

# How to make a Gingerbread House



THE JAMES COLLIER



*Gingerbread*

JUBILEE

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## How to make a Gingerbread House (*allow 1 month + to build*)

### Planning

- Pick a structure / theme. Or get a pattern from book or online.
- If you are replicating a structure, take pictures of the structure from all angles.
- Draw a picture of what you want your gingerbread house to look like.
- Make a pattern from cardboard, poster board or foam board.
- Don't go too big or small - the max base size is **36 x 28 inches** & max height is **30 inches**.
- Tape or pin the pattern together to make sure it fits. Do the sides cover the ends edges or the ends cover the sides? Remember the gingerbread is about ¼ inch thick & swells during baking.
- Make a shopping list. Candies: seasonal or order online. Allow for delivery time. Look for sale candies after holidays.

### Making the Gingerbread

- **Make the Dough** - Mix gingerbread dough using your recipe or the one in this booklet.
- Keep extra dough in plastic wrap to prevent drying out. Roll dough out at room temperature. Freezes well.
- **Cutting** - Use a piece of lightly floured parchment paper for each house pattern piece; roll out dough using wooden dowels (use ⅛ or ¼ inch) as guides to achieve a uniform thickness.
  1. Cut windows & doors. To keep dough from shifting, use cookie cutters or sharp knife.
  2. Leaving windows & door pieces in place, cut the long pieces & edges with a pizza wheel or sharp knife.
  3. Remove windows & doors carefully; even re-measure with your cutting piece.
  4. If you are going to put any texturing, shutters, or brickwork on the gingerbread, you need to roll out the house dough with ¼ inch dowel & mark your dough with brickwork or texturing before cooking. *Keep your cutting tools clean.*
- **Bake** large pieces by themselves. Group smaller dough cut outs together, similar in size, to bake at one time, keeping each piece on its own parchment paper in case one is done before the others. Check gingerbread for large bubbles while cooking & poke with sharp knife.
- Cool flat. Keep dry if you stack them, parchment paper is helpful between layers; however, it is best to keep all pieces flat. Humidity will cause pieces to deform.
- Dry fit walls. If they don't fit, trim. Match up with pattern pieces, they can swell during baking.
- **For trimming**, place piece on cookie sheet in a 325° oven until warm. Remove from the oven & use a serrated knife & saw with little pressure till you get through the gingerbread. This works well for the walls that attach to the base, giving a tight fit & a sturdier structure.
- Mix frosting. Store frosting in the refrigerator in air tight containers or cover frosting with plastic wrap. Be sure air is out from under plastic wrap & wrap touches frosting & bowl sides. You may also store different color frosting in decorating bags with couplers & tips, covering ends of bags with plastic wrap or damp cloth to keep icing from hardening.

## **Board - Maximum base size: 36 x 28 inches & ¾ inch plywood for stability.**

- Add feet to your board for ease of transport.
- Any flexing of the board in transit will break the gingerbread. *The contest requires ¾ inch plywood.*
- Decide where to put your structure on the board. Drawing out a plan on the board with pencil gives you an idea where to place your structure, gardens, walkways & other items.
- For lighting, use battery operated lights. Easy to drill hole in board to thread up lights. *Disguise your battery pack.* Use LEDs if possible.
- *The edge of base may be painted or covered (ribbon, tape, etc). The top of the base must be painted in a single color or covered in edible products.*

## **Decorating**

### **Decorate the Walls**

To decorate walls, siding, windows or trim, *do it while pieces are flat.* Let dry for 4 hours. Remember you will need to hold edges to place walls together.

### **Windows**

Recommend using leaf gelatin for windows, purchase online (*type in gelatin sheet for gingerbread house windows*). Or, crush clear hard candy fine. Put the gingerbread piece on cookie sheet face up & put crushed candy in window hole. Heap up candy so it has room to melt & windows will be full. Use tooth picks to get it where you want. Heat in 300° oven till candy melts.

### **Assemble the house**

- Have your prepared board marked in pencil.
- Use icing or Almond bark for assembly. Almond bark dries quicker. Handy for the roof
- Pipe a line of icing at the base of one wall at a time. Pipe a line of icing at the edge on the backside of the wall where the other wall will attach.
- Stand the walls up. Use soup cans to hold the house in place. Let dry about 15 minutes.
- Add other walls in the same manner. Pipe the edges of the walls & the base. Any movement to the wet icing walls will weaken its hold.
- Finish all your walls. You may want to use a smaller tip & pipe icing where the pieces meet on the inside of the house to help hold the structure firmly in place. *Let dry overnight.*

### **Landscape**

While waiting, you can start coloring your grass, making your paths, planting your garden, making trees, building fences, etc. Do not put all of these in place until your house is completely iced but have them in readiness.

### **Roof**

Decorate the roof before you attach it to the structure. The roof can get *very heavy* with certain candies. If so, you need to put a support piece of gingerbread inside your house, like an additional end piece to support the roof. Pipe a wide line of icing under the roofline to make sure the roof & walls are all connected with icing. Connect the two pieces of roof at the peak with piped icing to hold them together. You will need to hold the roof for some time depending on the pitch of the roof, to keep it from sliding off. Do both sides of the roof at the same time so the peak lines up properly. Check on the overhang on the ends to be sure you have placed roof in the center of the house. Put on a chimney if you want one.

**Trees:**

Ice cream sugar cones  
Rice crispy treats  
Stacked cookies shaped in stars

**Shrubs:**

Gumdrops, held together with spaghetti  
Dried herbs  
Candy, **no wrappers or lollipop sticks**

**Grass:**

Coconut w/ food coloring  
Dried herbs

**Snow:**

Icing  
Powdered sugar

**Dirt:**

Ground cookies / chocolate (Oreo's)  
Brown sugar  
Seeds

**Roofs:**

Cereal, crackers, gum sticks, gum drops, sushi seaweed, seeds, beans, icing, Necco's

**Chimneys:**

Jelly Belly's, Boston baked beans, candies

Spaghetti can be used for different things; holding gum drops together or rebar to strengthen gingerbread pieces. Candy canes for light posts. Use white chocolate when cementing on candy canes. **Warning:** Icing will melt the candy canes

**Fountain features, waterfalls, & ponds**

Use hard candy. Make a mold in the shape you want from aluminum sprayed with oil. Keep as wrinkle free as possible. Crush hard candy & place on aluminum foil form. Put in the 350° oven & melt. Mold it while it is still hot if you need to. Be careful melted candy out of oven is very hot! Use oil on your utensils & fingers. Edges dry very quickly. Remove the foil.

**Recipes****Gingerbread dough**

6 ¾ Cups flour

1 Tablespoon cinnamon

1 ½ teaspoons ginger

½ teaspoon salt

1 ½ Cups light corn syrup

(Add color paste to corn syrup, if desired)

1 ¼ Cups packed light brown sugar

1 Cup margarine

Cut nonstick baking parchment to fit your baking sheet. Stir together the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Combine light corn syrup, brown sugar, & margarine in a 2-quart saucepan. Stir constantly over medium heat until margarine is melted. Pour the syrup mixture into the flour mixture. Stir well, using your hands to mix as the dough becomes stiff. If you are using a heavy-duty Kitchen Aid® mixer, the mixer can handle this dough; lightweight mixers cannot. Chill the dough 1 hour or until it is about room temperature.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Roll out the dough on nonstick baking parchment to a thickness of ⅛". Using the patterns of your choice cut out the pieces. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Bake smaller pieces separately from larger ones, as baking times will vary depending on size. Place each smaller piece of gingerbread on its own piece of parchment paper, so you can remove it each piece separately as they are done. Check for air bubbles during baking and poke them with a knife. When baking is done, slide the parchment with the hot gingerbread onto a cooling rack. Make sure all the pieces lie flat.

This recipe is from “*Gingerbread for all Seasons*” by Teresa Layman

### **Colored dough**

If you plan to color a whole recipe of dough 1 color, stir the color into the corn syrup mixture before adding it to the flour. If you plan to color only part of the batch, you will have to knead the color in by hand, either in a plastic freezer bag or with surgical gloves. It is a messy job.

### **Meringue Royal Icing**

1 pound confectioners’ sugar (comes in 2 pound bags)

3 Tablespoons meringue powder (found in cake decorating stores) or 3 egg whites, at room temperature (use large size, not jumbo size eggs).

6 Tablespoons warm water

Beat all ingredients until icing forms stiff peaks. This takes about 5 to 12 minutes, longer if using a hand-held mixer. Cover icing tightly with plastic wrap, as it dries very quickly. Use paste food colors to tint the icing. A tiny dot on a toothpick to a quarter cup of icing will make a nice pastel color, so be sure to add it a little at a time. With practice you will learn how much to use to get the color you want.

A Kitchen Aid mixer will mix a double batch nicely!

### **Items you may need:**

#### **Pattern making**

Poster board

cardboard

Ruler

X-acto® knife

foam board

Pencil

Scissors

#### **Board preparation**

¾ inch plywood board, required for the contest

Paint to cover board (optional)

Tape or ribbon to cover sides of board (makes it look finished)

Feet to raise board for ease of picking up

Drill & drill bits for holes to allow battery operated lighting inside your house

#### **Gingerbread supplies**

Heavy-duty electric mixer

Paste food color

Mixing bowls

Decorating tips & bags

Measuring cups and spoons

Cookie cutters

Ruler

Toothpicks

Rolling pin

Tweezers

2 dowels ( ⅛”or ⅜”or ¼”) 18” long

Ice cream sugar cones

Nonstick baking parchment

Chocolate

Baking sheets /stone cookie sheet

Almond bark

Sharp, thin bladed knife

Cookies

Bread knife

Cereal

Pizza cutter

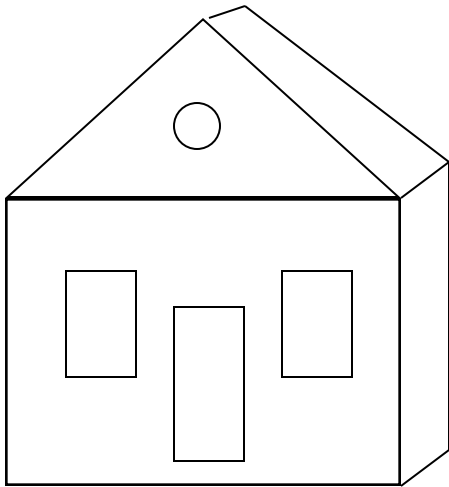
Crackers

Wire, stone or marble cooling racks

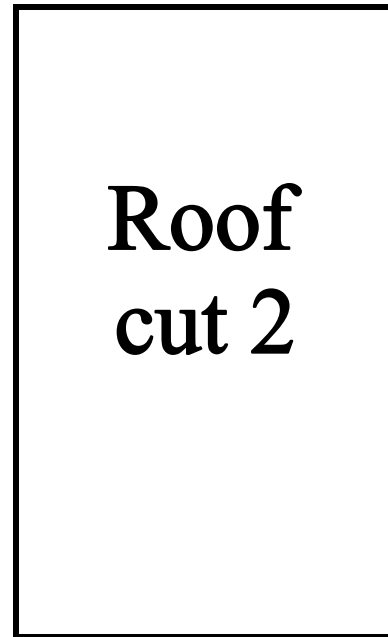
Candy, unwrapped & no lollipop sticks

# Basic Narrow House

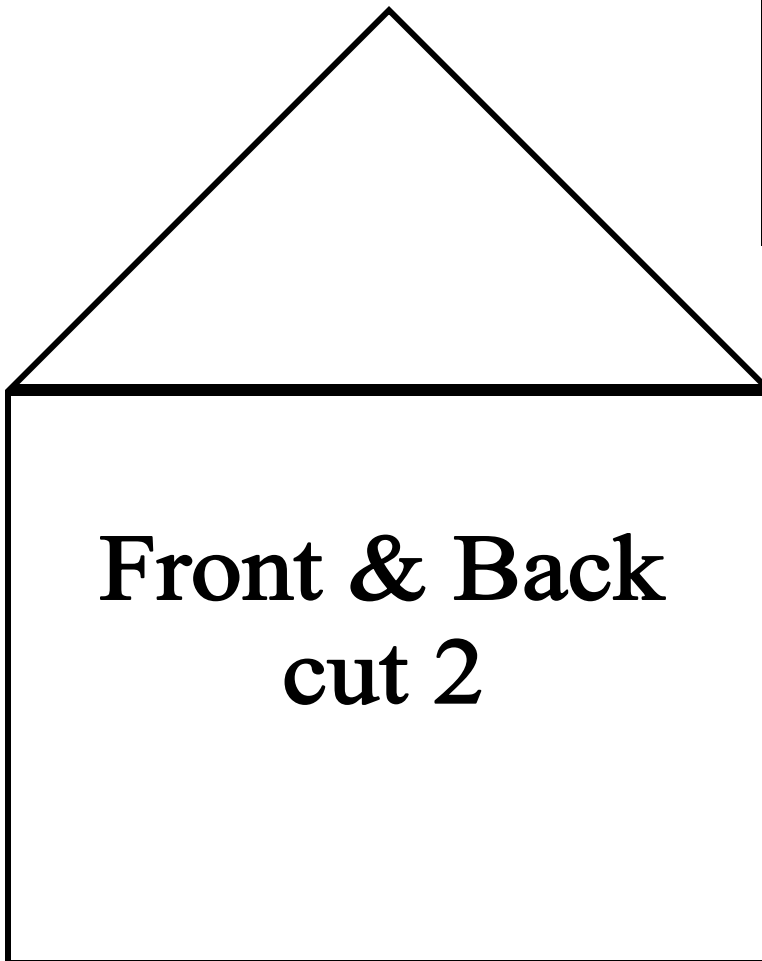
Vary dimensions to change shape of house.



2 inch



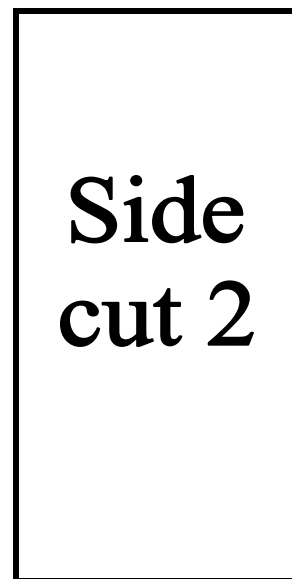
3 & 1/4 inch



3 inch

Front & Back  
cut 2

4 inch



1 & 1/2 inch