
Cutting out the house panels

1 double recipe of gingerbread dough
Sharp knife, pastry cutter or pizza cutter
Manila folders or foam core (optional)
Rolling pin

Additional flour
House panel templates
Parchment paper
Baking sheets

1. Remove half of the dough mixture from the refrigerator and let it sit for 10 minutes. Roll it out evenly onto a sheet of parchment paper to between $\frac{1}{4}$ - and $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness, dusting the dough occasionally with flour to avoid sticking.
2. Cut out the house panels from the templates provided. If you intend to reuse them, trace them onto a manila folder or foam core. Place the templates onto the dough, as many as will fit, with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch between the pieces. Use a pastry cutter, pizza cutter or sharp knife to trace around the panels and to cut out the front window. You should end up with these 6 house pieces: Front, Back, Side A, Side B, Roof A and Roof B. Cut the dough removed from the front panel window in half, lengthwise, and separate to make the shutters.
3. If you can't fit all the pieces on the rolled-out dough, use the same steps on the remaining dough in the refrigerator for the rest of the pieces. Use cookie cutters on some of the remaining dough to make cookies. Frosted, Halloween-themed cookies will make great additions to your haunted house.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F with the oven rack in the middle. While oven is heating, place the cookie sheets with the dough in the freezer about 5 to 10 minutes to help them bake evenly.
5. Bake dough pieces until the edges are just beginning to darken, about 20 to 25 minutes. Rotate the cookie sheets halfway through the baking time to brown more evenly. Remove the sheets from the oven and place on cooling racks.
6. While the pieces are still slightly warm, lay the paper templates over them and use a large, serrated knife to trim off any uneven parts or areas that have spread past the pattern. Let pieces cool completely before assembling the house.



BERNARD'S BAKING TIPS:

- *Leave about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch between pieces when cutting out the dough, and transfer the dough to the baking sheet without removing it from the parchment paper. This will keep the dough from stretching out of shape and keep the pieces from running into each other when baking.*
- *Dough scraps can also be reused and rerolled, but keep in mind the more you reroll the dough, the "tougher" the dough becomes and the pieces will bake differently.*
- *After you've transferred the parchment paper to the baking sheets, place some small pieces of leftover dough on the corners to keep the parchment paper from curling up against your house panels and causing them to warp.*



Assembling and decorating the house

See step-by-step assembly photos at Hallmark.com/halloween/ideas/gingerbread-house/

Parchment paper

1 recipe Royal Icing

Food coloring in Halloween colors

Decorating bags or parchment paper

Decorating tips (I used a round tip 4 for the basic house and round tip 3 and star tip 16 for the more intermediate and advanced houses)

Various candies for decorating

1. Pick a solid base for your gingerbread house, such as a thick, sturdy piece of cardboard lined with florist foil, a cake stand, or plate. If you want to create a gingerbread base, roll out your remaining dough and cut a circle using a round 8-inch cake pan as a template. Bake at 350° for about 30 minutes and let cool.
2. Color your icing. Drop a decorating tip (round tip 4) into a decorating bag and add your icing. Pipe a thick line of icing along the bottom and sides of the front panel and along the bottom of one side panel (it doesn't matter if you start with Side A or Side B). Press the front and side together down on the base. Hold in place for a few minutes until the icing is partially set.
3. Pipe another thick line of icing on the short and long end of the second side panel and place it against the edge of front piece and base. Hold in place to set. Repeat with the back piece, aligning all the corners and edges. Get an extra set of hands or cans from your pantry to help hold the panels in place, if necessary. Pipe additional icing along the seams inside the house to fill in any gaps and add stability. Let stand for at least 20 minutes before adding the roof pieces.
4. For the roof, pipe icing all along the top edges of front, back and two sides. Place both roof panels on the structure at the same time, making sure the top edges of the roof panels are touching each other. Hold in place for a few minutes to set. Pipe more icing along the top seam. Let the whole house stand for at least an hour before adding decorations.
5. Decorate the shutters, let dry, then carefully add a line of icing to the back of the shutters to attach them to the front of the house. Hang them askew for a haunted look.
6. Pipe icing with various tips to make decorative designs around the walls of the house and roof.
7. Use icing to "glue" pieces of candy to the house, beginning with the front and sides, then the back, then the roof.
8. Add a path to the front door with remaining icing and crushed hard candies for the paving. Complete your house with frosted cookies and larger candies around the perimeter.





Assembling and decorating the house



BERNARD'S BAKING TIPS:

- *Don't have an extra set of hands to help in the kitchen? Grab some cans from your pantry to help hold the gingerbread panels in place.*
- *If you don't have decorating tips, just cut the end off your parchment bag and ice away.*
- *These are some of my favorite candies for decorating haunted houses: foil-wrapped chocolates, gumdrops, jelly beans, orange slices, chocolate-covered candies, candy corn and black licorice. For the easy house, I used premade sugar pieces in Halloween shapes (spiders, skulls, jack-o'-lanterns, etc.) that are available at cake decorating and craft stores.*



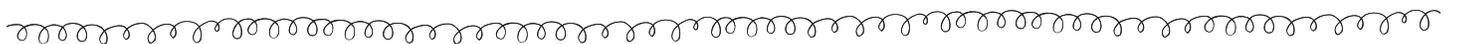
Easy



Intermediate



Advanced



Cutting and assembling a haunted tree

When you're all done with your house, it's time to create a deliciously scary haunted tree with your leftover dough.

1. Roll out all leftover dough and slice 8 to 10 strips about ½-inch wide and about 8-inches long. Don't worry about uniformity—the more crooked the strips the better.
Tip: To make a face for the tree out of dough (optional), cut one additional thin strip and form an "O" for a mouth, and two smaller balls for the eyes. Add them to the tree trunk after Step 4.
2. Gather the strips like you're holding a bouquet of flowers and transfer the strips to a parchment paper-covered baking sheet.
3. Gently twist the strips near one end to make the trunk. Softly mash them together so they won't separate during baking—but leave the very tips of the strips on that end splayed out to form the roots.
4. On the opposite end where the strips are not gathered, carefully spread the strips apart to create curvy, crooked branches.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F with the oven rack in the middle. While oven is heating, place the cookie sheets with the dough in the freezer about 5 to 10 minutes to help them bake evenly.
6. Bake tree until the edges are just beginning to darken, about 30 to 35 minutes. Rotate the cookie sheets halfway through the baking time to brown more evenly. Branches may begin to darken more than the rest of the tree, but that's OK—the trunk needs to bake long enough to be sturdy.
7. Remove the sheets from the oven and place on cooling racks.
8. Let the tree cool completely before adding it to the house.
9. Add a generous amount of icing to the base of the tree and prop it carefully against the house for stability.
10. Add a face to the tree with additional icing and candies (optional).





Gingerbread House Template

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***Print at 100%**

Side B: Cut 1
3 1/2" w. x 5 1/4" h.

Roof B: Cut 1
4" w. x 5 3/4" h.



Gingerbread House Template

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***Print at 100%**

Side A: Cut 1
3 1/2" w. x 5 3/4" h.

Roof A: Cut 1
4" w. x 4 1/2" h.



Gingerbread House Template

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***Print at 100%**

Roof A
goes here

Roof B
goes here

Front and Back:

Cut 1 for front.
For back, flip template over,
then cut 1.

*Note: do not cut a window
for back.*

Window

Cut out from front piece
only. Remove scrap
dough from window and
cut scrap dough in half
to make shutters.

Side A
goes here

Side B
goes here

