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Tips, Tricks and Resources

Gingerbread can be tricky building material, so we've put together a list of tips, tricks and resources (including some TSA-tested recipes) to help you when creating your gingerbread creations.

Tips and tricks

- **Plan in advance:** Between templates, baking and decorating a gingerbread house can take some time so make sure to plan in advance and give yourself plenty of time to let things cool and set.
- **Make some templates:** Cutting out a cardboard template will make sure your pieces are a good fit and that you aren't missing walls as you're topping off your building! Bonus tip, when gingerbread is out of the oven you can put your template on top to recut any edges that have gotten misshapen. You can also use a microplane to sand an edge straight.
- **Gingerbread and Royal Icing:** Good building materials are key for structural integrity, so make sure you have a good gingerbread and royal icing recipe! We've tested a few recipes for you (placed in the resources below) which worked out well for us (and were super tasty too!).
- **Be patient:** When assembling your gingerbread creation, be patient! Let the royal icing harden completely before putting on things like roofs or decorating, otherwise you risk structural collapse!
- **Moisture control:** Even in gingerbread, water penetration can be a problem! Humidity softens gingerbread and compromises its integrity, so make sure you are keeping your gingerbread somewhere dry if you want it to last.
- **Have fun!:** Gingerbread is about imaginative creations and having fun, so don't sweat the small details and just have some fun!

Resources

- **Where to Get supplies**
 - If you're looking to get materials and baking tools from suppliers based in the area, here's a list of some stores in the GTA:
 - McCall's in Mississauga, which offers curbside pickup or delivery.
 - Nella, which offers curbside pickup at three Toronto locations.
 - Madame Gateaux, an east-end supplier that offers online ordering with curbside pickup.
 - The Cookery, which offers curbside pickup at two Toronto locations.
 - Tap Phong in Chinatown West, which offers curbside pickup.
 - Bulk Barn, several locations in GTA, which has an excellent candy selection and also baking supplies.

- **Recipes**
 - **Gingerbread:** A [quick recipe](#) that will give you a well-spiced dough that's great for building (and snacking!)
 - **Royal Icing:** Make sure to use [royal icing](#) to keep everything together—it's the glue that will bind the best!

- **Expert Advice:**
 - [The Do's and Dont's of Modern Gingerbread House Design](#)
 - [A quick guide to creating a Gingerbread Diorama](#)
 - [Tips for how to decorate your Gingerbread House \(especially useful if you're working with prefab elements!\)](#)

- **Tools of the Trade:**
 - You don't need to invest in specialty made pastry bags to get those icicles—a [few kitchen staples](#) can get you ready to pipe to your heart's content!
 - A few [tips and tricks](#) to help plan your gingerbread structure (make sure not to try and do everything in one day!)

- **Photography Tips For Landmark Submissions:**
 - **Make a Plan**
 - Consider how you want your gingerbread creation to be shown: will a bird's eye view or an eye-level picture best capture the different shapes and decorative elements? Do you want to show your structure in context, or get close up to it?
 - **Lighting**
 - Use multiple light sources: It's important to have at least two light sources when taking pictures of your model, using whatever you have in your own home, whether it's a reading light, spotlight, or even a candle! This will help to add more depth to your picture, along with helping show the different textures.
 - Do you want your gingerbread to be backlit, with soft or bright lighting? The best way to tell is to experiment!
 - No need for flash! A lot of the time, the flash light can be too harsh and might not work best to show your creation.