

My Gingerbread House



Last year I made my first gingerbread house. It was such a rewarding, creative experience that I was looking forward to it again this year.

There are many gingerbread house dough recipes online. Unfortunately, since I didn't take notes, I do not recall which recipe I had used for the dough last year.

I googled a Martha Stewart recipe and proceeded forward. The dough is very spicy and flavorful; but it was like rolling concrete, not the soft, fragrant dough from a year ago.

In thinking I had screwed up the recipe somehow, I made a second batch. It was equally difficult. At this point, I was ready to quit. But I wasn't going to let impossible dough deter me. After some serious effort and sweat (picture me using all my weight on the rolling pin), the dough was flat enough to be used. This was NOT the experience I had last year.



You can make your own templates or get various ones online. The templates I used were purchased in the 1990s and had no instructions. Thankfully they were labeled.

The smaller pieces I cut on the counter as the larger ones were done in place on the cookie sheet, so I didn't have to move them and risk breakage.





Baking resulted in some of the edges not being square so this was easily fixed with a paring knife.



A large cardboard base covered in aluminum foil was the foundation of the project.





The window panes were made from butterscotch candies. Last year I used yellow cellophane. First time I have done this and it was super easy.



Candies were smashed into bits and then poured onto parchment paper in the rough form of the windows.





In a few minutes, the candies melted in the oven. After cooling, they readily peeled off.

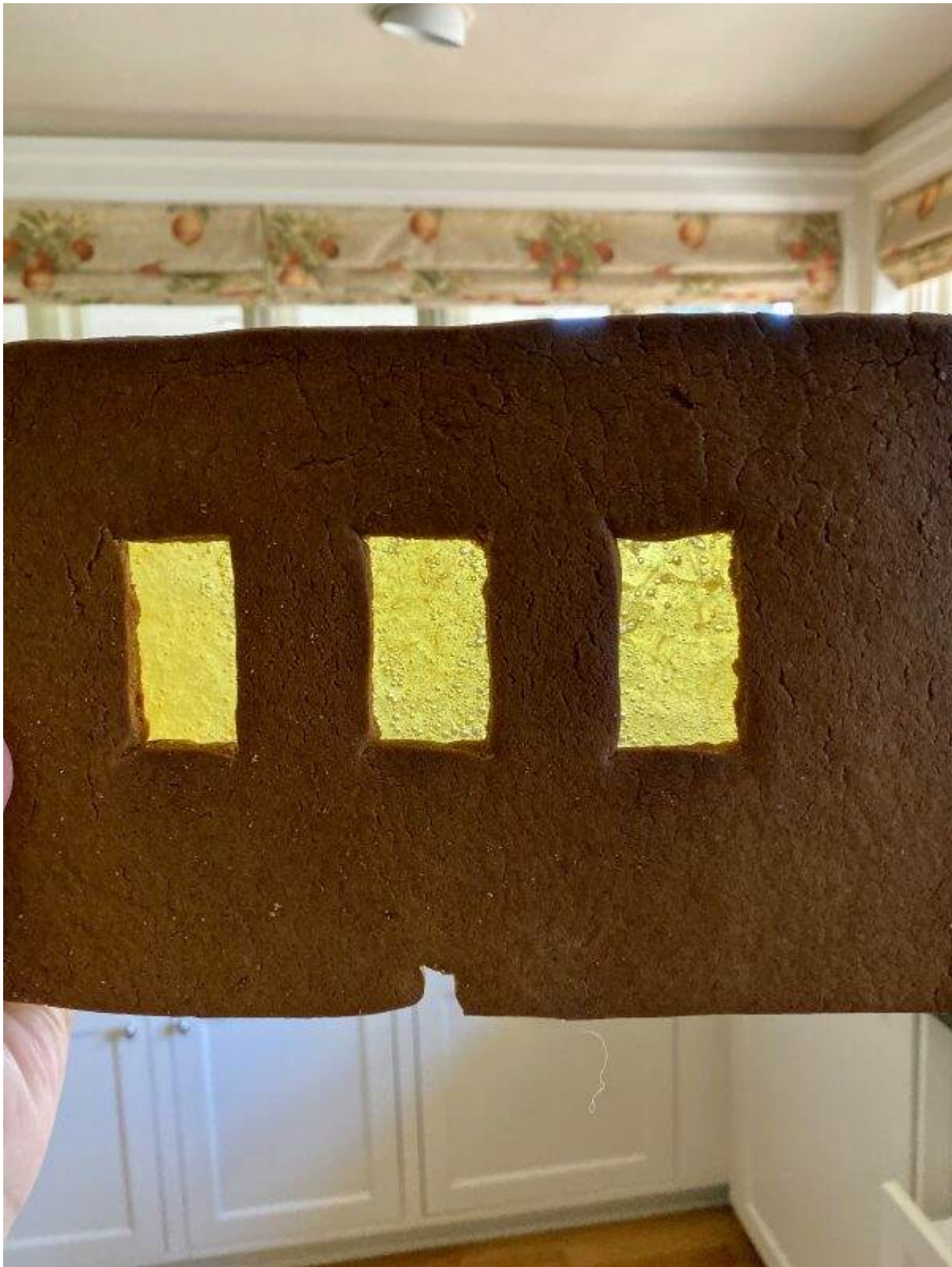


After all the pieces were baked and windows made, construction begins! There are several recipes for Royal icing for gingerbread construction. Three simple ingredients ~~confectioners sugar, egg whites and cream of tartar makes a sturdy glue. Applying with a pastry bag was helpful.



Windows were glued to the inside of the walls.





Time and patience are essential next. It is important to wait for the royal icing to dry after each section is glued together or collapse is inevitable.



Before the roof went on, battery operated fairy lights were placed inside.







This was the fun part for me~~decorating the outside with various candies and confections, pretzels and coconut.







The chimney is coated in chocolate bark. Hershey chocolate pieces and pretzels adorned the windows and corners.



With the extra gingerbread dough, I made trees, the owners and a wreath.



Here is the finished product.









My piping skills need improving. What was I thinking when I did the shorts on the gingerbread man? LOL!





Happy Saturday! Trying to minimize the stress of knowing Christmas is only 4 days away. Wishing you a wonderful weekend!

Mary