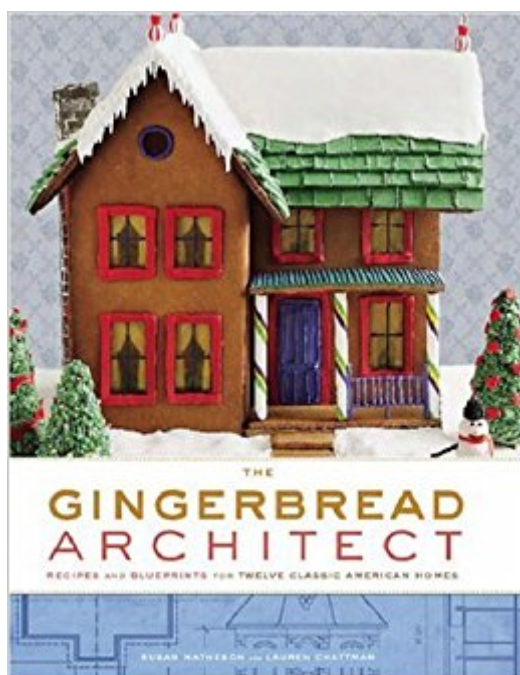


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# The Gingerbread Architect: Recipes And Blueprints For Twelve Classic American Homes



## Synopsis

What happens when an architect who is also an avid baker gets together with a house-obsessed pastry chef? Twelve classic American homes rendered in gingerbread. Are you dreaming of a colonial Christmas? Here's your chance to build a traditional Cape Cod house in freshly baked gingerbread, complete with breath-mint pinnacles, Twizzler shingles, and a brick-red fruit-leather chimney. Prefer nineteenth-century New York elegance? Why not whip up an urban brownstone, embellished with crushed butterscotch windows, Tootsie Roll staircase posts, and a front courtyard tiled in mini Chiclets. Is the Santa Fe look more your style? Try a gingerbread pueblo, landscaped with rock-candy cacti and turbinado-sugar sand. Here to guide you through every step of building your gingerbread dream house is *The Gingerbread Architect*, created by New York- and London-based architect Susan Matheson and professional baker Lauren Chattman. Featuring detailed blueprints and elevations of the houses alongside baking directions and essential construction notes, this modern guide to the traditional holiday craft of creating gingerbread houses has projects for bakers of all levels, from novice to advanced. For each house, Matheson and Chattman provide historical context and descriptions of prominent architectural features, demonstrating how to execute those characteristics in gingerbread and candy. Detailed instructions cover everything from baking and assembling the walls to piping icing and landscaping the yard. And to help match gingerbread houses to bakers and their little helpers each house has a difficulty rating, ranging from one gingerbread man to four. With full-color photographs of the finished houses, tips on the construction schedule, baking and candy resource guides, a glossary of architectural terms, and instructions for lighting the houses from within, *The Gingerbread Architect* is the complete guide to the ultimate family holiday baking project for anyone with a keen eye and a sweet tooth.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

SUSAN MATHESON grew up in Nova Scotia with a passion for baking. Eventually, she trained as an architect in Canada and England, and has maintained a private practice in both Manhattan and London for the past fifteen years. She specializes in building and renovating houses in historic districts. LAUREN CHATTMAN is a cookbook author and former professional pastry chef who has written nine books, including, most recently, *Icebox Cakes*. She has also collaborated with former White House pastry chef Roland Mesnier on *Dessert University* and with Daniel Leader on *Local Breads*. Her recipes have appeared in *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appétit*, *Cook's Illustrated*, the *New York Times*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Family Circle*, and *Redbook*, and she has appeared on the *Today* show and QVC. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Sag Harbor, New York.

I have made gingerbread houses for years but wanted to try something a little more detailed so, I purchased this book. I liked the house on the cover so that is the one I made this year. This book is not for gingerbread house builders that have no experience. The pieces are small and must be enlarged. There are no directions for putting it all together so, you are on your own for this but, I took it one piece at a time and it all worked out. I didn't care for the "amateurish" decorating that was used on the houses and they were very plain so, I did my own decorating.

I enter a gingerbread house competition every year, I got this book to see if it had some tips that might help give me an edge or maybe some new ideas...all in all, it's a good book, and for a beginner it's full of ideas and very helpful tips. However I found it to be a little too basic for me. This in no way reflects on the content of the book, just my own personal needs were more advanced. I plan on giving this book away to someone who can benefit from it.

My latest book acquisition arrived today and I am so excited. Last year we designed and built a gingerbread house using the instructions from "The Professional Pastry Chef" and it was much more complicated than I had anticipated. Not hard, just complicated. Planning a design for even a simple A-frame house was very tedious, making sure everything would line up and the roof would overhang and everything. Then decorating: what candy to buy, how to use it effectively. It came out

cute, but doing it again was daunting. I'm not blown away by any of the designs I see in "The Gingerbread Architect", but I am impressed by their thoroughness. They've planned out the steps, day by day, into reasonable chunks of work; they list exactly the ingredients and candies you need to recreate their designs; they have templates for exactly the pieces you need to cut out, to scale; they list alternate ideas and decor, how to adapt the style, and pitfalls they had with certain designs or decor choices. And I was impressed with some of their creative use of materials, particularly decorating with upside down ice cream cones for trees and green rice krispy treats for shrubberies. All in all, I feel a lot more sanguine about tackling this holiday craft with this book in hand.--Well, it is Christmas day and I'm still not done with this project. Where on earth do you buy hard candies these days? The recipes for the dough and the icing were similar to others I've used (Bo Frieburg) and the directions were easy to follow. I had a snafu with the pattern pieces; I had absolutely no idea that 400% larger was so big, and neither did the folks at Kinkos. With the size of the Kinkos bill, I think the pattern pages could have been laid out more efficiently. In the end, I threw out the Kinkos copies anyway, because a gingerbread house over 14" tall would overwhelm my dining room. I resized the pages to only 300% and went from there. Cut out, baking, and assembly have been moderately straightforward. I chose to do the Victorian on the book cover (my son picked it) which is a medium difficulty plan. The directions did NOT point out that I shouldn't have cut out the doors, which is annoying, since I then had to cut separate door pieces and tack them on. It was also unclear exactly how much crushed candy should be added to the window spaces and my windows look thin and lumpy. Altogether, however, it is a very handsome house and I would never have designed such a complex house on my own. My son is thrilled to bits, the air smells like gingerbread, and I didn't have to think of all the details myself. Compared to a ready-to-make kit, making a gingerbread house from scratch is a labor of love (and money). But this book did do a nice job of setting it out, step-by-step, and taking away the guesswork.

this is adorable, and a perfect match for the box, the automatic return works well, and it fits nicely in my hand; I have purchased every accessory, along with the sewing basket, and I love them all!

I gave this book as a gift to an architect who owns an old Greek Revival home...he enjoyed looking at it.

Arrived within the time line of expectancy and unharmed. I felt the book wasn't really what I wanted for my youth project; I found it easier to build than decorate but the houses in this book do both at

the same time. However, I felt for myself personally, I think its fine. The instructions are in very small print and are very complicated, but the ideas and houses were fantastic.\*\*\*I recommend this book for above and beyond experienced bakers.

fantastic guide, designs and recipes... wish they would come out w/ a new addition.

Even if you are not considering building a gingerbread house -which I doubt once you flip through this book- you'll drool over the creativity of the authors at the examples beautifully photographed. Step by step instructions, it's just a pleasure to look at it... I would even use it for gift-giving. Must-have for architects with the slightest interest in baking.

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