ACTIVITY

Gingerbread House DIY



What will you do?

We're going to have a go at making our own gingerbread house. This will need the whole family's help; grown-ups to deal with the hot and sharp things and the little ones to help build and decorate.

Ensure you have permission from an adult and their supervision before starting.

What will you need?

For gingerbread

250g unsalted butter
200g dark brown sugar
7 tablespoons of golden syrup
600g of plain flour
2 teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda
4 teaspoons of ground ginger

To decorate

Royal icing to construct
Selection of sweets to decorate

Kit

Kitchen scales
Baking tray(s)
Greaseproof paper
Piping bag (optional)
Knife
Cookie cutters
Template Our house will be made of 6 panels in total, a front, a back, two sides and two roof panels
Bowl, saucepan, spoon

Watch the Gingerbread House DIY video on #GSCAtHome Facebook or YouTube page

Recipe

Baking

Step 1. Preheat the oven to 200 °C/180° fan / gas mark 6 and get your baking trays ready.

Step 2. In a large bowl add the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ground ginger, and mix together.

Step 3. Melt the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a saucepan. When it's all melted together add the wet ingredients into the dry and mix well. This should combine into a dough. You can add a small amount of water if it doesn't come together.

Step 4. Put some baking paper on your surface and put the dough onto it. Sandwich it with another piece of paper and roll out a large rectangle to 1 cm thick. If it is too thin, it will snap when we try to construct our house. Too thick and it will take too long to bake.

Step 5. Place your templates on top of your rolled-out dough and cut around them with a sharp knife. Keep rolling the trimmings out until you have two sides, a front and back, and two roof panels. If you have any dough left over, you can make trees or gingerbread people to use as decorations.

Step 6. To create windows or an open door for your house, press a cutter into the gingerbread but leave the piece in place. They will be removed after baking which helps to create clean crisp edges in our doors and windows.

Step 7. Gently pick up the greaseproof paper with your shapes on and place onto your baking tray.

Step 8. Bake your panels for 12 minutes or until the edges are darker in colour.

Step 9. A few minutes before the end of baking, remove the panels from the oven. Re cut the windows and remove that piece. Bash some boiled sweets into small pieces and put the crushed-up sweets into the window spaces. Put this back in the oven for a few minutes until the sweets have melted into a syrup.

Step 10. Remove the panels from the oven and allow to cool slightly.

Step 11. Our pieces will have spread slightly during baking. Using your template again trim the edges with a knife, making the straight edges needed for construction.

Step 12. The panels need to be left to cool completely until they are firm.

Construction

Step 1. Put your royal icing into a piping bag. Alternatively, you can use a knife, but the piping bag will give you more control.

Step 2. Pipe some royal icing onto the bottom and along one side of both the back and right-side panels. Press these onto the board/plate and fix the side to the back by pushing the royal icing together. It will help to have someone hold the panel steady while you prepare the side.

Step 3. Fix the left-side and front panels of your gingerbread house to the existing structure, using the same method. We now must leave it to dry before attaching the roof. You can use a jar or tin to support the structure as it sets.

Step 4. When it's solid to the touch, it's time to add the roof. Pipe some icing along the edges of the roof panel. Attach one panel at a time. Holding it in place until it sets a little. Once both roof panels are in place, pipe some icing along the joins of the roof to strengthen it.

Step 5. Now it's time to decorate! Using your selection of sweets, decorate your house however you like.

Step 6. Finish it off with a dusting of icing sugar snow!

More to try

You can experiment with different shapes and sizes, or design your own style of house - the only limit is your imagination. You can even fill with sweets or treats to be discovered when you break your house open.

Fun facts

Some of our oldest traditions, which includes the introduction of gingerbread, date back to the ancient Greeks. They also believed bringing evergreens indoors would ward off evil spirits and serve as a reminder that life will regrow after the winter is gone.

There are millions of people across the world who don't celebrate Christmas or have different traditions/ celebrations across the festive season. For example, lighting the Menorah during Hanukkah.

Heart-shaped gingerbread cookies were often traded as love tokens.

In Austria, Santa's evil cousin Krampus, scares children into being good. Children are scared with stories of being kidnapped by Krampus if they are naughty.

Iceland's "Yule Book Flood" is the tradition of gifting books to each other on Christmas Eve and spending the evening reading them.

In the last few years some Japanese families have made changes to their traditional Christmas dinner. They go to KFC! In recent years KFC have added a festive menu in Japan for Christmas Day, with pre-orders starting months in advance.

Share pictures of your gingerbread house with us on social media using #GSCAtHome