



## MINIS AT HOME

volume 1, issue 11

**Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!**

**Welcome to issue 11 of Minis at Home newsletter.** Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

### **This week's theme = Gingerbread**

It's that time of year when you might be decorating a gingerbread house or baking scrumptious gingerbread cookies. **Gingerbread** is delicious and so wonderful to smell! Making gingerbread cookies or houses is a tradition for many families. Have you ever made or decorated a gingerbread house?



What is **Ginger**? Ginger is a plant whose roots are used to flavor goodies such as gingerbread cookies, gingerbread houses, ginger tea, ginger candies and ginger-ale. The ginger root looks like a tree root or even fingers! Ginger root can be used in all sorts of foods, and it is one of the healthiest spices. Did you know that If you drink ginger tea or eat ginger candies when you have a tummy ache, it might help you feel better? People have used ginger root for THOUSANDS of years as a medicine and to make treats to eat and teas to drink.

Gingerbread is like cookie dough. The cookies can be shaped into gingerbread people and decorated with colorful candies and icing for clothes, buttons, face and hair. Gingerbread houses can also be decorated with candies as well as with loops and curves of icing on the roof, doors and windows. Have you ever seen a real house with curves and loops of wooden trim on the doors or near the roof? This is sometimes called "gingerbread work."



At royal parties in medieval England, queens and kings would serve gingerbread cookies. The cookies were decorated to look like the guests at the party. These royal cookies were sometimes even decorated with gold. Imagine having a special cookie decorated to look like you! Gingerbread cookies were also given to knights by their ladies as tokens of good luck before they went to battle.



Hundreds of years ago, people in Germany began making mini houses out of gingerbread, inspired by a very famous German fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel," in which the children came upon a real-life sized gingerbread house in the woods.



Gingerbread "men" have appeared in movies, TV, ballet performances and books. There was a gingerbread man in the movie "Shrek" as well as in the Muppet Show. In the Nutcracker ballet, the Gingerbread Men army battled with the Mouse King and his people.

The largest gingerbread man cookie ever made was on display at an IKEA store in Norway. This GIANT cookie weighed 1,400 pounds which is about as much as 50 of you and your friends weigh or about as much as a polar bear weighs!



## Activity: Baking Together

Here's a delicious recipe for Gingerbread Cookies: [from foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com)

Makes 24 5-inch tall cookies

### Ingredients:

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
1 3/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
6 tablespoons unsalted butter  
3/4 cup dark brown sugar  
1 large egg  
1/2 cup molasses  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest (optional)



### Directions:

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves until well blended.

In a large bowl beat butter, brown sugar, and egg on medium speed until well blended. Add molasses, vanilla, and lemon zest and continue to mix until well blended.

Gradually stir in dry ingredients until blended and smooth.

Divide dough in half and wrap each half in plastic and let stand at room temperature for at least 2 hours or up to 8 hours. (Dough can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 4 days but allow dough to return to room temp before using.)

Preheat oven to 375°.

Grease or line cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Place 1 portion of the dough on a lightly floured surface. Sprinkle flour over dough and rolling pin. Roll dough to a scant 1/4-inch thick. Use additional flour to avoid sticking.

Cut out cookies with desired cutters (gingerbread people are so fun to decorate!) Space cookies 1 1/2-inches apart. Bake 1 sheet at a time for 7-10 minutes (the lower time will give you softer cookies). Remove cookie sheet from oven and allow the cookies to stand until the cookies are firm enough to move to a wire rack. After cookies are cool, decorate them any way you like using candies and icing.

## How to Make Royal Icing:

### Ingredients:

3 ounces pasteurized egg whites  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
4 cups confectioner's sugar



### Directions:

In large bowl of stand mixer combine the egg whites and vanilla and beat until frothy.

Add confectioners' sugar gradually and mix on low speed until sugar is incorporated and mixture is shiny. Turn speed up to high and beat until mixture forms stiff, glossy peaks. This should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes.

For immediate use, transfer icing to pastry bag or heavy-duty storage bag and pipe as desired. If using storage bag, clip corner. Store in airtight container in refrigerator for up to 3 days.

## Activity: **Gingerbread House Craft:**

### Materials:

**Brown paper lunch bag**

**1 small sheet of newspaper or paper towel for stuffing the bag**

**1 sheet white construction paper or regular office paper**

**Various colors of construction paper or festive gift wrap paper scraps to use for candy decorations, door and windows**

**Markers**

**Aleene's Tacky Glue**

**Glue stick**

**Scissors**

**Stapler**



**Procedure:**

Using colorful construction paper or gift wrap scraps, draw and cut out all sorts of candy shapes, such as candy canes, gumdrops, and peppermint candies to glue onto your house. Children can draw candy shapes and designs and grownups can help them with cutting. Kids can also draw candies on white paper and then color them using markers.

Cut a door and 2 windows for your house out of construction paper.

Cut a piece of white office paper or construction paper in half width-wise and make a slight curvy edge along the perimeter of the paper. (This will be the white snowy roof.)

Fold the white paper in half along the long edge. This will be glued (or stapled) over the opening side of the paper bag (the roof line) once the bag is stuffed.

Fold the top of the paper bag down about an inch from the opening; don't decorate the bag above the fold line.

When you have all your candy decorations, door and windows made, glue them onto the paper bag, making sure you don't glue anything above the fold where the roof will go.

When all your decorations are securely glued onto the bag, stuff the bag with newspaper or paper towels so that it can stand upright.

Staple the white roof over the folded portion of the roof.

You can also decorate your house with REAL candies such as small M & M's, Skittles, gummy bears, or candy canes. Use hot glue or tacky glue for this. Once glued, do NOT peel off and eat!



## Activity: Move, Sing and Count

### Five Little Gingerbread Men

(from the Kiboomers 2017)

5 gingerbread men lying on the tray  
 1 jumped up and ran away,  
 shouting "catch me, catch me if you can!"  
 "I run really fast, I'm the gingerbread man."  
 The gingerbread man, the gingerbread man;  
 I run really fast, I'm the gingerbread man.

(Repeat with 4, 3, 2, 1 and then the final verse):

No gingerbread men were lying on the tray  
 Because they all jumped up and ran away.  
 Oh, how I wish they had stayed to play  
 Next time I'll eat them before they run away!



### Gingerbread Man

(original author unknown)

Stir a bowl of gingerbread (pretend to make a stirring motion)  
 Smooth and spicy brown  
 Roll it with a rolling pin (pretend to use a rolling pin)  
 Up and down  
 With a special cookie cutter (pretend to press down on a surface like using a cookie cutter)  
 Make some little men  
 Put them in the oven (pretend to open oven and put tray inside)  
 Till half past ten! (and then pretend to eat them while they're still warm)

### My Gingerbread House — Days of the Week Rhyme

(original author unknown)

I made a house of gingerbread:  
 It was sugary and sweet!  
 It took me all day long to make,  
 but it lasted just a week!  
 Monday, I ate the ceiling,  
 Tuesday, I ate the door,  
 Wednesday, I ate the windows,  
 Thursday, I ate the floor,  
 Friday, I ate the walls,  
 Saturday, I ate the lawn,  
 Sunday, I ate up all the crumbs  
 till my gingerbread house was gone!



**Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together

*Gingerbread Mouse* by Katy Bratun

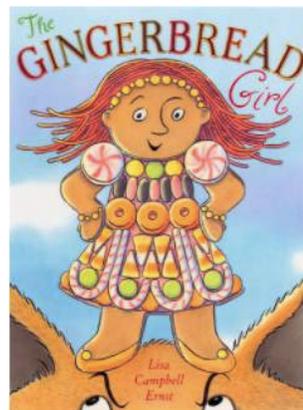
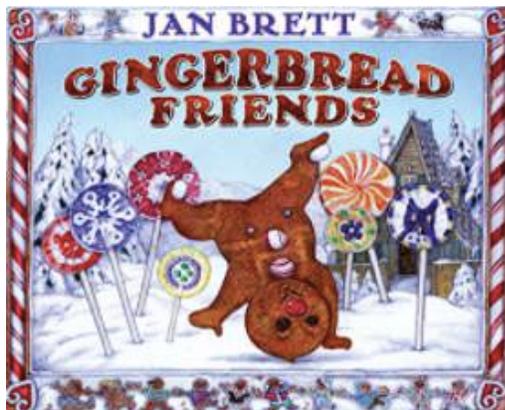
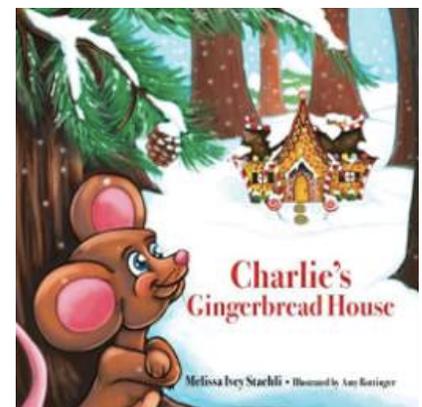
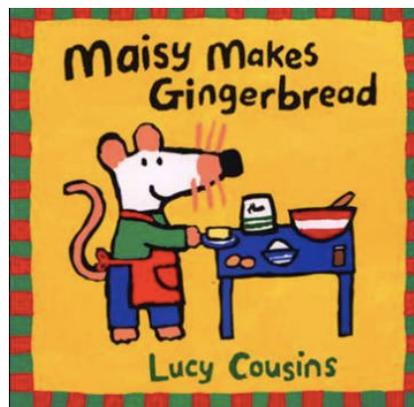
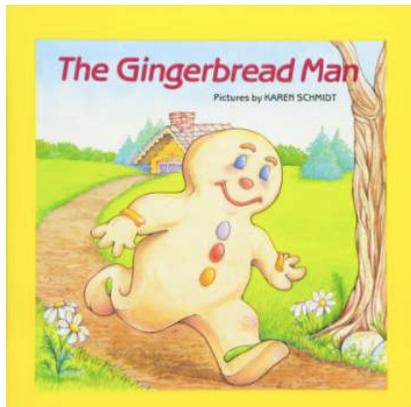
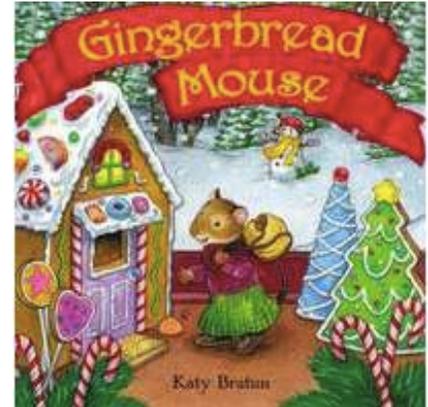
*The Gingerbread Man* by Karen Schmidt

*Maisy Makes Gingerbread* by Lucy Cousins

*Charlie's Gingerbread House* by Melissa Ivey Staehli

*Gingerbread Friends* by Jan Brett

*The Gingerbread Girl* by Lisa Campbell Ernst



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See you next week with issue 12 of *Minis at Home!*

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

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