

How to Make a Gingerbread House

Ingredients

- 6 cups all purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 teaspoons ground ginger
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves or allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 sticks (12 Tbsp) butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup dark molasses
- 1 Tbsp water

Method

Make the Gingerbread Dough

1 Whisk together the dry ingredients in a large bowl, set aside.

2 Using an electric mixer, beat on medium speed the butter and brown sugar until fluffy and well blended. Beat in the eggs, molasses and water until well combined.

3 Beat half of the flour mixture into the molasses mixture until well blended and smooth. Stir in the remaining flour. Knead (or use your mixer's dough hook) until well blended. If dough is too soft, add a little more flour.

4 Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least two hours, preferably overnight. You can make it up to 3 days ahead of time. Let sit at room temperature for at least 10 minutes before rolling out.

Make the Gingerbread House Pieces

1 Preheat oven to 350°F, with the oven rack in the middle. Have several flat cookie sheets ready, preferably ones that you know will not warp in the oven heat.

2 Divide the dough in two. Spread parchment paper or wax paper on a large flat surface for rolling. Dust the paper lightly with flour. Working with one portion of the dough at a time, use a rolling pin to roll out the dough to an even thickness of 1/4-inch. Add a little flour to the surface of the dough, and check for sticking as you roll it out. If it sticks to either your rolling pin or the rolling surface, dust with more flour. If the rolled out dough is very soft, you may want to freeze it for an hour before cutting out the patterns.

Before using the Gingerbread House Mold for the first time, wash in clear, warm water and towel dry. Now you are ready to bake!

For best results use the following recipes for the cookie base and frosting.

Gingerbread Base

(To get the correct number of pieces, fill and bake the mold with gingerbread twice. It is only necessary to fill the chimney section once.)

3 cups flour
1½ teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup butter, softened*
½ cup sugar
½ cup molasses
1 egg yolk

Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease mold with vegetable oil spray. Blot out excess oil with paper towel. Set aside. Combine flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar at high speed until light and fluffy. Add molasses and egg yolk and beat until smooth. Gradually add flour mixture and continue to beat until dough is thoroughly combined. Dough will be stiff and slightly dry. Gather dough into a large ball. Press half

of dough firmly into grease mold. Wrap remaining dough in plastic wrap. Level off back of dough in mold using a serrated knife. Bake for 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Place a cooling rack over surface of mold. Flip mold and cool rack together to unmold house pieces directly onto the rack. Let mold cool completely before refilling and baking. Lightly grease mold again before refilling.

*Do not substitute margarin for butter in this recipe.

Royal Icing

(This sticky icing acts as the "mortar" to hold the house together.)

1¼ cups powdered sugar
1 egg white
⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar

Place all ingredients in a small, non-plastic mixing bowl. Beat on high speed until frosting is glossy and holds peaks, about 5 minutes. This frosting dries very quickly, so cover with plastic wrap when not being used. Frosting may be tinted with food coloring if desired.

Yield: approximately 1 cup
If covering large areas of the house with frosting, you may need to make two batches.

Using the Decorating Bag and Tips

The decorating bag included with the Gingerbread House comes fully assembled and ready to use. Simply select the tip you wish to use, place it over the coupling at the end of the bag, and screw the threaded ring over the tip to hold it in place.

Fill the bag with icing, leaving at least 2 inches at the top unfilled. Twist the top of the bag to close it. Gently twist the top of the bag to dispense the icing. Here are some suggestions for using the tips.

Small plain tip - good for attaching candies and other decorations or for writing messages.

Small star tip - makes small shell and star patterns for fine detail work such as decorating trees or outlining windows.

Large star tip - used to make thick lines of icing to assemble the house. May also be used to form large stars or shells.

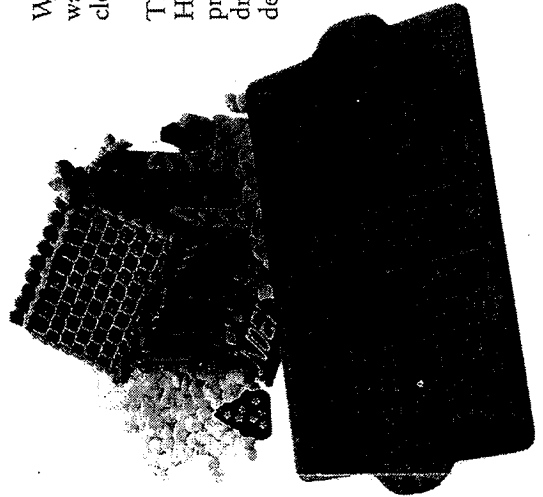
To clean the decorating bag and tips, remove coupler from bag and wash all parts in warm soapy water. Towel or air dry before storing.

Care and Cleaning of the Stoneware Gingerbread House Mold

Allow the Gingerbread House Mold to cool completely before cleaning. If the mold is washed while still warm, it may break.

Wash the mold in clear, hot water. Do not use soap when cleaning the mold.

The Stoneware Gingerbread House Mold is a natural clay product and may break if dropped or exposed to sudden changes in temperature.



Assembling the Gingerbread House

Once the gingerbread pieces are completely cool you may begin to assemble the house.

Diagram A

Start with a side wall and a front piece. Apply a strip of frosting to the inner edge of the side wall as shown. Squeeze the front piece and side wall together and hold for a minute until icing sets. Be sure that the patterned sides are facing out. Next, apply a strip of frosting along the back inner edge of the same side wall as shown.

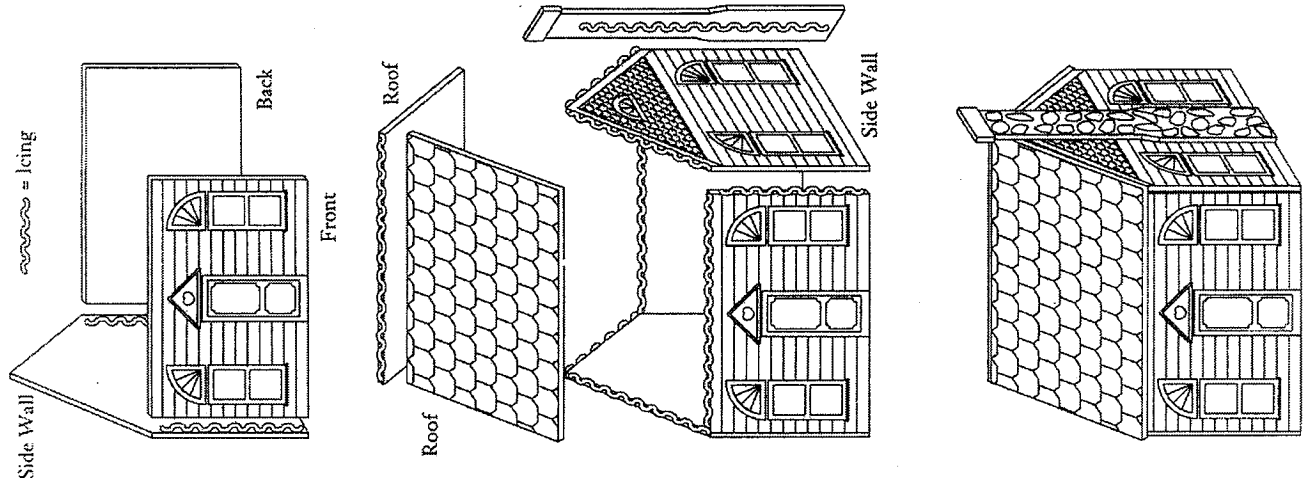
Squeeze a back piece and the side wall together until icing sets.

Diagram B

Apply a strip of icing along the ends of the front and back pieces and squeeze the last side wall in place. To attach the roof, apply icing all around the roof line of the base and along the peaks of the roof pieces. Place the roof pieces in place and squeeze together until icing holds the roof securely.

Diagram C

Apply a strip of frosting to back side of chimney and press into place on house as shown. Allow completed house to dry for ½ hour before decorating for best results.



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