

## Gingerbread House!

Gingerbread makes its most impressive appearance as deliciously decorated cookies and sugary winter wonderlands with houses both big and small.

### The Gingerbread Dough

1 1/4 cups unsalted butter  
2/3 cup granulated sugar  
1/3 cup packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
2 teaspoons ginger  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/2 cup whole milk  
1 cup unsulfured molasses  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
5 1/2 to 6 cups all-purpose flour; plus extra for rolling out dough

1. Cream together the butter and sugars for 3 minutes; scraping down sides of the bowl periodically.
2. Add the vanilla, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, milk and molasses to the creamed mixture for approximately 2 minutes. The mixture will look speckled and broken.
3. Sift together the dry ingredients and add to the creamed mixture 1 cup at a time.
4. Mix the last 1 1/2 cups of flour by hand, as needed. If the dough is still sticky, add a little extra flour.
5. Divide the dough in thirds, wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour before rolling out.
6. Sprinkle work surface with flour, roll and cut dough, and place cutouts on a nonstick pan.
7. Bake for 6 to 9 minutes in a 350° oven, or until edges start to brown.

Note: This dough can be refrigerated for up to 1 week and may be frozen for up to 1 month.

### Meringue Powder Royal Icing

1/4 cup meringue powder  
1/2 cup cold water  
1 lb confectioners' sugar, sifted  
1 oz (2 tablespoons) lemon juice\*

1. Add meringue powder to cold water in a mixing bowl.
2. Beat to a soft peak stage—about 3 minutes.
3. Add the confectioners' sugar 1 cup at a time. Beat between each cup, scraping down the sides of the bowl.
4. Add lemon juice and beat for an additional 3 to 5 minutes on MEDIUM-HIGH speed or until the icing forms medium to stiff peaks.

\*If icing is too dry, add more lemon juice 1 teaspoon at a time until desired consistency is reached.

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