

## How to Build a Gingerbread House - and Get the Kids Out of Your Hair

Christmas is looming and – as well as a little too much sun, food and champers and way too much flexing of the credit card - that means the kids will soon be out of school and into your hair. I can hear you groaning as you wonder how you are going to entertain the little treasures, especially in the lead-up to Christmas when there's shopping, wrapping, decorating and cooking to get done.

Here's an idea that will kill a number of birds with one stone – encourage the kids to get into the kitchen and make some Christmas food. Why not start with a traditional [gingerbread house](#)? Your home will look festive, you will (hopefully) have something to eat at the end and you will be relieved of the kids, at least for a little while.

Don't have time to fiddle around with a template for the gingerbread house? A mould is the perfect solution. Australian company The Chefs Toolbox has a good one. It's made from silicone and all you have to do is make the dough (see [www.chefstoolbox.com.au](http://www.chefstoolbox.com.au) for a [recipe](#)), press it into the mould, put it in the oven and 20 minutes later you'll have perfectly-formed walls, door, roof and gingerbread people.

Now that you have all the parts, it's easy to put it together. You'll need a piping bag and nozzle (if you purchase the Chefs Toolbox mould mentioned above, you'll get these with it) and some royal icing to use as "glue".

Here's how:

1. Pipe the icing along the base of one side panel and position on a board. Prop up with a tea cup.
2. Ice the base and one edge of front panel. Position against side panel and prop up with a tea cup.
3. Pipe the icing along one edge and the base of the other side panel. Position against the front and prop up with a tea cup.
4. Ice base and both edges of the back panel. Position against side panels and leave to dry for 20 minutes.
5. Remove tea cups. Ice door pane and place in "open" position on front panel.
6. Ice roof edges and place in position.
7. Leave to dry for 30 minutes.

Now it's time to let the kids loose on the fun part. Just give them some lollies to decorate the gingerbread house (freckles, Smarties and jellies of all shapes are perfect) and let their imaginations run wild!

A home-made gingerbread house (or any other home-made Christmas food for that matter) makes a fantastic [gift](#), but if the kids can't bring themselves to give it away, they're great fun to eat (after everyone has admired it for a few days, of course). The downside is that while you may have enjoyed a bit of peace and quiet while the kids were busy decorating the gingerbread house, they'll be tearing around the house like lunatics after eating all those lollies.

Perhaps it's time for a visit to grandma and grandpa's?

### About the Author

The Chefs Toolbox specialise in quality [cookware](#) and [kitchen utensils](#). For more information about The Chefs Toolbox visit [www.chefstoolbox.com.au](http://www.chefstoolbox.com.au)

Source: <http://www.spinneykitchen.co.uk>