

## Sara Jean's Gingerbread House Recipe

5 cups unsifted all-purpose flour\*  
1 tsp. baking soda  
¼ tsp. baking powder  
2 tsp. Ground Cinnamon  
2 tsp. Ground ginger  
2 tsp. Ground cloves  
1 tsp. Ground Nutmeg

1 cup shortening  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 cup molasses  
1 large egg\*  
1 tsp. Vanilla

Sift the first seven ingredients into a medium bowl and set aside. In a mixer with a paddle attachment, cream shortening and sugar together until well blended. Add molasses, egg and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the dry ingredients in about three or four stages to the wet ingredients, mixing between each addition. The dough will be very stiff. You will need to finish mixing the dough with a wooden spoon or with your hands. Divide the dough into three balls. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for half an hour or until ready to use. The dough can be refrigerated for up to two weeks.

Preheat the oven to 325° F. Take one ball of dough from the refrigerator. Roll out the dough on a silicone baking mat, parchment paper or aluminum foil. Small pieces can be rolled out thinner, about 1/8" thick; larger pieces can be rolled out up to 1/4" thick. It is best to use the same thickness on all the pieces for one structure. Measure your dimensions onto the rolled out dough or cut around a template. Use a dull (plastic or pastry) knife to cut the shapes. Remove all excess dough from around your pieces. This dough can be wrapped in plastic and put back in the refrigerator to be used later. Place the liner with the dough on it onto a baking sheet. Bake the pieces according to how large and thick they are. Bake until the pieces have firmed and are browned around the edges. Small pieces might be ready in 8 minutes; larger pieces might take 14 to 15 minutes to bake. Cool the pieces on the baking sheet for about 5 minutes. Place the pieces on a cooling rack to finish cooling. The pieces will become firmer once they are cooled. Finish cutting out and baking all of your pieces for the house. Store the pieces in an airtight container. The cookie pieces will keep for a long time (4 to 6 weeks) if kept in an airtight container in a cool, dry place.

Use the recipe in Wilton's Meringue Powder for royal icing to construct the house. Construct the house on a strong cardboard or wood base or a platter or cookie sheet. Use a medium large tip like a #18 star tip to pipe the icing. Hold the pieces together for about half a minute to allow the icing to take hold. If you want a more streamlined look, you can smooth the icing in the seams while it is still wet. Allow the icing to dry overnight before decorating the house. Use royal icing to attach decorations to the house.

\*For No Egg Recipe:

Eliminate the egg. Reduce the flour to 4 ½ cups. Add ¼ cup vegetable oil with the shortening. Let dough rest in refrigerator for at least 1 hour or overnight.