

JOANN

# GINGERBREAD HOUSE

Skill Level: Beginner

Crafting Time: 1-2 hours



## SUPPLIES & TOOLS:

- Gingerbread House Kit
- Hot Glue Gun
- Hot Glue Sticks

## OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

- Royal Icing
- Icing Bag
- Sprinkles
- Food Coloring
- Mini Marshmallows
- Ice Cream Cones
- Graham Crackers

## DIRECTIONS:

The good news is that there isn't a wrong way to make a gingerbread house! We have some handy tips and tricks that will make the decorating and constructing process a bit easier.

Start with any gingerbread house kit; whether you choose a traditional house, holiday village-sized homes, or train cars, this guide can help. If you have more time and are feeling ambitious, bake the sides and roof panels with your favorite gingerbread recipe. No matter the option you choose, the following are our recommendations for a smooth decorating experience.

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## PREP:

Cover your building surface with parchment, wax, or newspaper.

Smooth the edges of the cookie pieces - this makes connecting them easier. You can use a fine grain sandpaper or a kitchen utensil like a zester to achieve the clean finish.

If you're planning a very elaborate gingerbread house, make a template out of cardboard before working with the cookies. You'll be able to practice the assembly and make sure that all the pieces and shapes work together.

If you'd like to mix colors, use very small amounts of food coloring in the royal icing. Colors deepen over time, so the longer the icing sits out, the darker the color will get. You can also thin out the icing with a little bit of water at a time if you need to alter the consistency for piping.



## DECORATING:

We find that it's easier to decorate each piece while it's lying flat before assembling the sides and roof.

**Leaving Negative Space:** If you are not planning to cover the entire cookie with icing, different piping tips will achieve various textures. Practice piping the icing on parchment paper to see what textures and patterns you can create. Outline the windows and doors with the textures you prefer. Fill in empty cookie space with wreaths, holly, ornaments or decorative swirls.

**Flooding the Cookie:** If you intend to completely cover the cookies with icing, start by outlining windows and doors then flood the negative space

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with thinner royal icing after the outlines have dried slightly. Pipe additional details on top of the icing, such as outlines, garlands or holiday lights.

**Using Stencils:** Stencils can add patterns on top of dried royal icing. Find or make stencils, such as bricks, holly, or swirls and use a flat palette knife or butter knife to spread a thin layer of icing on top of the stencil. When you remove it, you'll see the shape left behind.

**Sprinkles and Candy:** either add these before the icing is dry or allow the icing to dry completely and place candy on top of dots of wet icing.



## ASSEMBLY:

The tried-and-true assembly method is hot glue! It might sound strange on a cookie house, but it is the best way to get everything to stay as structurally sound as possible. The glue dries fast and will quickly hold the pieces together without crumbling over time.

If you intend to eat the gingerbread house, assemble it the old-fashioned way with icing. A thick consistency will help pieces adhere better than thin icing.

## FINAL TOUCHES:

Once the house is completely constructed and stable, use icing to cover up any seams. You can add cute holiday lights or snowfall. This is a great opportunity to add details to the roof and chimney, or even the front yard. The best tip is just to have fun! Spend time with your loved ones and make memories along with a beautiful holiday decoration for your Christmas table!