



## Gingerbread “Construction Zone”



If you can bake it, you can decorate it! Here are some ideas for decorating and detailing and your gingerbread:

### decorating

- Lifesavers (crushed and melted for “stained glass”)
- uncooked spaghetti (paint with icing for “thin” details like weather vanes, flagpoles, etc.)
- fondant (color and roll/mold into 3-D shapes)
- icing “markers” (for signs, labels, etc.)
- Starburst candies
- Fruit Roll-ups (or similar type of fruit “tape”)
- Gummy “anything” :)
- Tic Tacs
- peppermint candies
- Andes Mints
- gum sticks
- gum drops

### landscaping

- chocolate rocks
- graham cracker crumbs
- rainbow-colored Nerds
- colored sugar (green/yellow/brown/blue, etc.)
- M&M’s (chocolate)
- M&M’s (chocolate, mini size)
- Necco wafers

### foliage (trees, leaves, shrubs)

- spearmint leaves
- sugar cones
- Cheerios
- green SourPatch straws
- shredded coconut (colored green)
- red-hot cinnamon pieces (for holly berries)

### flowers

- multi-colored candy-coated sunflower seeds
- marshmallows (cut into small pieces for petals)

### architecture

- pretzel rods
- pretzel “waffles” (small square pieces)
- pretzel sticks
- peppermint sticks (thick)
- vanilla creme-filled “wafer” cookies
- gum sticks (for shutters)
- tootsie rolls
- graham crackers

Some sources for additional ideas and inspiration:



Anderson, Lisa Turner. (2010). *No-Bake Gingerbread Houses for Kids*. Layton, Utah: Gibbs-Smith.

Brigham, Beth. (2002). *Incredible KidEdibles*. Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers.

Gunter, Veronicka Alice. (2004). *Making Gingerbread Houses*. New York: Lark Books.

Tack, Karen & Richardson, Alan. (2008). *Hello, Cupcake*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Tack, Karen & Richardson, Alan. (2010). *What’s New, Cupcake?*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Tack, Karen & Richardson, Alan. (2012). *Cupcakes, Cookies e3 Pie, Oh My!*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

a plethora of photos and links on Pinterest and Facebook!

There are many great recipes for gingerbread - here's one I've used for 20+ years for building houses:

### Gingerbread Recipe

5 c. flour  
2 tsp. ginger  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. cloves  
3/4 c. shortening  
1 large egg  
1 c. blackstrap molasses  
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar  
3/4 c. sugar

Mix flour, soda, and spices in a separate bowl. In mixing bowl, beat shortening and sugar 'til light and fluffy (med. speed). Scrape bowl often. Add egg, molasses and vinegar - mix until smooth. Add flour mixture, one cup at a time (last cup may have to be mixed by hand). Divide dough into four parts; wrap in plastic and chill at least 2 hrs. Roll to 1/8-in. thickness on a floured surface. Bake at 375 degrees (12 - 15 mins.) on foil-lined baking sheet. Cool completely on a flat surface before "building."

Royal Icing - again, there are many different recipes. I often use the recipe on the label of a container of meringue powder or powdered egg whites. Here's one that uses real egg whites:

### Royal Icing

4 large egg whites, at room temperature  
5 c. confectioners sugar (10x)

Beat egg whites at high speed - when foamy, add sugar - 1/2 c. at a time - beating well after after each addition (will take approx. 7-8 mins.). Icing dries fast - keep covered with a damp cloth at all times. Store unused icing in an airtight container with a damp paper towel stretched between the lid and the icing.

### Cereal "Evergreen" Trees

2 Tbs.p butter  
8 large marshmallows  
1/4 - 1/3 tsp. green food coloring  
1 c. Cheerios

Melt butter and marshmallows over low heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; add food coloring. Stir in Cheerios until well coated. Spread onto wax paper. When cool enough to handle, shape into trees and shrubbery.



If you can bake it, you can decorate it!  
A few ideas and suggestions to help  
your gingerbread project go smoothly



Prep  
Time  
Patience

### Design/Building

Find gingerbread inspiration from books, Pinterest, and online resources (patterns, photos, recipes and techniques).

Use card stock or light cardboard to first “test run” your pattern.  
(If it fits in cardboard, it will translate well in gingerbread.)

Less is more. A well-constructed, nicely decorated project is (often) more “fun” than simply striving for \*the biggest\* design.

### Baking/Assembly

Roll dough/cut pieces directly on baking sheet lined with flour-covered, foil-lined baking sheet. (Optional: parchment paper, if preferred.)

Move pieces immediately to a flat surface when baking is complete.

For weight-bearing pieces - roll dough slightly thicker.

For roof pieces and fixtures - roll dough slightly thinner. (Watch baking times.)

Decorate pieces flat before assembling, leaving a margin free of icing, etc. along edges that will be \*glued\* together.

Leave plenty of time between assembly of pieces (especially wall and roof pieces).

Use soup cans/slender bottles covered in wax paper for “props” to support pieces as they set during assembly.

### Material Ideas: Special Effects

Stained glass and glass: Lifesavers; Jolly Ranchers; Isomalt crystals

Lighting (battery-powered): fairy garden lights; tea lights; LED lights