

# Canadian Gingerbread House

This part takes about 30 mins – you can bake one day and decorate the next!

## Gingerbread:

1 ½ cups butter

2 cups white sugar

2 large eggs

½ cup molasses

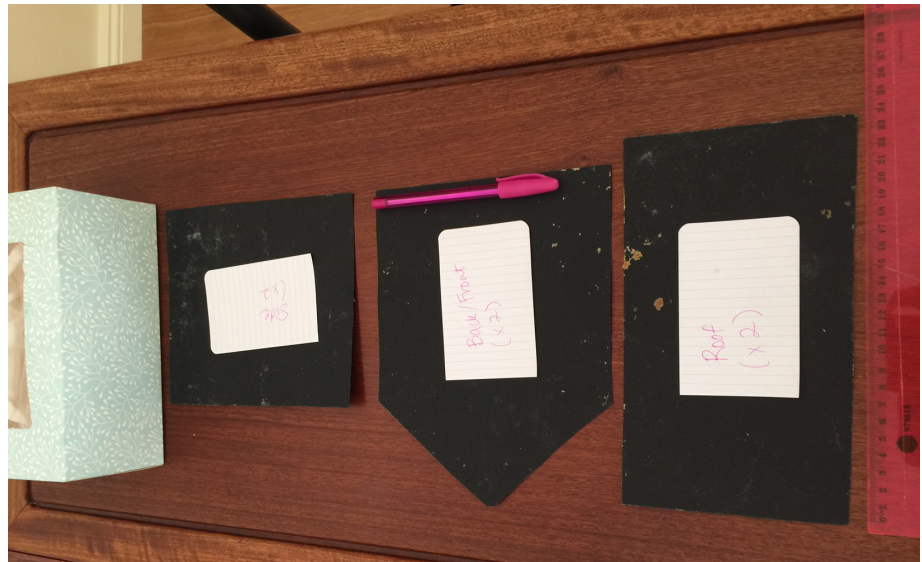
5 cups plain flour

4 teaspoons baking soda

2 teaspoons cinnamon

2 teaspoon ground ginger

(This amount will make 1 large house)



Using a mixer, mix butter, sugar, egg and molasses until creamy. Add flour, baking soda and spices and blend well.

- Get out your baking pans / cookie sheets!
- On the benchtop, place a sheet of baking paper cut to the size of your cookie sheet.
- Roll out a piece of gingerbread about ½ cm thick **right on the baking paper**. (Use some flour on your rolling pin as you roll, but don't worry if the dough is 'stuck' to the paper)
- Place cardboard 'pattern' on top and cut out pieces using a sharp knife. You can even leave pieces touching on straight sides like this:



- Remember you need TWO of each piece you see above (2 roof pieces, 2 front/back, 2 sides = 6 in total!)

**Here's the trick:** pull the excess dough away from the cut pieces and slide the whole baking paper onto your baking sheet. Easy!



Then repeat this step until you have all the pieces you need (6 in total). Bake at 160 degrees (fan forced or 180 regular) for about 25 minutes. You want the pieces to be firm when they are cool.

**The next trick:** as soon as you pull the gingerbread from the oven, invert your pattern pieces on top of the warm gingerbread (still on the baking trays) and 'recut' the pieces so you have nice clean edges. After a few minutes, transfer to baking racks.

Cool well on baking racks. You can leave them overnight (covered) or for a few days but fresh is best 😊



## Icing

**To ice the house together takes about 20 mins, then drying time (a few hours) then another 10 mins to stick on the roof!**

You may want to experiment with making the icing a bit thicker to ice the pieces together, and slightly thinner to decorate. I just use this amount below and it works fine...

- 4 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 kilogram icing mixture

Beat egg whites until almost stiff. Add other ingredients and mix in icing mixture slowly (or you will have a snowy white kitchen!). To make icing stiffer, add more icing mixture.

### To assemble the house

I use a plastic tray from IKEA but any flat surface will do. I use ziplock bags with a hole cut out of the bottom corner as an icing bag because I find the commercial icing bags always break anyway!

With a knife, ice an outline of your house foundation right on the tray (eg Make a thick rectangle the length of your ends and sides). It doesn't have to be perfect – you'll cover this all anyway.

- Stick on the first piece (either a wall or front/back), hold it about a minute.
- Then with your knife, put icing down the side that you'll join.
- Stick on the next piece (to make an L-shape). Now you should have 2 walls up!
- Do the same with the rest of your walls. You'll find that the walls stay together surprisingly well. If you're having trouble, wedge a coffee mug inside to give yourself extra hands 😊 or get someone to help hold.

**Let the four walls dry for a while** (up to 4 hours + or even overnight) before you try to glue on the roof! Remember that stiff icing works best! PUT YOUR CANDY INSIDE before the roof goes on 😊

Tip: don't worry if it doesn't look perfect! Just get this all 'glued together' and you'll get to go back overtop with more icing to make it look beautiful before you decorate.

### Decorating

Now for the fun part! **I let the house dry for a few hours OR overnight** and then let the boys help. I make more icing and pipe on doors, windows, a shingled roof etc, sticking lollies in as I go. I also 're-do' the icing on the four joining points of the walls, etc, to make it look neater. Choose whatever lollies you like! Smarties and jelly beans are great, and there are peppermint jelly candies that look like little Christmas trees. You can also pipe an icing footpath up to the house (directly on the tray) and stick 'trees' onto the tray. **Remember to use lighter lollies on your roof 😊. Smarties work well, and so do M&Ms.**