

Vegan Ginger Bread House



This is no small task, but it does define Christmas for us. Molly and I really enjoy doing this every year. It does get simpler, once you've tackled it once and know the ropes.

Top tips:

Cut troughs out of the fondant icing that lines your board for the walls to sit in, makes it much steadier.

We only do two rows of 'tiles' on the roof now, otherwise we find it's too heavy to hold up without 'snow balls' of fondant icing to support the roof.

Don't rush it and buy lots of edible glitter for decorating!

You can use eggs in this recipe - 3 replace the egg replacer in the dough.

Free From: Eggs, Dairy, Nuts

Contains: Gluten

Dough Recipe

1kg/2lb 4oz plain flour

300g/11 oz. Pure Sunflower Margarine

2 tbsp mixed spice

2 tbsp ground ginger

1 tsp cinnamon

1 tbsp bicarbonate of soda

3 teaspoon egg replacer, plus 5/6 tablespoons water (or whatever your egg replacer says for 3 eggs)

225g/8oz golden syrup

450g/1lb brown sugar

To assemble/decorate

750g/1lb 10oz icing sugar plus whatever colours of food dye you choose

400g/14oz preserving sugar (I couldn't find this so just used white sprinkles or edible glitter on the tiles)

200g/7oz ready to roll white fondant icing, plus a few ping pong sized balls (you should be able to find this in most supermarkets)

Make the Dough

Put about half the flour in a food processor with the butter. Whizz until you can't see any

lumps of butter. I need to rub with my fingers to achieve this (and if you don't have a food processor just use your hands)

Mix the buttery flour with the remaining flour, spices and bicarb of soda with a pinch of salt. Stir in the sugar.

Whisk the egg replacer with the golden syrup and stir into the flour mixture.

Using your hands knead the dough until smooth. This takes a surprising amount of time I find. Partially because the dough is quite stiff.

Cut out the shapes

Preheat oven to 200°/180c/gas 6

Roll out a quarter of the dough at a time on a sheet of baking parchment to the thickness of two £1 coins.

Cut out two sides, and two 'fronts/back' of the house.

Roll out more of the dough to make the roof, these need to be lighter than the rest of the house so make them the thickness of one £1.

Dimensions



Roof 15 cm high, 19 long

Sides 8 cm high, 14 cm long

Front/Back -rectangular part identical to the sides, with sides of the triangular roof measuring 14cm (basically a triangle sitting on top of the rectangle). This does make quite a steep roof.

Using paper make a template, and glue grease proof paper on it so it doesn't stick to the dough when cutting out.

Using a sharp knife cut around the templates. Remove the excess dough and using the baking parchment lift onto a baking tray. Remember you need two of each major piece (2 sides, 2 roofs, a front and a back).

Bake one item at a time on a high shelf for 8-12 minutes until rich brown and firm. Give it 3-5 minutes to cool then place the template on top and trim the edges. Use a small knife, or cookie cutters to cut out any doors or windows while the front and back sections are still warm. If you wait too long, just pop the gingerbread into the microwave for 5 seconds so it softens a bit and then cut out the window/door. Over the years we have found that sticking to one door and one window on the front of the house is best for stability!

For a roof tiles roll out the remaining dough to the thickness of one £1 coin and using a 3-4cm round cutter stamp out 36 rounds. The original recipe calls for 76 roof tiles, I usually

lose the will to live by around the 50 mark, also we've found that having the roof entirely covered makes it too heavy so we do two rows only now. Or ignore this and when the time comes cover the roof with icing!

Bake the rounds for 6-9 minutes. You'll have enough dough left over to make some ginger bread men as well.

Decorate

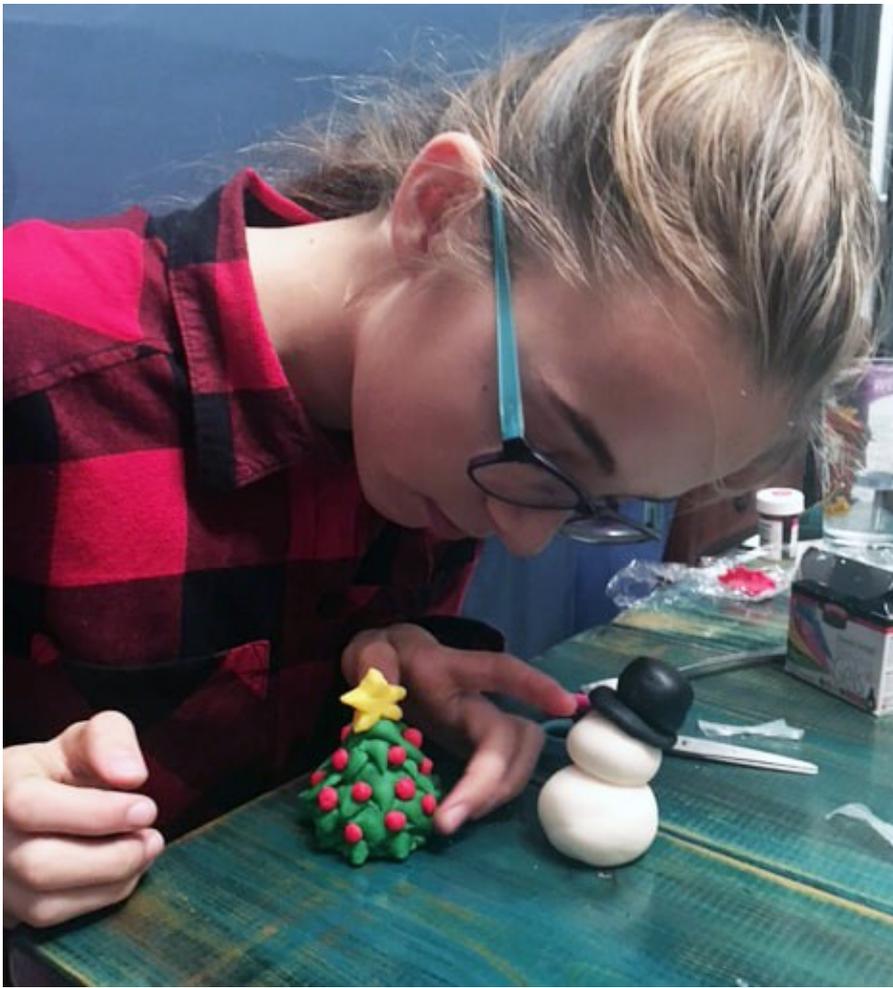
Sift 250g of icing sugar into a bowl, with 1 tbsp dairy free margarine, 1 tsp of vanilla and dribble in water until you've a thickish icing. Dip the roof tiles in about half way one by one and then dip into preserving sugar or sprinkles and leave to set on a wire rack. We put bowls of edible glitter out and dip the tiles into different colours - white, ivory and light blue look pretty.

Use 500g of icing sugar, add 1.5 tbsp of dairy free butter, 1.5 tsp vanilla dribble in more water and make a thick icing. Divide into bowls and add whatever food colouring you fancy. Put a bit into a piping bag with a small nozzle and decorate the front and sides as you wish. We go for green vines with flowers as we think it's pretty but pipe any decorations you want. Leave to dry for a good 45 minutes.



Building

Cover your board with fondant icing, we get ours from Sainsbury's. Roll it out, cover the board, then use your fingers to make indentations so it looks a bit like snow covered grass. Sprinkle glitter, or use the left over fondant to make a snowman or snow balls. We used green fondant to make a tree this year. Molly formed the green fondant into a triangle and then used scissors to snip the leaves.



We've found that the best thing to do is to cut a trough in the fondant used to cover the board for the walls to sit in. Take your pieces, arrange them on the board (you'll need someone else to help hold) and mark out where they will sit. Cut out the fondant with a small sharp knife to make the 'foundation troughs.

Arrange the wall biscuits as you are going to assemble them. Swap to the big bag of icing with a medium nozzle to pipe generous snakes of icing along the side edges

and stick the walls together. Pipe extra along the walls to join them. We've found we don't need to support the walls with balls of fondant icing when we've done the trough, but to be extra careful you can support each wall with balls of royal icing. Leave to dry for several hours.



Roof

To decorate the roof start placing the circular tiles along the bottom of the roof sheet in a row. Use icing to secure the tiles in place - a blob on the back. Let the bottom row

overhang the edge of the roof, then continue sticking on the tiles a row at a time so that each tile sits above the gap of the row below so the tiles sit in a diamond pattern. You will need to cut some of the tiles at the end to fit (use a sharp knife). Do the same for the second roof and leave to set for several hours.



You should have a solid, roofless house now. Time to put the roof on. Pipe icing around the apex of the front and back of the house (around the triangle bits) and fix the roof sheets, one at a time and

support with icing balls. This bit is fiddly so you need two sets of hands to get it right. Do one at a time, and hold it for a few minutes til it starts to set then pipe icing along the top seam to set. We get Julian to hold the roof in place for about 15 or 20 minutes - this seems to work when we've done the troughs for the walls to fit into as the house is much more solid. In a few hours you can take away the icing balls.

Final Decorations

Put anything you like along the top join - mini marshmallows, blobs of icing, spare roof tiles. Decorate the rest as you wish, either like we did with ginger bread men and sugar figures or any Christmassy theme you like.

Our first ever house!



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