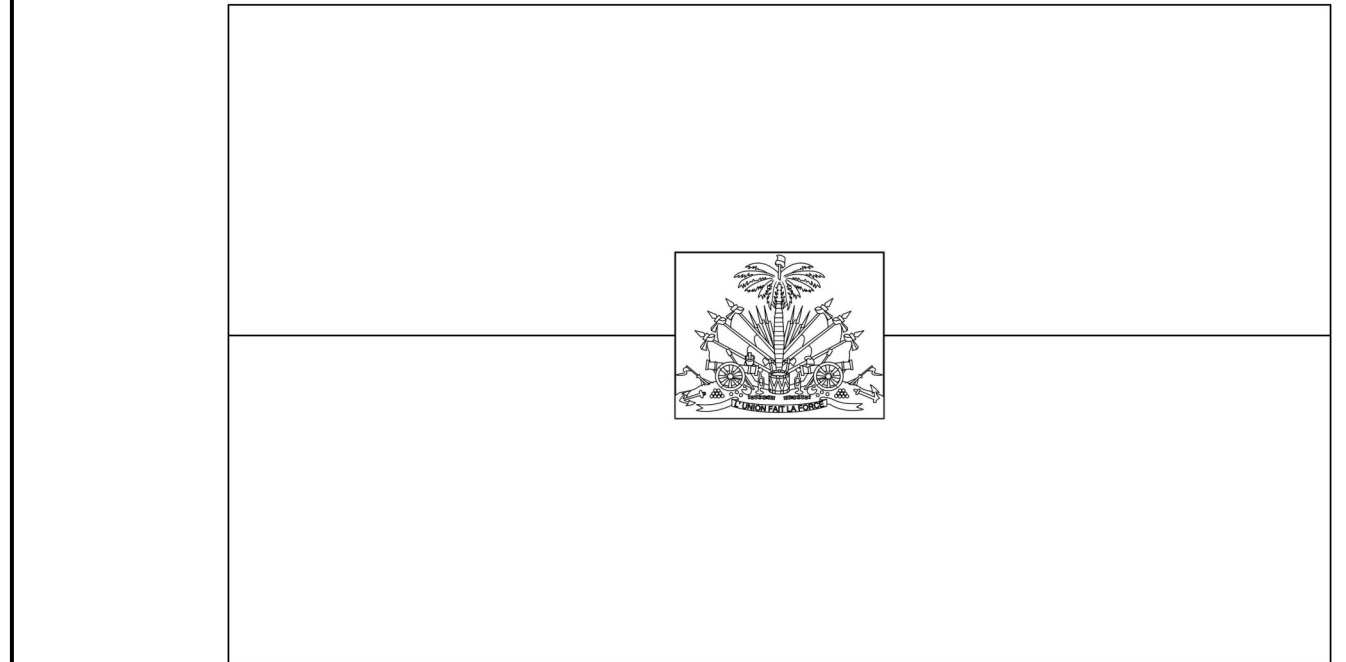
Soup Joumou is one of Haiti's most beloved and symbolic dishes, traditionally enjoyed on New Year's Day to celebrate Haitian independence. This rich, aromatic pumpkin soup made with calabaza squash, beef, pasta, and a medley of vegetables and spices is far more than a meal; it's a tribute to freedom and resilience. During colonial times, enslaved Haitians were forbidden from eating this dish, which was reserved for French colonists. After Haiti declared its independence in 1804, Soup Joumou became a national symbol of liberation.



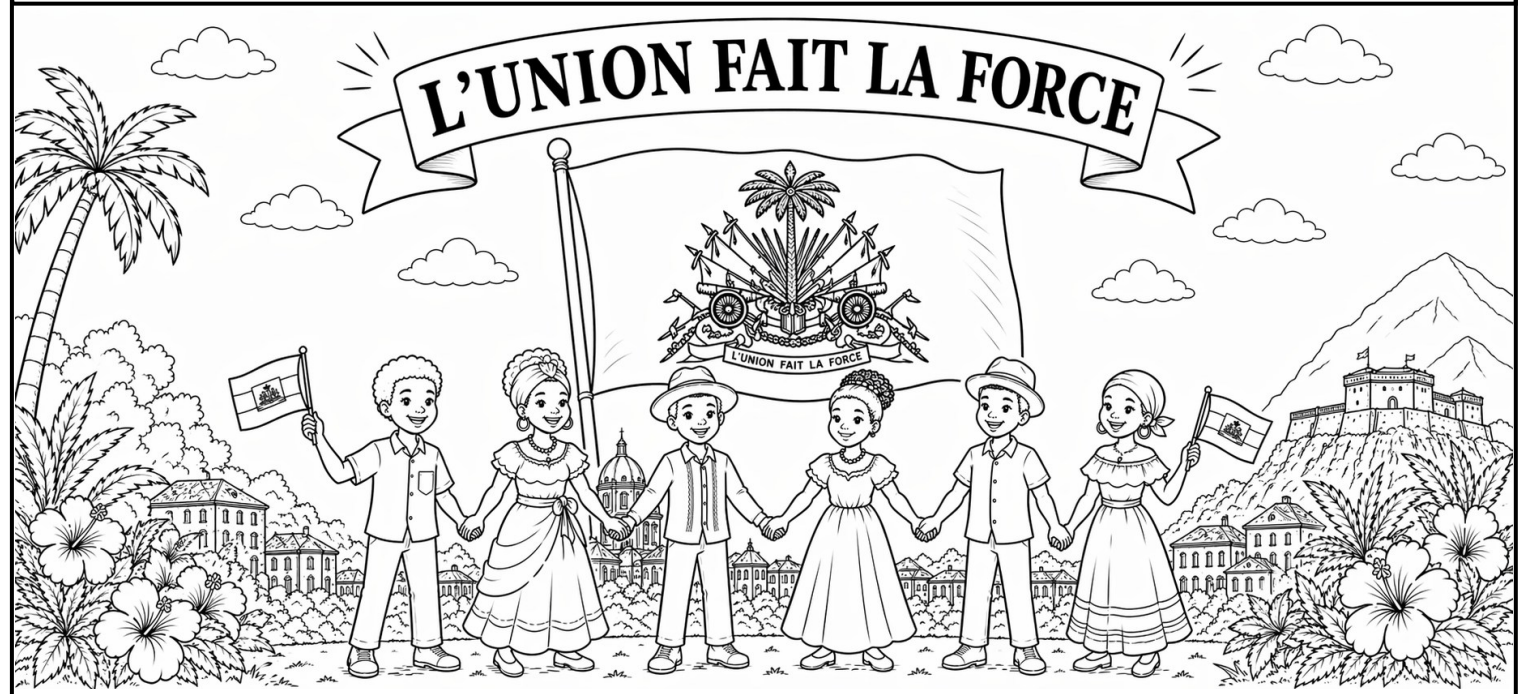
The national sport of Haiti is soccer (also known as football in many parts of the world). It's the most popular and widely played sport across the country, with deep cultural significance. Haitian communities often gather to watch local matches or international tournaments, and many young people grow up playing the game in streets, schoolyards, and open fields. Soccer serves as both a unifying force and a source of national pride in Haiti.



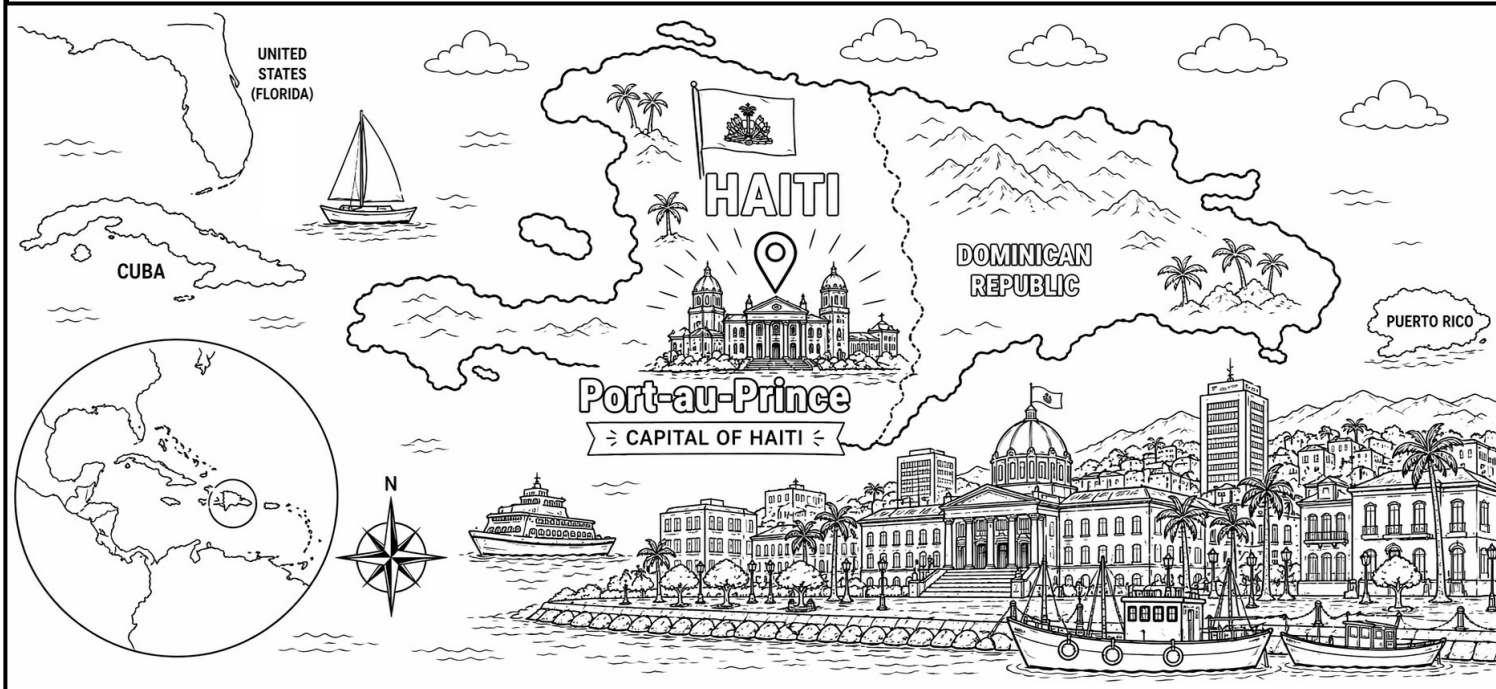
The Haitian flag features two equal horizontal bands of blue and red, symbolizing unity among the people of Haiti. At the center is the national coat of arms, which includes a palm tree, cannons, and a liberty cap, representing freedom and resilience. Below the coat of arms is the motto: "L'Union Fait La Force." The current design of the Haitian flag was officially adopted on May 18, 1803, during the Haitian Revolution. This date is now celebrated each year as **Haitian Flag Day**, commemorating the creation of the flag as a symbol of unity and independence from French colonial rule. The coat of arms was later added in 1843.



"L'Union Fait La Force," which translates to "Unity Makes Strength," is a powerful national motto featured on the Haitian flag. It reflects the core value that guided Haiti's fight for independence—the belief that only through solidarity and collective action could freedom be achieved. This motto continues to symbolize the strength of the Haitian people when they stand together, reminding us that unity across all backgrounds is essential to overcoming challenges and building a strong, resilient nation.



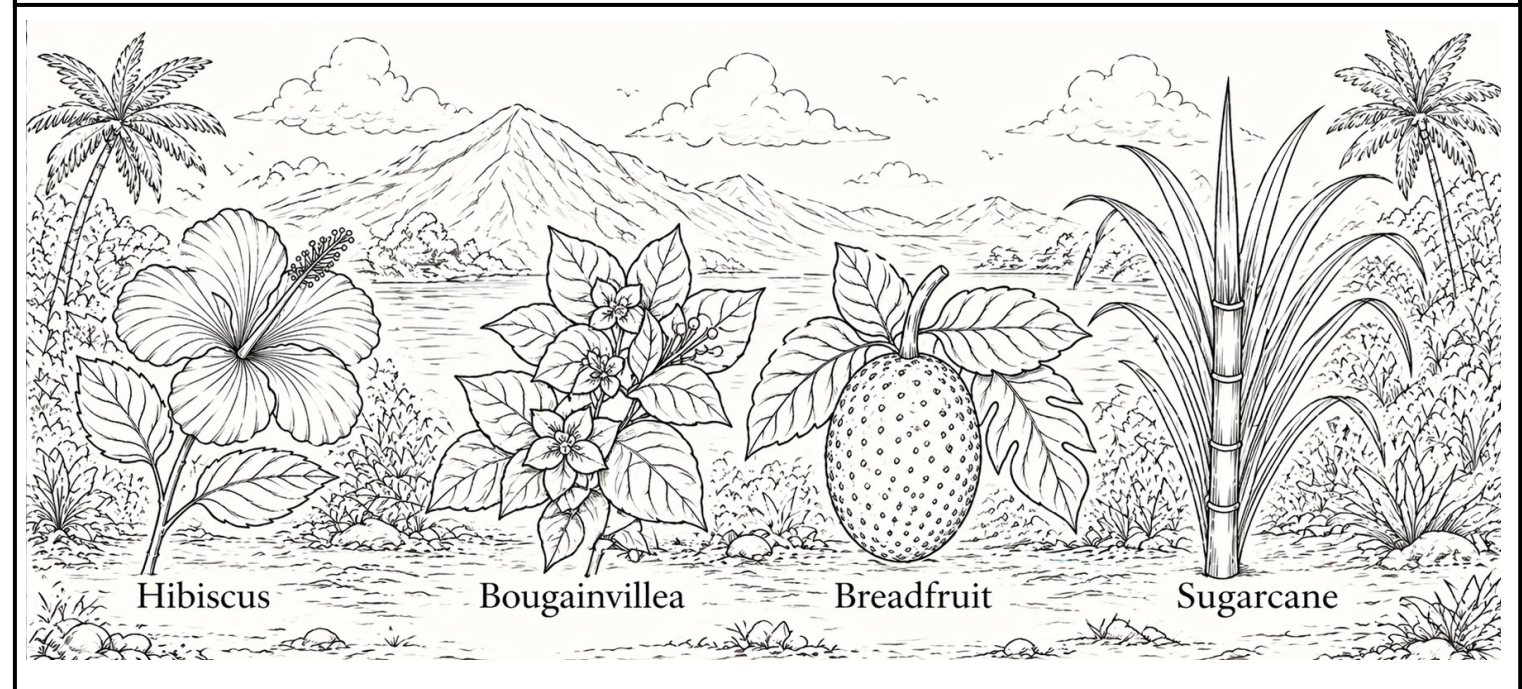
Haiti is located on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean Sea, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. It is situated between Cuba to the west and Puerto Rico to the east. Haiti lies just southeast of the United States, below Florida. The capital city of Haiti is **Port-au-Prince**. It is the largest city in Haiti and serves as the nation's political, cultural, and economic center.



First Independent Black Republic (1804) - Haiti was the first country in the world led by formerly enslaved people to gain independence, defeating France in 1804. The Haitian Revolution led by Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henri Christophe, was the first and only successful slave rebellion that led to an independent nation. **Jean-Jacques Dessalines** ultimately became the first ruler of independent Haiti, declaring the nation's independence and serving as its first head of state.



Haiti is home to a rich and colorful array of native flora that reflects the island's tropical climate and cultural vibrancy. Among the most iconic are the **hibiscus** and **bougainvillea**, known for their bold, bright blooms that often decorate homes, gardens, and public spaces across the country. Equally important are agricultural staples like **breadfruit** and **sugarcane**, which are not only vital food sources but also carry deep historical and economic significance. Breadfruit trees provide shade and sustenance, while sugarcane fields have shaped the island's economy and identity for centuries.



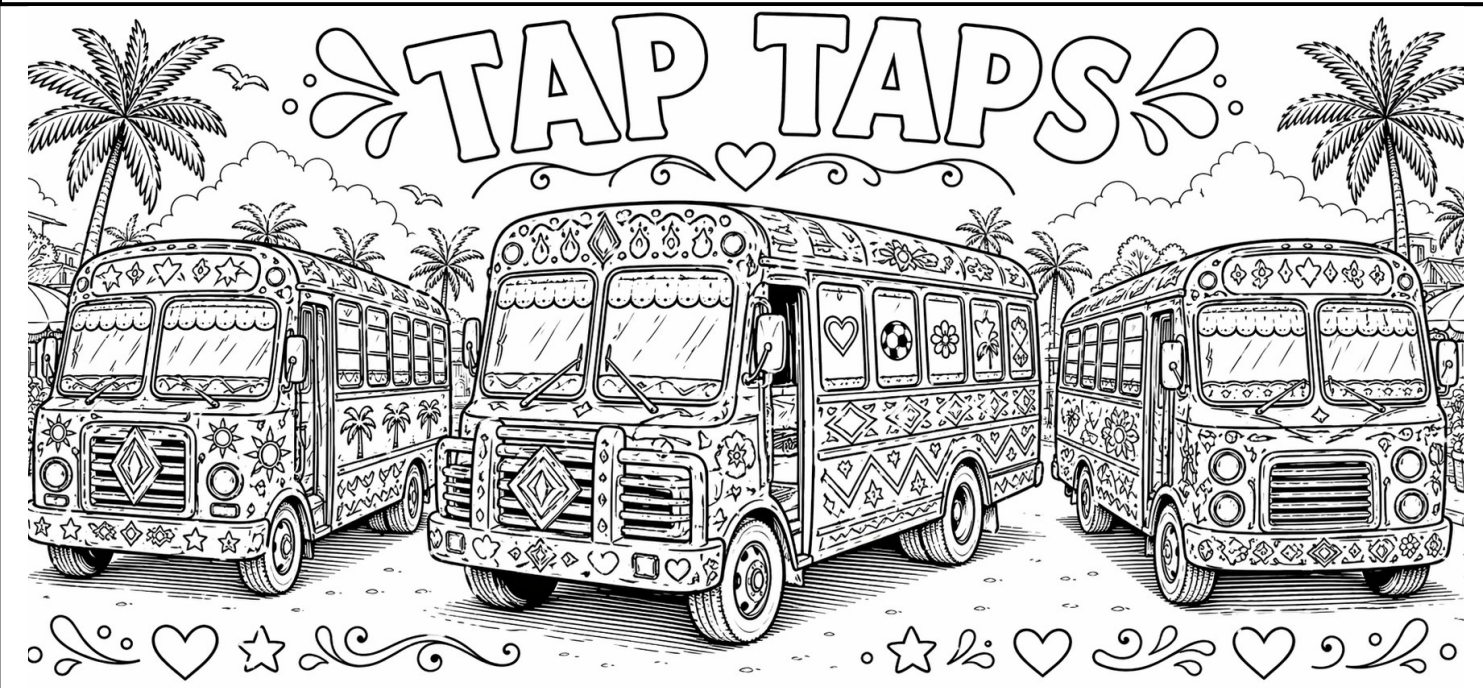
Boukan is a traditional outdoor way of cooking in Haiti that brings people together. Food is prepared over an open fire in large pots, often with families gathering around to cook, talk, and share stories. More than just a way to make meals, boukan is a special part of Haitian culture that brings community, warmth, and connection. The smell of woodfire and spices fills the air, making it feel welcoming and alive. It's a time where food and togetherness go hand in hand.



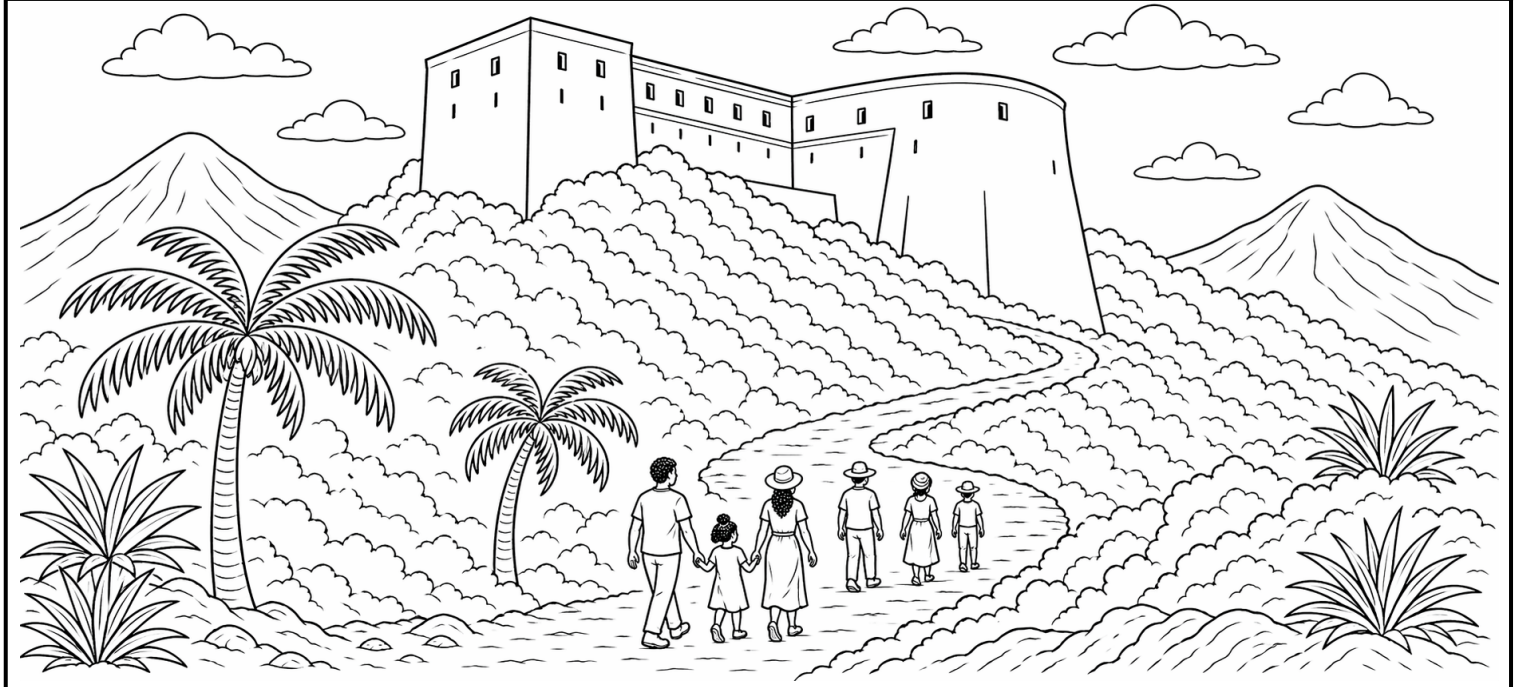
The **Marché en Fer**, or Iron Market, is one of Haiti's most vibrant and historic landmarks. Located in the heart of Port-au-Prince, this bustling marketplace is known for its striking ironwork architecture and lively atmosphere. Under its grand arches, vendors line the aisles with colorful displays of fresh produce, handmade textiles, spices, street food, and artisan crafts. The market is not only a center for commerce but also a cultural hub where the sounds, scents, and energy of everyday Haitian life come alive. It stands as a symbol of community, tradition, and the creativity of the Haitian people.



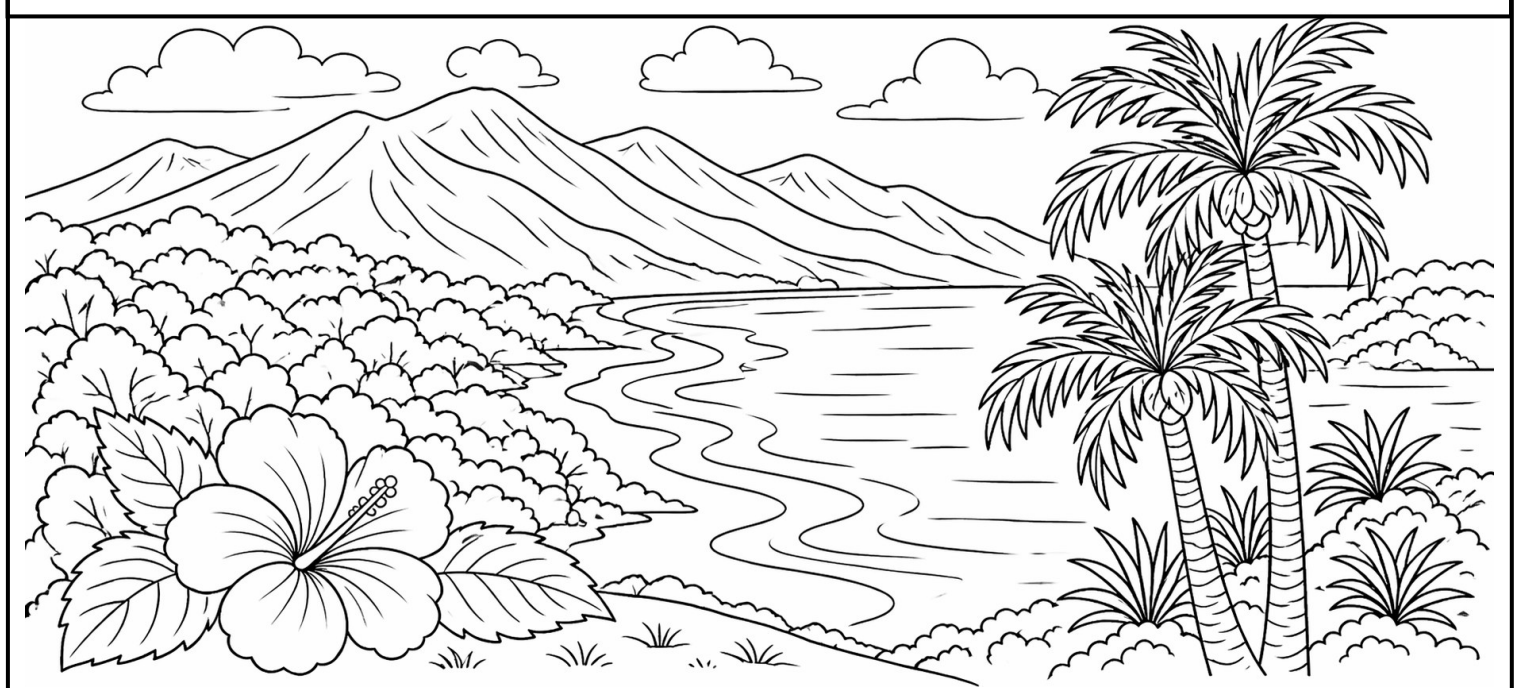
Tap-taps are one of Haiti's most vibrant and recognizable cultural symbols, serving as both a practical form of public transportation and a moving expression of Haitian art and identity. These brightly painted buses and trucks are often adorned with bold colors, religious imagery, proverbs, and phrases like "Tout moun se moun" ("Every person is a person"), reflecting messages of faith, unity, and everyday wisdom. More than just a way to get from place to place, tap-taps represent community, creativity, and resilience—bringing people together while showcasing the spirit and pride of the Haitian people.



Citadelle Laferrière was built after Haiti gained its independence as a powerful symbol of freedom and national pride. Perched atop a mountain in northern Haiti, this massive stone fortress was designed to defend the new nation against potential French invasion. Initiated by **Henri Christophe**, the Citadelle remains one of the largest fortresses in the Americas and is recognized as a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site. Today, it stands as a testament to Haiti's resilience, strength, and enduring fight for liberty.



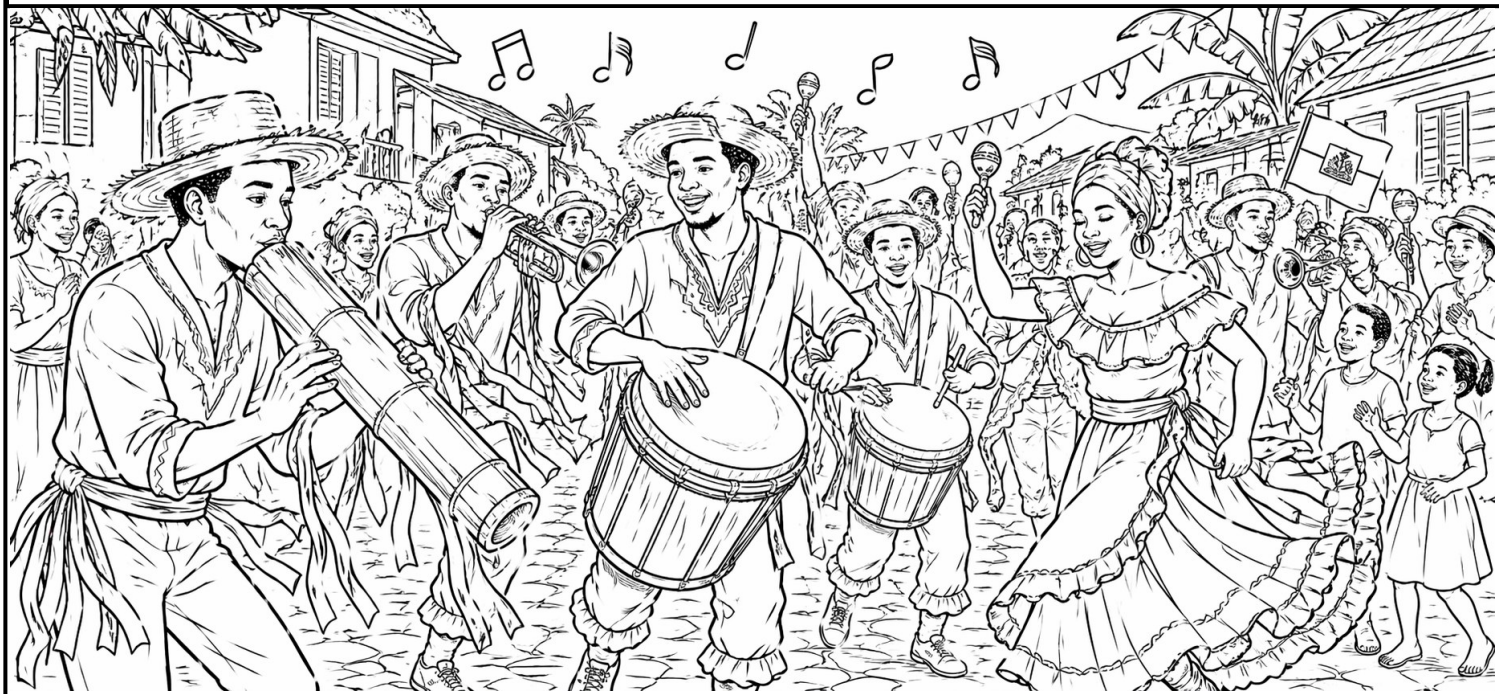
Haiti is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, featuring both pristine beaches and majestic mountains. The country's beautiful coastline offers serene escapes with crystal clear waters, golden sands, and vibrant coastal culture. In contrast, Haiti's mountainous terrain is equally impressive, with **Pic La Selle** standing as the tallest peak in the country, soaring over 8,700 feet. This towering mountain offers stunning views, challenging hiking trails, and a glimpse into Haiti's diverse natural environment.



Haiti's **Carnival** is a vibrant celebration of culture, music, and creativity. Held annually before Lent, it features lively parades, colorful costumes, and infectious rhythms that fill the streets. The festival showcases Haiti's rich artistic traditions, with dancers, musicians, and performers coming together to celebrate the nation's history and diversity. Carnival is a time for joy, unity, and self-expression, drawing locals and tourists alike to experience the unforgettable energy of this dynamic event.



Rara is a lively and colorful Haitian tradition where musicians parade through village roads, filling the air with joyful rhythms and energy. The band features a mix of bamboo instruments, drums, trumpets, and maracas, creating a powerful sound that gets everyone dancing. Dressed in bright costumes, performers and community members join in as the parade winds through the streets, celebrating Haitian culture with music, movement, and unity.



Kompa music is Haiti's most iconic dance genre, celebrated for its infectious rhythm and vibrant energy. Originating in the 1950s, Kompa blends African drum patterns, Latin-Caribbean beats, and smooth jazz influences into a rich, melodic sound that invites movement. Typically performed with guitars, horns, keyboards, and percussion, Kompa is known for its steady groove and romantic lyrics. It plays a vital role in Haitian celebrations, from parties and weddings to national festivals, uniting generations through dance and storytelling. More than just music, Kompa is a cultural expression of pride, resilience, and joy.



Haiti's unique currency, known as the **gourde**, is also featured, including both coins and bills that reflect the nation's history and identity. This section highlights beautifully crafted artisanal goods such as handmade jewelry and intricately hand-carved items, showcasing Haiti's rich cultural traditions and skilled craftsmanship passed down through generations. Together, these pieces offer a glimpse into the creativity, resilience, and everyday life of the Haitian people.

