Santa’s Workshop

Originally from Good Housekeeping in the 1980s
Designed by Ollie Alpert, Photographed by Victor Scocozza

Gingerbread Dough

6-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
1-1/2 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp salt
1-1/2 cups light corn syrup
1-1/4 cups packed light brown sugar
1 cup butter or margarine

In large bowl, stir together flour, cinnamon, ginger, and salt. In 2-quart saucepan, stir corn syrup, brown sugar, and butter or margarine until well blended; stirring constantly, cook over medium heat until better is melted. Stir into flower mixture until well blended. Refrigerate until dough is easy to handle.

Ornamental Icing (also known as Royal Icing)

1 pound confectioner’s sugar (aka Powdered sugar)
3 egg whites at room temperature
1/2 tsp cream of tartar

In large bowl with mixer at low speed, beat all ingredients until blended. Beat at high speed 7 to 10 minutes or until knife drawn through mixture leaves a path. Makes about two cups.

Note: because the icing dries very quickly, make each batch just before you are ready to use it. If you must store for a few hours or overnight, cover tightly with plastic wrap. When using, keep container covered with damp cloth or paper towel. Mix in food colors as needed. If icing is too thick when using fine tubes, add a few drops of water. For thicker icing, beat in a little extra powdered sugar.

Supplies Needed:

- 2 batch Gingerbread Dough
- 5 batches of Ornamental Icing
- Red, pink, blue, green, yellow, and brown food coloring pastes* or food coloring
- Heavy cardboard, 20” by 20”
- 6 foil-lined cookie sheets*, 2 large (17” by 14”), 4 small (15-1/2” by 12”)
- Small artist’s brush for painting with icing

* You can get paste food colors at most any cake decorating store, or a Michael’s that carries Wilton supplies. Liquid food colors from the supermarket work as well, just watch carefully as the liquid can dilute your icing, making it thinner. Use paste colors if you can find them easily.

♥ Or, if you prefer to save the time of rerolling the dough: Roll out all dough, one cookie sheet at a time, transferring each sheet, foil and all, with dough cut and ready for baking, to a piece of lightweight cardboard. Refrigerate sheets of dough till ready to bake, at which time remove foil with dough from cardboard, and return it to cookie sheet.)

Decorations:

- Silver dragees
- Candy canes
- Red and green jelly beans
- Red candy hearts

Jana Keeler, costumepastimes.com, 2010 – copied from Good Housekeeping article from 1980s
NOTE: IN THIS FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH THEY ARE ASKING YOU CUT OUT ADDITIONAL PIECES NOT SUPPLIES IN THE PATTERNS—read this section carefully so you'll make all the pieces you'll need!

Prepare the Pattern Pieces: In addition to those given in the pattern diagram (included at end of instructions), you will need: a rectangle 2-1/8” by 2-1/4” for window (pattern piece #4), rectangle 2-1/8” by 1” for shutters (#16), rectangle 1-1/4” by 1-1/2” for chimney side (#15), rectangle 2-3/4” by 1-1/2” for chimney (#14), rectangle 7-1/2” by 9-1/4” for roof (#13), and rectangle 3-3/4” by 8-1/4” for workshop side (#9).

To roll dough: Line the cookie sheets with foil, moistening sheet with water fist to prevent foil from sliding. Roll the dough from the refrigerator and roll about ¼” thick. (For easy rolling, place damp cloth under cookie sheet to prevent sheet from slipping).

To cut and bake dough: to cut out pieces: Place 3 cups dough on each large foil-lined cookie sheet and 2-1/3 cups dough on each smaller cookie sheet. On the 2 large cookie sheets, roll dough to 16” by 14”. On 4 smaller sheets, roll dough to 15” by 11”.

Arrange Patterns As Follows: leaving ½” space between each: On one large cookie sheet, place patterns #1 (cut two, place on diagonal), 2, 3, 4 (cut three), 5, 6 (cut two, and 7; on other large sheet, #s 8 and 9 (cut 2), 10 (cut two). On one small cookie sheet, place pattern #s 8, 11; on third, #s 8, 12; on fourth, #s 13 (cut 2), 14, 15, 16 (cut 6). Using some of the excess dough and following photographs as guide, make mailbox. Roll additional dough into a 5” by 1” rope for three braces. Cut into 1” lengths. Place on cookie sheet.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until pieces are lightly browned and firm when lightly touches with finger. Remove cookie sheet from oven and cool on wire rack.

Note: before gingerbread has cooled check size of pieces by placing patterns on them. Trim to size, if necessary. (When pieces have cooled completely, any uneven edges can be filed down with a file or sandpaper.)

If you have left over dough, make cookies.

Construction Tips

When assembling gingerbread pieces with icing, work with pastry bag with medium tube.

To attach walls or fitting pieces together pipe line along edge of one wall or piece; press sit against adjoining wall, and hold in place for several minutes until icing sets. When dry, smooth seams with damp cloth; fill in any spaces with more icing.

For extra stability when building a house or other structure, pipe icing along the inside seams as well. Allow to stand for at least an hour until icing has completely dried. If you’re not planning to eat the structure, you can use toothpick “nails” for even sturdier construction. Cut toothpicks diagonally into ½” lengths. With real nail or skewer, pierce edge of two pieces to be joined. Insert toothpick “nail” into one hole. After applying icing on edge of one piece, put two pieces together with “nails’ in place.

To Assemble Base (not pictured):

1. Cover 20” by 20” heavy cardboard with foil. Arrange four base pieces of gingerbread to form circle. Spread small amount of Ornamental Icing along straight edges of base pieces, and fit frosted edges together.

Decorating:

1. Setting aside about 4 cups of Ornamental Icing, divide remaining icing into green, red, brown (if using liquid food coloring combine about 4 drops yellow, then about 3 drops red, then about 1 drop green to make brown); pink, and small amount of yellow and blue, as needed.
2. With pink Ornamental Icing, frost entire surface of shutters, door, 2 roof pieces, sign and mailbox. Let dry completely.

Jana Keeler, costumepastimes.com, 2010 – copied from Good Housekeeping article from 1980s
3. Decorate roof, shutters, and sign pieces with red and/or green icing and silver dragees as pictured, using pastry bag fitted with medium-fine plain round tip and small oval petal tip for “flowers.”

4. **Door:** Decorate with red frosting and dragees as shown. To form wreath, use pastry bag fitted with #233 tip and pipe green frosting in circle on door; let dry. With medium-fine tip, pipe red bow and berries. With same tip, pipe brown icing to make doorknob; decorate with silver dragees.

5. **Mailbox:** With extra-fine tip, pipe red frosting to write “S. Claus” on mailbox. Spread small amount of white frosting on bottom of mailbox and attach 1-1/2” piece of candy cane for support pole.

6. **Windows:** Frost surfaces of all windows with blue frosting. Let dry completely. Pipe brown-frosting edges, and mullions (a line that divides the windows). Let dry. Pipe on “leaves,” using green icing and pastry bag fitted with small oval petal tip. Attach candy hearts and dragees with small amount of white icing.

7. **Chimney:** Frost 4 sides of chimney completely with green frosting (be sure to frost sides that will be facing out). Let dry. With pastry bag fitted with medium-fine tip, draw “bricks” with pink Ornamental Icing.

8. **Santa:** Decorate with frosting and silver dragees as shown in photo (see pattern for Santa to the right).

9. **Trees:** With pastry bag fitted with #233 tip, pipe green frosting to cover entire surfaces of trees. Let dry completely. With pastry bag fitted with medium-fine tip, pipe on white icing dots. Decorate with silver dragees.

10. **Sides of Workshop:** With icing, attach windows and shutters to each side of workshop. Decorate walls with red and green icing, dragees.

11. **Front of Workshop:** Create timbers by piping on outline in brown icing and filling in with brown icing you paint on. Let dry completely. Spread small amount of icing on back of windows, sign, and door, and attach. Working with one shutter at a time, spread small amount of icing along 1 long edge of shutter; attach in place next to window. Decorate front of workshop as illustrated.

**ASSEMBLING:**

1. On cookie base pipe outline of where house will stand. Following **Construction Tips**, assemble pieces in this order: back piece of workshop, sides, front, roof pieces.

2. Assemble chimney; position on roof as shown.

**Finishing Touches:**

1. Decorate eaves and side and rooftop edge with candy canes (cut to size), icing, and dragees as shown.

2. Decorate top of chimney and roof with white icing as shown.

**To Decorate Base:**


2. Make a path of red and green jelly beans, dragees from door of workshop, attaching with white icing. Place small amount of icing on Santa and position in chimney, as shown. Stand trees around house, attached dough “braces” to reinforce trees. Note: you can also use sugar cones to make trees. To vary the height you can gently steam cone so you can trim the bottom off to make trees of varying heights. Using green icing pipe and a small to medium “leaf” tip to pipe on leaves starting at the wider bottom of cone till you reach the top. Let them dry before putting on the cookie base to complete the look as shown in the photo.
PATTERN FOR SANTA’S WORKSHOP. 1 square = 1”

Read all instructions first—while not necessarily a beginner project with time and patience you can master this one. You don’t always have to follow the decorating instructions and feel free to use your own creativity!

If you make this workshop please do send me a photo to jkeeler415@costumepastimes.com

Note: where it says “see recipe” you need to cut these out pieces out yourself using the measurements provided up in the instruction section on page 2.
Santa’s Workshop:
enchancing timbered cottage,
complete with Santa himself,
leaving—by the chimney—on his
Christmas Eve rounds.