

CHEF'S CORNER

WITH CHEF AMELIA

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

FROM CHEF AMELIA'S KITCHEN

A NOTE FROM CHEF AMELIA:

This is a super fun way to get into the holiday spirit! BUT give yourself ample time to prepare the recipe and the days in between to chill, dry out, and assemble!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound (4 sticks), at cool room temperature
- 2 ½ cups plus 3 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 12 ¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 heaping tablespoons ground ginger
- 2 heaping tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs, at room temperature
- 2 cups molasses

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make half of the batch: In a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together half the butter and half the sugar for 5 minutes, until fluffy. Scrape down sides.
2. Meanwhile, sift together the dry ingredients — the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder and salt — and set aside half.
3. With mixer running at low speed, add two eggs, one at a time.
4. Mix in 1 cup molasses. Scrape down bowl.
5. In 3 batches, add half the dry ingredients, mixing just to combine. To prevent any flour from flying out, make sure the mixer is off when adding each batch, and drape a towel over it when mixing.
6. Pull dough out of mixer, and wrap in plastic wrap, or transfer to a resealable plastic bag.
7. Repeat the process for the second batch of dough and refrigerate both batches overnight.

THE NEXT DAY

1. Preheat your oven to 350. Working with your first batch of dough, use a kitchen scale to weigh out 20-ounce portions; these will become your walls and roof.
2. Lightly flour a counter, then roll each portion into a 10-inch square. These will later be trimmed, so it doesn't need to look perfect around the edges. Place each piece on a baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes.
3. Allow to cool briefly, then, using a sharp knife and your template, cut out the desired shaped front, back, sides, and roof pieces. Save your scraps for a gingerbread pie crust!
4. Allow these pieces to cool and dry out completely overnight, or at least 8 hours.



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INSTRUCTIONS [CONT.]:

8 HOURS LATER

1. Time to decorate! Here's how you make the decorating icing. You'll need:
 - 5 egg whites
 - 2 teaspoons lemon juice
 - 2 pounds powdered sugar
2. Using a mixer, combine the ingredients until a smooth, ribbony icing is formed.
3. Pour the icing into a gallon size freezer bag, then snip the tip off to create a piping bag. We decorate the sides before assembling, as it's easier to pipe on a flat surface rather than a vertical one. Snowflakes, trees, and stars are great easy things for kids to pipe. Don't forget to pipe on your doors and windows!
4. Allow the icing to harden for at least an hour before assembling the house after decorating the sides. Save the remaining decorating icing, you can use it on the final product for touch ups!
5. For assembly, you'll need a stiffer icing than what we used to decorate. The process is the same, but you'll need a different ratio of ingredients.
 - 2 egg whites
 - 1 teaspoon lemon juice
 - 1 pound powdered sugar
6. Scrape the icing into another gallon bag and cut a thicker tip off the edge of the bag. On your serving tray and using your template as a guide, pipe a thick 9-inch square outline.
7. Stand the front wall up first, hold it in place with cans, a coffee mug, or even a vase! Next, pipe a thick line up the side of the front wall, and attach your side wall. Repeat with the back wall, and finally with the remaining side wall. I like to take a break and give the walls a chance to harden before attaching the roof. Go walk the dogs! Pour a glass of wine! Put on the Christmas music! Ok, you're ready.
8. Pipe the icing along the pointed edges of the front and back of the house, as well as on the top of the side walls. This icing hardens like a rock, so use as much as you feel like you need! Gently place one side of the roof on the house and press lightly. I used a can to hold the roof in place from the underside. Repeat the process on the other side, again using a can to hold it in place. If you see any gaps, fill them with your icing. Allow to harden completely, at least 8 hours, before adding any candy decorations or removing the cans for stability.
9. At this point, the only limit is your imagination! I opted for a snowy scene with no candy, but tons of edible glitter and sprinkles. You can use Necco wafers for the roof or frosted mini wheats! You can build a fence with pretzel sticks! You can use rock candy for greenery! Shredded coconut for freshly fallen snow! This is your chance to get creative and make your own personal winter wonderland. Have fun with it! Remember, the secret ingredient in anything you make? LOVE. Happy Holidays!

