

Gingerbread House

This recipe makes a perfectly crisp gingerbread house that will have everyone gasping in delight. The smell of the biscuits baking in the oven will instantly transport you to Christmas heaven!

MAKES 1 GINGERBREAD HOUSE

225g (8oz) butter
200g (7oz) light brown sugar
4 tbsp golden syrup
2 tsp treacle
2 tbsp ground ginger
2 tbsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground cloves
500g (18oz) plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

To decorate:

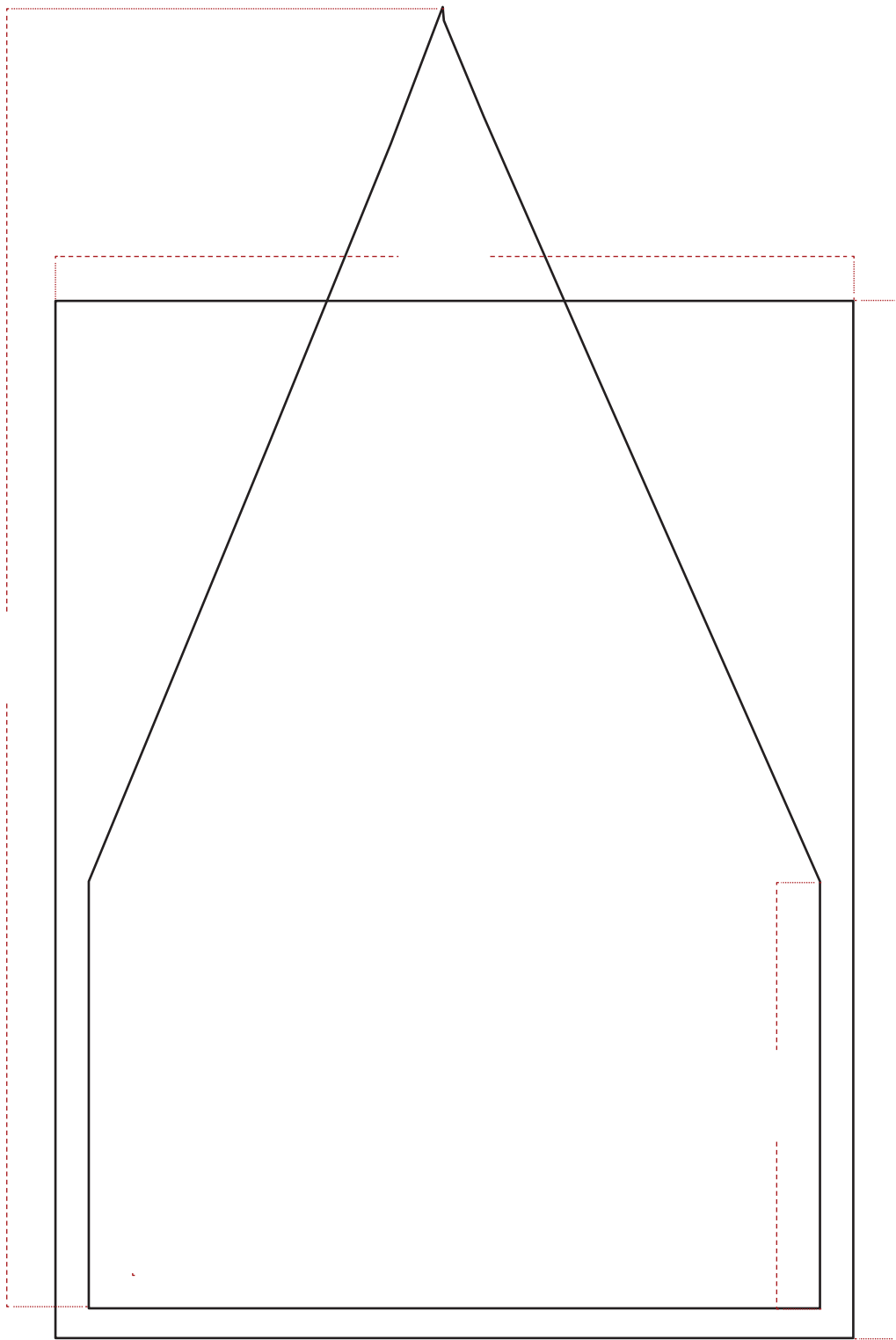
1 egg white
250g (9oz) icing sugar, plus extra
for dusting
a few drops of lemon juice
1 x 125g (4½oz) packet of mini
chocolate fingers
generous selection of different
kinds of sweets



1. Preheat the oven to 190°C (375°F/gas mark 5). Cut out the templates below.
2. Put the butter, sugar, golden syrup, treacle, ginger, cinnamon and cloves in a pan set over a low heat. Cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring, to melt the butter and dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and stir in the flour and bicarbonate of soda in batches until you have a smooth but fairly stiff dough. Be careful, as the dough will be quite hot. Allow it to cool for about 5 minutes before handling. However, it's important to work with the dough while it's still a little warm and pliable, as it becomes quite dry and crumbly once it has cooled completely, making it more difficult although not impossible to work with.
3. Roll out a quarter of the dough in between two large sheets of parchment paper to a 3mm (1/8in) thickness – basically, as thin as you can because you want the gingerbread

to rise only slightly so it will be nice and crisp when it's cool. Cut out one of the sections, then slide the gingerbread, still on its parchment paper, onto a baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough, re-rolling the trimmings, until you have two side walls, a front and back wall, two roof panels and a base. Any leftover dough can be cut into Christmas trees, if you like.

4. Bake all the sections in the oven for 10–12 minutes, until firm and just a little darker at the edges. Leave to cool for a few minutes to firm up, then trim them again to give sharp edges. Leave to cool.
5. Put the egg white in a large bowl, then sift in the icing sugar, add the lemon juice and stir to make a thick, smooth icing. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a medium nozzle. Pipe generous snakes of icing along the wall edges, one by one, to join the walls together. Use a small bowl to support the walls from the inside, then allow to dry for at least a couple of hours.
6. Once dry, remove the supports and fix the roof panels on. The angle is steep, so you may need to hold these on firmly for a few minutes, until the icing starts to dry. Leave to dry completely (overnight is best).
7. To decorate, pipe a little icing on the mini chocolate fingers, cutting them down to fit as necessary.
8. Using the icing, stick sweets around the door and on the front of the house. Use any remaining icing to decorate the house. Pipe a little icing around the top. If you've made gingerbread trees, decorate those too. Dust the roof with icing sugar for a snowy effect. Lay a winding path of sweets and fix gingerbread trees around and about using blobs of icing. Your gingerbread house will be edible for about a week but will last a lot longer if you just want to use it for decorative effect.

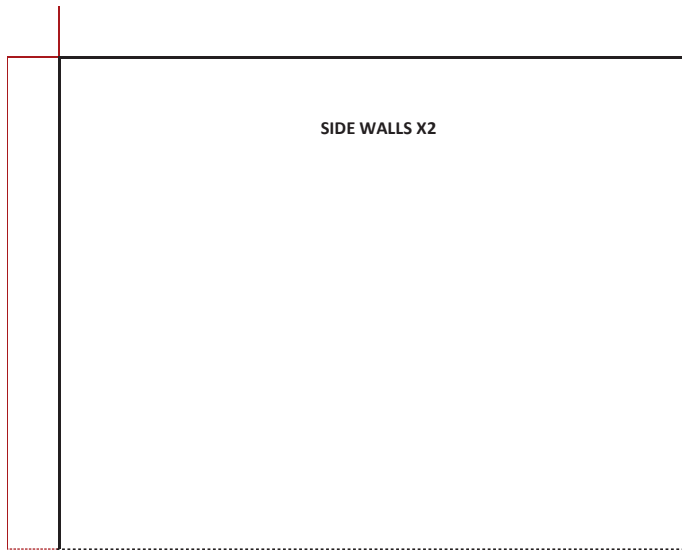


120 mm

ROOF PANELS X2

FRONT AND BACK WALLS X2

SIDE WALLS X2



..... 83 mm