

Make a gingerbread house

Discover your inner engineer this festive season.

What you need

- 250g unsalted butter
- 200g dark muscovado sugar
- 7tbsp golden syrup
- 600g plain flour
- 2tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 4tsp ground ginger
- 2 egg whites
- 500g icing sugar, plus extra to dust
- Saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- Large bowls
- Templates from tinyurl.com/SN-Gingerbread
- Rolling pin
- Knife
- Baking tray and paper
- Whisk
- Piping bag

How does it work?

Gingerbread dough is different from other types of biscuit – syrup and flour turns it elastic but sturdy. Using bicarbonate of soda without an acid like yoghurt or honey (which is what helps other types of dough rise) means the gingerbread will spread out but won't puff up in the oven. A splash of water also makes the dough smoother. The best icing to use to build the house is made with egg whites. This is because, when beaten, the eggs' proteins unravel and then come together again, trapping air bubbles inside. This creates white, foamy "peaks" that are stiff. Stiffer peaks create a stronger paste, which dries hard and holds everything together in your gingerbread house.

TOP TIP!
Use any leftover dough to make Christmas trees and stars to decorate your gingerbread house.



1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6. On the hob, melt the butter, sugar and syrup in a pan until it is all combined and gooey.



2 Mix the flour, bicarb and ginger in a bowl, then slowly stir in the butter mixture. Make a dough by folding and kneading. Add water if needed.



3 Roll out your dough until it is the thickness of two £1 coins. Then, ask an adult to go to tinyurl.com/SN-Gingerbread and print out the templates.



4 Place each template on the dough and carefully cut out the sections of your gingerbread house. You will need to cut two of each shape.



5 Put the shapes on a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake in the oven for 12 minutes. Leave to cool completely.



6 Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl and slowly sift in the icing sugar until you have a thick paste. Put the mixture into a piping bag.



7 Pipe the icing to decorate the different sections of your gingerbread house. You can add other sweets, too.



8 Pipe more icing onto the sides and top of your house, to stick the sections together, and assemble. This can be a bit fiddly, so be patient.



9 Finish your house with a layer of icing sugar and any final decorations you want to add. The biscuits will be edible for about a week.

