

How to Make a Ginger Bread House



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My friend Susanne from www.Hillbillyhousewife.com emailed me earlier today to see if I thought my readers (that would be you ☺) might be interested in a little guide on how to make a gingerbread house with the kids.

One of her own readers, Karen Hoffman, shared some wonderful pictures and detailed instructions and that's exactly what you will find in this guide.

The end result looked so cute, I couldn't wait to share this with you. If you have young kids, or just like to bake around the holidays, you should give this pretty gingerbread house a try. I can't wait to make it with my kids this weekend.

You may remember seeing the video of them making and decorating a fairytale cake. If you missed it, you can watch it right here:

<http://www.menuplanningcentral.com/blog/fairytale-christmas-cake>

I'm sure they will have just as much fun with a gingerbread house this holiday season. It's a great way to use up extra Halloween candy and makes for a pretty holiday decoration as well as a yummy treat.

Enjoy!

Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season

Christine Steendahl – The Menu Mom

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P.S. A membership to Menu Planning Central makes a great holiday gift!

A Note from Susanne – The Hillbilly Housewife

A few weeks ago one of my readers shared some pictures and directions on how to make one of the cutes gingerbread houses I've seen and I thought I'd pass those on to you.

I love this time of the year where we're baking, cooking, crafting and spending quality time with your families. Doing things like making this gingerbread house are a great way to build memories that will last a lifetime.

If you enjoy baking Christmas cookies, I would also like to invite you to participate in our Virtual cookie exchange. Hillbilly Housewife Newsletter readers are sharing some of their favorite cookie recipes. You can find them right here at

www.Hillbillyhousewife.com/cookies.htm

But let's get back to making that beautiful gingerbread house. Below you will find a note from Karen along with detailed instruction and color pictures.

God Bless and wishing you all a safe and happy holiday!

Susanne Myers – The Hillbilly Housewife

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Every December the kids and I make a gingerbread house from scratch. It takes a few days, more because we have to wait for things to cool or wall joints to harden, but overall it is a pretty easy project. Just be sure to purchase LOTS of extra candies for decorating because half the fun of decorating the house is eating all of the “damaged” or “imperfect” candies. ☺ We use our gingerbread house as a table decoration and then after Christmas dinner the kids get to bust it apart with a hammer (yes, it does make a huge mess) and eat it up.

Day 1 – Dough

(I use a stand mixer. This is a LARGE batch of dough.)

- 1 C butter (room temp.)
- 1 ¾ C brown sugar
- 1 ¼ C white sugar
- 2 Tbl molasses
- 6 eggs
- 6 C all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 Tbl ground ginger
- 1 Tbl ground cinnamon
- 1 Tbl allspice

Cream the butter and sugars, then beat in the molasses and eggs. Combine all of the dry ingredients together in another large bowl. Then combine the mixtures and knead until smooth. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

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Day 2 – Pattern, Cutting, Baking

Pattern: I have the kids measure these out on construction paper (help with illustrations needed!!!)

Roof – 2 rectangles: 7" x 11"

Side walls – 2 rectangles: 5" x 8"

End walls – 2 of these (each piece will look as if you took a square and set a triangle on top)

Square part – 5" x 5"

Triangle (peak part) – find the center of the base (2.5") and measure up 9" to make your peak

Cutting/ Baking:

Preheat oven to 325F. You will need several cookie sheets lined with parchment paper or foil that has been greased and floured. Bake 15-20 min or until slightly firm. Dry overnight (so they are firm enough for building).

Roll dough out on a well-floured surface until $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Place a pattern piece on the dough and cut around the edges. (I use a pizza cutter for this part.) Gently lift with and put onto prepared cookie sheet (sometimes the dough gets a little misshapen – I have found that lifting the cutting board and sliding the dough onto the cookie sheet works well, but this will never have the perfect edges of a store bought kit).

Save the scraps of dough for gingerbread men or drop cookies (wonderful if you roll them in crystallized ginger and sugar first).

Day 3: Assembly

Base: I use two pieces of cardboard glued together and covered in foil. A scrap piece of plywood or even a cookie sheet turn upside down would work well too.

Royal Icing: this is the glue that holds it all together and it must be VERY stiff! You will need several batches to complete the decorating of the house, but only make one batch at a time. Seal well and refrigerate any that doesn't get used. I use a piping bag to apply, but a Ziploc bag with the tip cut off works well too.

- 3 egg whites
- 1 ½ tsp cream of tartar
- 4 – 4 ½ C powdered sugar

Beat egg whites until they begin to foam. Add the cream of tartar and beat until mixture forms peaks. Gradually beat in sugar until it is VERY stiff (might take more than 4+ cups).

Assembly:

Pipe two thick lines of icing onto the base at a 90 degree angle – one for a sidewall and one for a peak wall. Pipe the side wall where the edges will meet. Place the walls on the base, touching each other. (We usually have the sidewall edges on the exterior and the peak wall edges on the interior.) Repeat. Let the structure dry for about 2 hours – you can use cans to prop it up if needed. Pipe a lot of icing on the top of the wall and stick on the roof. (There will be an “unsightly” seem along the top of the roof but that gets covered up with icing and candies, so don't worry about it.) Again, use cans or whatever to help prop it up while the roof dries.



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Day 4: Decorating!

Let your imagination run wild. We use peppermint candies, gum drops, candy canes, cookies for the roof, licorice, red hots, and whatever else looks good. Make another batch of royal icing, give each child a small “piping bag”, and turn them loose.

To make “stained glass windows”: roll out gum drops on a sugared surface and attach to the house with icing.

I hope this starts a new tradition in other households too! Happy holidays!

~Karen Hoffman

Here are a few more pictures of this gorgeous gingerbread house.





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