



Make your own

Classic gingerbread house



House

front x 1

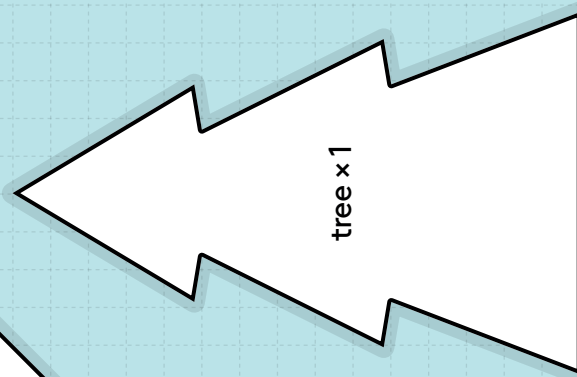
roof x 2



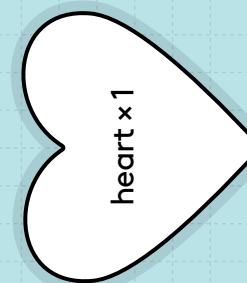
House



back x 1



tree x 1



heart x 1

Maid of
gingerbread

side x 2

Maid of Gingerbread's classic construction gingerbread recipe

Equipment needed

- Weighing scales
- Medium saucepan & hob
- Large mixing bowl and wooden spoon (or stand mixer with paddle attachment)
- Rolling pin
- Cling film
- Baking parchment paper
- Small sharp knife
- Oven trays

Ingredients

- 200g soft light brown sugar
- 40g black treacle
- 40g golden syrup
- 40g ground spices (Any 'pudding spices' will work really well. My spice mix is top secret, but includes ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg. Or keep it simple and just use ground ginger for a really yummy, gingery gingerbread.)
- 50ml cold water
- 250g unsalted butter, cubed
- 550g plain flour (plus extra for dusting)
- 1 tsp table salt

TOP TIP! The construction pieces can be made in advance and kept until you're ready to build. If you want to store them for up to a week, just place them in an airtight tub or tin.

If you want to keep them for even longer, wrap them in cling film and place in the freezer - to defrost, unwrap and spread the biscuits out on cooling racks until they're back up to room temperature.

Method

1. Pre-heat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4.
2. Place the sugar, treacle, syrup, spices and water in a saucepan on a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until all the sugar has dissolved and it's just starting to bubble.
3. Turn the heat off and gradually add the cubed butter, stirring continuously until it's all melted in to form a glossy mixture.
4. Pour hot mix into a stand mixer (if you have one, otherwise use a large mixing bowl and wooden spoon), set to the slowest speed and gradually add the plain flour and salt until it forms a warm dough.
5. Tip out onto a clean work surface. Divide the dough in half and wrap each half in cling film. Place in the fridge to chill for around 30 minutes.
6. While your dough is resting, cut out your templates from the printed template sheets.
7. Remove your chilled dough and roll out directly onto a sheet of baking parchment, using a dusting of flour to prevent the rolling pin from sticking. You're aiming for a thickness of around 4-5mm.
8. Roll out both halves of dough and then cut around your templates, leaving a gap of around 1cm between pieces. Be sure to note how many of each piece you need to cut out (written on each template).
9. Carefully remove the excess dough from between the pieces. Gather this together and re-roll it. Use this to cut out your remaining template pieces or just make some extra gingerbread biscuits (using cutters or freehand shapes) to go with your construction.
10. Carefully slide your baking parchment sheets of cut pieces onto baking trays and place in the oven for 13-18 minutes, until they're just starting to go slightly darker around the edge.
11. Leave to cool on the trays - the pieces should be completely firm once cool. If they're soft, re-bake them for 5 minutes to make sure they're construction strength.
12. Make my construction and decoration icing (see other sheet) and you're ready to get building!

Maid of Gingerbread's classic royal icing recipe

Equipment needed

- Weighing scales
- Large bowl
- 2 smaller bowls
- Sieve
- Electric whisk (or stand mixer with whisk attachment)
- Large spatula/spatula spoon
- Cling film
- Disposable piping bags (or if you're using reusable bags you'll also need 2 piping tips: 1 small writing tip + 1 large round tip of at least 0.5cm diameter)
- A sharp pair of scissors

Optional extras

- Piping gel (this helps keep the icing smooth when you're piping decorations, so if you're planning on doing lots of biscuit decorating it's a good investment. Just add in a teaspoon of it with the egg white.)
- Brown food colouring gel. Not essential, but dyeing your Construction Icing batch brown to match the gingerbread helps disguise the joints of the construction.

Ingredients

- 2 egg whites (or 4 tsp dried meri-white mixed with 6 tbsp water)
- 500g icing sugar, sifted
- Squeeze of lemon juice

Method

1. Put the egg white (or meri-white mix) and lemon juice into a large bowl (or stand mixer if using) and mix to combine.
2. Tip in half the icing sugar and mix gently until combined. (Cover the bowl of your stand mixer with a tea towel to prevent the icing sugar flying out.)
3. Add icing sugar until the mixture is really thick and smooth. If mixing by hand it will be very stiff. It should look thick and glossy, but not wet.
4. Divide the icing into two medium sized bowls and cover one with cling film, pressing it down so it's touching the whole surface of the icing. (This prevents it from drying out.) This is your Construction Icing.
5. To the other bowl, gradually add some water drop by drop (you really won't need much) until a slightly softer icing is formed, that still holds its shape. When you lift the spatula out and let a ribbon of icing fall onto the surface it should sink into the main pool of icing after about 10 seconds. Cover with cling film as before. This is your Decoration Icing.
6. If you'd like to dye your Construction Icing brown, now add a few drops of gel based brown colouring and stir in until it's completely combined.
7. Fill your piping bags (at least one each of the Construction and Decoration icing), twist the open ends and either tie them into a knot or use a kitchen clip to hold the twist tightly.

TOP TIP! If you'd like to see the right icing consistencies, how to fill and cut the piping bags, then head to www.maidofgingerbread.com/icing and enter the password 'sweet' to view my short video guide.

House

Things to have to hand before you start:

- A couple of empty jars (to help hold pieces up)
- A sharp pair of scissors
- Some kitchen paper and/or a damp cloth
- Decorations of your choice (anything you like - from brightly coloured sweets, to delicate edible pearls)
- A cake board slightly bigger than the house (an 8" or 20cm one would work perfectly). Or you can just use a chopping board or large plate if you prefer (so long as it's totally flat).

Useful additions/optional extras:

- A fine cheese grater or a hand-held zester. If any of the biscuits have warped slightly in the oven I use my zester to carefully file down the edges of them until they're really straight. Absolutely not a necessity, of course, but if you're a bit of a perfectionist this is a fab way to get really perfect edges on your construction!
- Mini spatulas. Again, not at all essential, but if you'd like to make lots of gingerbread constructions these come in super handy. (You can just use a normal knife if you don't have a little spatula.)
- If you'd like more details on how to construct this, check out my step-by-step video guide which you can find here: www.maidofgingerbread.com/house-construction - just enter the password 'sugarandspice'.

Ready to start constructing? Let's go!

1. First, cut the tips off your piping bags (you can use icing nozzles if you prefer). Your construction icing bag needs an opening of around 5mm diameter and the decoration icing one should be smaller, around 1-2mm.
2. Place both of the side pieces flat on your work surface and use your decoration icing to pipe some windows and set them aside to dry.

TOP TIP! If you're feeling confident with your piping skills you can also pipe some roof tile shapes onto both roof pieces.

3. Take the two tree pieces and the little heart piece and add some decorations to them by piping little dots and adding silver balls, for example. You could also do some outline piping or attach some little sweets if you like. Set the finished decorated pieces aside for later.

4. To assemble the house, carefully pipe some construction icing along the bottom edge of the back piece and press it gently down onto your cake board (or plate/chopping board).
5. Place a couple of jars either side to hold it upright while you prepare the next piece.
6. Take a side piece, pipe construction icing along one side edge and the bottom edge then place it onto the board as before, but also pressing its side edge onto the back piece.
7. Repeat with the opposite side. (You can now remove the jars as it should be standing on its own now).
8. To attach the front piece, pipe icing up the two exposed vertical sides of the side pieces as well as the bottom of the front piece, then carefully press it onto position.

TOP TIP! Before you attach the roof, take this opportunity to add more strength to the house by carefully squeezing some more construction icing inside all of the joints.

9. If you like to have clean-looking joints, use a mini spatula (or small dinner knife) to carefully scrape away any icing that is showing on the outside of the house.
10. To attach the roof, pipe construction icing all along the exposed edges of the house as well as the top edge of one roof piece, then place them both on top and hold gently for around 30 seconds until they stay in position.
11. Attach the little tree biscuits either side of the front door (pipe a blob of construction icing on the back of them and gently press them onto the front piece) and place the heart biscuit above the entrance.
12. Finally, add more decorations or sweets of your choice. You could go wild and create a totally sweet-covered Willy Wonka house, or keep it traditional by attaching some silver balls or some sifted icing sugar 'snow' onto the roof.

I really hope you enjoyed constructing your gingerbread house! If you'd like to learn more of my top tips, you can follow me on Instagram [@gingerbreadmaid](https://www.instagram.com/gingerbreadmaid).

Or if you have any feedback or questions please email me on emily@maidofgingerbread.com.