

FOOD

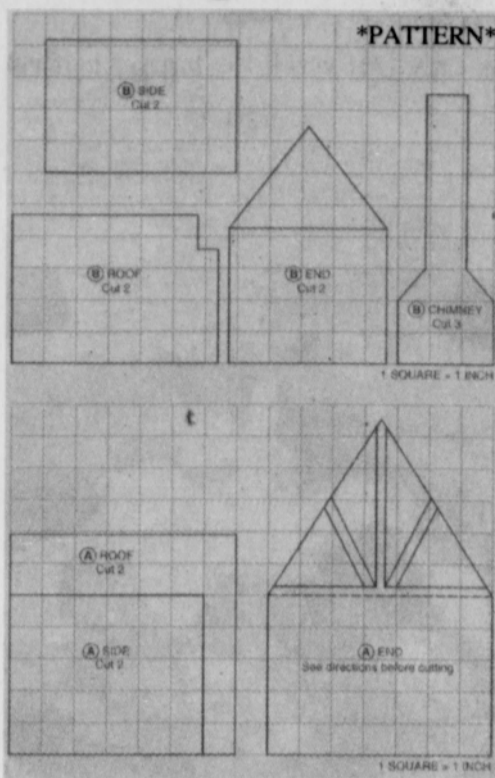
MATERIALS

- 1 recipe Sugar Cookie Dough
- 2 recipes Gingerbread Cookie Dough
- 2 recipes Royal Icing
- Wafer-crème cookies (shutters)
- Fruit-flavored circle candies (wreaths by front door)
- Tiny flavor-coated gum (trim above windows)
- Multicolored nonpareils (decorations on swags and trees)
- Graham cracker squares (porch)
- Peanut halves (chimney)
- Frosted bite-size shredded wheat biscuits (roof thatch)
- Mixed nuts (garden wall)
- Waffle-pointed ice cream cones (trees)
- Silver dragees (door trim and tree and lamp toppers)
- Candy cane sticks (porch posts and lamp post)
- Gumdrops (porch post and lamp post bases)
- Pretzel sticks (woodpile)
- Quilt batting
- Gingersnaps (stepping stones)



Fairy-Tale Cottage

Nothing makes a more impressive centerpiece during the holidays than a homemade gingerbread house, and they are not as difficult to make as they might appear. It is also a great way to get your children involved in the holiday festivities. You can put the basic frame structure together and watch the kids have a ball decorating with their favorite candies. Captivate young and old alike with this fanciful Heartland gingerbread cottage. It's tucked behind a nut fence and landscaped with ice-cream cone trees and gingersnap stones. The bungalow sports a roof of shredded wheat, sugar-wafer shutters and a porch with candy posts. It's a great family project!



ASSEMBLING

Porch: Break a graham cracker square in half, lengthwise. Break another graham cracker square in half, diagonally. Decorate one of the triangles as desired; discard the remaining triangle. Assemble the porch roof, using icing to cement the pieces together and to attach the roof to the two-tone end piece.

Cottage: Assemble the larger section of the cottage on "I" end of the cookie base, using a star tip to pipe icing on each of the edges that will join with another piece. Press pieces together (Photo 3). Assemble the smaller section next to the larger section, using icing to hold the sections. Let icing dry thoroughly.

Roofs: Using a star tip, pipe icing on top edges of side and end pieces of both sections of the cottage. Press roof pieces into position, placing the notched ends of roof pieces B at the outside edge (Photo 4).

Chimney: Cement 3 chimney pieces together with icing; attach to end of smaller section with icing, fitting chimney into notched area of roof. Spread 1 area of chimney with icing. Place peanut halves in icing, allowing a little space between nuts (Photo 5). Repeat till chimney is covered with icing and nuts. Let dry.

Thatch on roof: Generously spread icing, a little at a time, over roof pieces. Press shredded wheat biscuits into the icing, staggering the rows like shingles (Photo 6).

Garden wall and trees: Pipe icing on waxed paper to form a wall. Place mixed nuts in frosting. Repeat to make a wall four layers high. Let dry. Carefully peel off waxed paper. For trees, with a star tip, pipe swags on ice cream cones. Sprinkle with nonpareils. Top trees with silver dragees.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Porch posts: With icing, cement a candy cane stick on top of a fruit-flavored circle candy. Repeat. Position sticks, circle candy side down, under porch roof. Secure with icing.

Icicles: Using a decorating bag fitted with star tip, touch tip to edge of roof. Squeeze bag gently; pull down tapering frosting to a point. Pull tip away. Repeat around edges of roof. Spread icing over porch roof; add icicles.

Lamp: Press a candy cane stick into a gumdrop. Cement a fruit-flavored circle candy to the top of the candy stick with icing. Cement a yellow gumdrop onto the circle candy. Let dry. Top the gumdrop with a silver dragee.

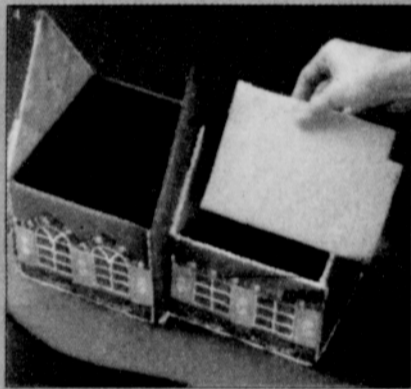
Woodpile: Cement pretzel sticks together with icing. Make a mouse from a peanut half. Use nonpareils for eyes and string for a tail.

GINGERBREAD COOKIE DOUGH

"Make two batches of this recipe; don't double it. There'll be some left over to make cutout cookies, gingerbread people or stepping stones."

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole-wheat flour



Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and shortening with electric mixer for 30 seconds or till fluffy. Add the sugar, ginger, allspice, baking soda and salt. Beat mixture till combined.
2. Add egg, molasses and lemon juice. Beat till combined.
3. With the electric mixer, beat in as much of the all-purpose flour as you can. Stir in any remaining all-purpose flour and the whole-wheat flour with a spoon.
4. Divide dough in half. Wrap each half in plastic wrap. Chill for 3 hours or till firm enough to roll out.

CUTTING AND BAKING

1. Enlarge the pattern pieces, as directed (refer to pattern diagram above).
2. Divide Sugar Cookie Dough in half. Using a floured rolling pin, roll out half to 1/4-inch thickness. For ease in baking, roll out the dough and cut out the pieces on the back of an ungreased 15x10x1-inch baking pan (Photo 1). Bake the pieces right on the back of the pan. Cut out 2 roof pieces using roof pattern.
3. Divide remaining dough in half. Roll out 1 portion and cut 1 piece using roof pattern B. Roll out remaining portion and cut out another piece, turning roof pattern B over. Set aside Sugar Cookie Dough scraps.
4. Roll out 1 portion of Gingerbread Cookie Dough and cut 1 piece using end pattern A. For the two-tone end of cottage (Photo 2), cut the pattern on the dotted line that forms the base of the large triangle to form a rectangle and a large triangle. Cut the rectangle from the Gingerbread Cookie Dough. Roll out the Sugar Cookie Dough scraps. Cut the large triangle from the Sugar Cookie Dough. Place these 2 pieces on a baking sheet with the long edges touching. Roll lightly to seal. For the beams, cut 4 strips 1/4 inch wide from the scraps of Gingerbread Cookie Dough. Place on the end piece (Photo 2).
5. For the base, roll out another portion of the Gingerbread Cookie Dough to an irregular oval about 16x16" ~ 1/2"x12" inches on a foil-lined extra large baking sheet. Trim edges. Use the remaining Gingerbread Cookie Dough to cut out 2 side pieces using side pattern A, 2 side pieces using side pattern B, 2 end pieces using end pattern B and 3 chimney pieces.
6. Bake pieces in a 375° oven for 10 to 12 minutes or till edges are lightly browned. While cookie pieces are still warm, place patterns on cookies and trim away excess dough. The more exactly you cut the pieces, the easier the cottage will fit together. Cool pieces on baking sheet.

ROYAL ICING



"Make this frosting when you're ready to assemble the cottage. Then, make a second batch when you need it. For best results don't double the recipe."

Ingredients

- 3 egg whites
- 16-ounce package powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Food coloring

Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the egg whites, sugar, vanilla and cream of tartar.
2. Beat with an electric mixer on high speed for 7 to 10 minutes or till very stiff. Use icing immediately.
3. Except when filling pastry tube, keep the icing in the bowl covered with wet paper towels to prevent it from drying out. Tint with the food coloring, as directed. Makes 3 cups.

SUGAR COOKIES



"You'll have some of this dough left over to make cookie cutouts."

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg
- 4 cups all-purpose flour

Directions

1. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer for 30 seconds or till fluffy.
2. Add the sugar and baking soda. Beat the mixture till well combined.
3. Beat egg into the butter mixture till combined.
4. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour with a spoon.
5. Cover and chill dough for about 2 hours or till firm enough to roll.

DECORATING

1. Using white Royal Icing in a decorating bag fitted with a small round tip, pipe windows and doors on side and end pieces (Photo 2). Using green icing and a small star tip, pipe a line around each window and door. If you like, pipe light strings on beams.
2. Separate 6 wafer-crème cookies into 2 layers each. Use Royal Icing to attach cookie layers next to windows on the sides of the cottage for shutters. Attach fruit-flavor circle candies for wreaths next to the door, and tiny flavor-coated gum pieces above windows. Pipe white scrolls on shutters.
3. Using green icing and a medium star tip, pipe an evergreen swag under each window. Decorate with multicolored nonpareils. Using red icing and the small round tip, pipe a bow under each shutter. For lights on green strings, use the small round tip to pipe small dabs of red, green, blue and yellow icing. Let icing dry.



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