

HISTORIC HOTELS of AMERICA

National Trust *for* Historic Preservation®

The 2021 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Most Magnificent Gingerbread Displays List Announced (from miniature to life size, ornately detailed, grand, and delicious)

December 9, 2021 – Washington, D.C. – Historic Hotels of America® offer travelers many memorable ways to experience holiday traditions, many dating back decades if not centuries. 25 of these legendary hotels, resorts, and inns have created magnificent gingerbread displays to delight and inspire guests. The tradition of gingerbread cookies in the United States of America dates to the late 18th century and the tradition of gingerbread houses in the U.S. dates to the early 19th century. From life-size gingerbread cottages to a letter-writing station at a gingerbread house for kids to write a letter to Santa and receive a personal reply before Christmas, these iconic historic hotels are the place for families to discover and experience wonderful holiday traditions and spirit. The 2021 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Most Magnificent Gingerbread Displays are the result of thousands of hours of culinary, pastry, confectionary, engineering, and carpentry teams working for weeks and even months to design, create, mix, bake, build or set up, and, of course, decorate. Collectively, the ingredients include more than a thousand pounds of sugar, thousands of eggs, more than a thousand pounds of flour, hundreds of spices, more than 10,000 individual candies, hundreds of gallons of molasses, honey, and frosting used to create these colossal gingerbread displays. There is also a Home Recipe Spotlight, from a Chicago hotel founded in 1927, for creating gingerbread magic on a smaller scale. Find photos of all these magnificent creations at the Historic Hotels of America [Top 25 Lists media center](#). Enjoy!

[Williamsburg Lodge, Autograph Collection, and Colonial Houses \(1750\)](#) *Williamsburg, Virginia*

The Williamsburg Lodge (1750) at the Colonial Williamsburg Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia, created Santa's Winter Wonderland for kids of all ages during the 2021 holiday season. This gingerbread village is a landscape of frosted seasonal activity. Visitors can spy the gingerbread village miniatures fishing, caroling, and choosing their holiday tree. Nutcracker soldiers guard Santa's Workshop, where a reindeer-led sleigh is loaded with bright packages. Elves are hard at work within frosted gingerbread walls. And just like guests can do in Colonial Williamsburg's Merchants Square, there are figures in the gingerbread village ice skating. At least six gingerbread experts worked over 300 hours, collectively, on this detailed gingerbread fantasy world. The village required 30 lbs. of icing, 125 lbs. of flour, 30 lbs. of butter, 28 lbs. of brown sugar, 2 cups of ginger, and 4 cups of cinnamon. The display is in the lobby of the Williamsburg Lodge and will be there through the end of December.

The Omni Homestead Resort (1766)
Hot Springs, Virginia

To celebrate the holidays and bring cheer to guests, The Omni Homestead Resort (1766) Executive Chef Todd Owen and Executive Pastry Chef Gelyn Widelski created a gingerbread replica of the resort to be the centerpiece of this year's resort gingerbread display – a gingerbread village. More than 15 different departments at the resort each created a gingerbread display for the gingerbread village, making it a team effort across the historic resort. The Homestead's gingerbread hotel tower draws eyes to its beautifully symmetrical frosted and holly-decked windows, balconies, and delicate eaves. The Gingerbread Homestead is about 3.5 ft. tall and 3 feet wide. It weighs more than 80 lbs. The pastry chefs used 10lbs. of icing and 250 pieces of chocolate to make the hotel windows. Surrounding the hotel, arranged on a bed of white fluff and sparkling garlands, is the village. The colorful village houses are iced, candy-covered delights with snowmen, reindeer, and Santa Clauses delivering gifts. Guests are invited to vote on their favorites in the village.

Woodstock Inn & Resort (1793)
Woodstock, Vermont

The Woodstock Inn & Resort (1793) pastry elves create a unique gingerbread house each year to delight guests and visitors. This season they have prepared a whimsical cottage style that pulls inspiration from Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel). Every October, the resort's core gingerbread team of three begins baking pieces to resemble shingles. The house set-up takes about two weeks to mix and bake. In November, professional carpenters assist with the construction. The Woodstock Inn & Resort's gingerbread house stands at 4 ft. wide by 3 ft. long and 6 ft. tall. The pastry chefs used more than 136 lbs. of flour, 90 lbs. of molasses and 16 lbs. of ginger. Guests and visitors are invited to walk through the Inn lobby to admire, enjoy, and take a photo in the sweet-coated house during the holiday season. Young guests can write a letter to Santa and send to the North Pole via the gingerbread house's mailbox.

French Lick Springs Hotel (1845)
French Lick, Indiana

This holiday tradition at French Lick Springs Hotel (1845) is so massive and over-the-top that it starts taking shape around Labor Day. Five members of the hotel's Pastry Team (plus a few part-time helper elves) create a fresh theme for their gingerbread creation each holiday season, and 450 hours' worth of work went into crafting this year's farmhouse-style home that's 7 ft. wide, 8 ft. tall, and weighs around 500 lbs. This is a spectacle you can usually smell before you see – nearly 5 lbs. of ginger and spices create that unmistakable gingerbread aroma that wafts through the corridors all throughout the resort's 50 Days of Lights celebration. As part of the festivities, there's also a letter-writing station at the gingerbread house for kids to write a letter to Santa, drop it in the holiday mailbox, and have a personal reply sent to their home before Christmas.

[Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C. \(1847\)](#)

Washington, D.C.

This December 2021, the Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C. (1847) proudly displays several gingerbread displays. These displays were created by high school students from the DC NAF Academies of Culinary Arts and in partnership with the American Experience Foundation (a 501(c)(3) charity). Students were divided into teams to design and build these gingerbread displays with the guidance of the schools' culinary instructors and the Willard culinary team. Their gingerbread creations were unveiled at the 2021 Gingerbread Display Unveiling, Contest, and Auction on December 3 at the Willard InterContinental, where celebrity judges critiqued their work. Each of the students' displays is just under 24 x 24 x 24 in., and they required around 20 people who worked 16 days total on their displays, which weigh about 80-100 lbs. altogether. After the unveiling, the People's Choice gingerbread contest pits these displays against each other to raise money for the American Experience Foundation to support their efforts of cultivating the next generation of hospitality professionals. This multi-faceted fundraising initiative aims to benefit both the American Experience Foundation and DC NAF Academies of Culinary Arts. [Vote for your favorite here between December 3-20.](#)

Ingredients Spotlight: Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C.

- 20 lbs. of brown sugar
- 28 lbs. of white sugar
- 20 lbs. of shortening
- 52 lbs. of flour
- 2.4 gallons of eggs
- A half-gallon of molasses
- Candies galore!

[Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa \(1847\)](#)

Point Clear, Alabama

When early-bird shoppers were rushing for holiday deals on Black Friday, November 26, the pastry chefs at the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa (1847) in Point Clear, Alabama, were putting the final touches on a massive confectionary version of the Mobile Bay resort. This brilliant resort village miniature is made from hundreds of lbs. of gingerbread, colorful sweets, and 150 lbs. of icing. The gingerbread village is a replica of the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa and is approximately 16 ft. in length, 8 ft. wide and 18 in. in height. Chef Kimberly and 40 members of the Grand Hotel Golf Resort team incorporated into the village an "I Spy" game for guests to discover fun features at the Grand, including the Grand Hotel Resort's ducks in the outside ponds, Chef Kimberly's dog (named "Nitro"), and Bucky's fire pits. Buildings in the display include the Pool Pavilion, South Bay House, North Bay House, Marina House and Spa, replicas of beautiful hundred-year-old oak trees, and marshmallow snow people. The pastry chefs and 40 Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa team members started working on the display in early October and finished on Thanksgiving Day. From making the dough, rolling it, cutting it, baking it, assembling it, and decorating it, the eight-week project is a Grand Hotel Golf Resort tradition!

Ingredients Spotlight: Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa

- 150 lbs. flour
- 30 lbs. sugar
- 6 cups of cinnamon
- 6 cups of ginger
- 24 lbs. molasses
- 20 lbs. assorted candy
- 10 lbs. coconut
- 10 lbs. chocolate
- Cemented together and frosted with 150 lbs. of royal icing

Mountain View Grand Resort & Spa (1865)

Whitefield, New Hampshire

The Mountain View Grand (1865) holiday Whoville Gingerbread Village display was created to compliment the Whitefield, New Hampshire resort's November 27 Grinch themed family event and to be a part of the season's holiday décor through the end of the year. The family celebration kicked-off the resort's holiday season with a tree lighting ceremony, crafts, strolling magic & juggling, Who Buffet dinner, and Variety Show. The finished confectionary product is 26 in. tall, 32 in. long and 24 in. wide and weighs approximately 50 lbs. The production included 15 lbs. of gingerbread and 12 lbs. of royal icing. Pastry Chef Sabrina Tessitore and Intern Maura Mead worked on the village for approximately one week, laboring to make the gingerbread and royal icing, baking the dough, measuring and cutting the specialty shapes, and then assembling and stabilizing the village. The Whoville Gingerbread Village is on display in the lobby for visitors to enjoy during December.

Mohonk Mountain House (1869)

New Paltz, New York

The year 2021 marks the 6th Annual Hudson Valley Gingerbread Competition at Mohonk Mountain House (1869) in New Paltz, New York. Mohonk invites guests and the local community to construct their best gingerbread creation for a chance to have it displayed at the resort during the holiday season. A panel of local judges select eight finalists from the adult-created gingerbread displays to the two finalists from the junior created gingerbread displays to join the holiday decorations at Mohonk Mountain House. Online "people's choice" voting runs from December 9–24 at Mohonk.com. The public is invited to vote for their favorite display along with three new superlative awards. Along with overall "best," the adult gingerbread creation displays are judged on "Best use of Edible Mixed Media," "Best Original use of Gingerbread," and "Best Creative Use and Decoration of the Base." Mohonk partnered with the local non-profit organization Food Bank of the Hudson Valley this year to support their efforts in alleviating hunger in their local community. The Food Bank serves 400 organizations across six counties in New York State. [Learn how Mohonk uses holiday gingerbread for a good cause.](#)

[Hotel Colorado \(1893\)](#)

Glenwood Springs, Colorado

The life-size, interactive holiday gingerbread house at Hotel Colorado (1893) in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, encapsulates the hotel's Legends Coffee & Gift Shop and welcomes guests to participate in a seriously sweet shopping experience. The gingerbread house is 16 ft. high, 12 ft. long, and 14 ft. wide, and built from 311 lbs. of gingerbread and 8 gallons of frosting. The gingerbread to make the house required one week to bake and build. Four people worked together to assemble the house. This year, the Glenwood Springs Historical Society and Frontier Museum is sponsoring [a gingerbread display contest](#) held in the Roosevelt Room at Historic Hotel Colorado. The contest will raise funds for the Historical Society to get a new roof. The Historic Hotel Colorado gingerbread house is free for anyone to visit, take photos, and enjoy! Guests can enter the gingerbread house to grab coffee, to-go food, or gifts for loved ones and friends.

[The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco \(1907\)](#)

San Francisco, California

For over a century, The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco (1907) has enchanted guests with its joyful holiday festivities and seasonal ambience. At the end of November each year, the hotel lobby transforms into one of the world's most beloved holiday destinations, where cherished memories for locals and visitors alike are created. The highlight of this awe-inspiring exhibit is the glowing, two-story Victorian-style gingerbread house, adorned in hundreds of lbs. of See's Candies' iconic sweets, located in the hotel's grand lobby. Lovingly built with a completely edible exterior, the delectable abode was constructed by the Fairmont Hotel San Francisco's talented culinary team, led by Executive Chef Michael Quigley. The house stands at over 22 ft. high and 23 ft. wide and includes thousands of baked gingerbread bricks. The hotel partnered with See's Candies to decorate its gingerbread house and holiday displays this year. Hundreds of lbs. of See's Candies – including their iconic lollipops, sour candies and chocolate confections – were artfully placed on the breathtaking build, creating a true work of art. The house itself contains more than 7,750 pieces of gingerbread, 1,500 lbs. of royal icing, and hundreds of lbs. candy. The culinary team spent approximately 375 hours creating the gingerbread house and the engineering department worked 520 hours to construct its framework. In maintaining the hotel's commitment to the environment, each year the framework is recycled, and the edible ingredients are composted. Want to dine inside the house for lunch, dinner or Holiday Tea? Contact the hotel to [make a reservation](#) for up to eight people.

[The Otesaga Resort Hotel \(1909\)](#)

Cooperstown, New York

The annual gingerbread display at The Otesaga Resort Hotel (1909) in Cooperstown, New York is a confectionary recreation of the historic Cooperstown Railroad Station, depicting the train station and village encircled by a working toy train. While details about 2021's display have yet to be released at the time of publication, last year's railroad station and village display was 8 ft.

by 16 ft. and required two gallons of egg whites, 112 lbs. of sugar and 38 lbs. of gingerbread dough to complete. Three people accomplished the feat over the course of 23 days last year. This year, The Otesaga hosted a gingerbread house decorating event for in-house guests. The resort's 2021 gingerbread railroad display will be open to guests through the holiday season.

The Omni Grove Park Inn (1913) ***Asheville, North Carolina***

The Omni Grove Park Inn (1913) hosted its 29th Annual National Gingerbread Competition in mid-November 2021 and opened its doors to the official Gingerbread Display of Entries on November 28, 2021. From December 1-12, one winner per day will be announced, via social media, with the Grand Prize Winner being revealed on December 12: National Gingerbread House Day! The gingerbread competition began with a small group of gingerbread houses built by Asheville, North Carolina community members in 1992 as another way to celebrate the holiday season with no plans to continue the following year. There was no possible way to know that nearly 30 years later, [The Omni Grove Park Inn National Gingerbread House Competition™](#) would be one of the nation's most celebrated and competitive holiday events. The Omni Grove Park Inn will be displaying all Gingerbread creations from November 28 through January 2, 2022, after 3 p.m. on Sundays and anytime Monday – Thursday to drive-up visitors. The display is open to in-house guests 24/7. Since it began, the Inn's Gingerbread Display of competition entries has become a true family holiday tradition. From the very young to the very young at heart, the reaction to this magical experience is the same – one of wonder, awe and delight.

HOTEL DU PONT (1913) ***Wilmington, Delaware***

The bake shop at HOTEL DU PONT (1913) in Wilmington, Delaware, honored the hotel's legendary past with a gingerbread replica of the 12-story Italian Renaissance building that is HOTEL DU PONT, appearing as it did when it debuted in 1913. Measuring 3 ft. by 2 ft., this impressive recreation – complete with a candy version of the hotel's grand porte-cochere – consists of *45 lbs. of gingerbread* and boasts *119 lighted windows* made of 8 lbs. of sugar! Snowy, frosted gingerbread cobblestone streets, candy streetlamps, and sugar evergreen trees surround the structure. Every year, the HOTEL DU PONT invites local Delawareans to try their hand at this traditional holiday craft at its annual Gingerbread House Decorating Party.

Chatham Bars Inn (1914) ***Chatham, Massachusetts***

The town of Chatham, Massachusetts, comes to life in the sweetest way through the Chatham Bars Inn (1914) gingerbread village this December. The gingerbread display is 16 ft. long by 8 ft. wide and features significant landmark buildings from the town of Chatham including the Train Museum, Chatham Bars Inn, The Chatham Squire, Chatham Lighthouse and Coast Guard

Station, Orpheum Theater, church and fish pier. Molded waves lap sugary sand at the edges of the gingerbread village and fondant evergreens dot the candy landscape. It has built-to-scale cars and boats in the landscape as well as a working train on a track throughout the gingerbread display. The gingerbread team spends an estimated 250 hours working on the display each year, to mix, bake, and setup. During the holiday season, the inn hosts several Gingerbread Workshops where the award-winning pastry team bakes and assembles gingerbread houses and guests have the fun part—decorating them with an array of edible frosting and candy, making the experience fun, easy and delicious. Over 20 gallons of royal icing, 1,000 gingerbread shingles, and 10 lbs. of fondant – all created with over 70 lbs. of powdered sugar and more than 100 eggs – turn a tabletop into an ocean-side winter wonderland.

Omni William Penn Hotel (1916) ***Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania***

The chefs at the Omni William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, create a gingerbread replica of the historic hotel annually – a decades-old tradition at the centurion hotel. The 2021 gingerbread replica of the hotel required more than 40 hours to mix, bake, and construct and was made with 220 lbs. of dough and 30 lbs. of sugar. Exactly *1,916* pieces of colorful candy adorn the exterior of this sweet showpiece as a tribute to *1916*, the year the hotel opened. The gingerbread hotel is placed in the hotel lobby, where it is complimented by a beautiful 20-foot holiday tree, garlands, and lights. The grand Main Lobby of the Omni William Penn transforms each year into a gilded holiday wonderland with lavish décor, making it one of the most visited places in the city.

The Broadmoor (1918) ***Colorado Springs, Colorado***

The Broadmoor gingerbread display has been a grand holiday tradition at the Colorado Springs, Colorado, resort since 1964. This year, the resort's 2021 Broadmoor Gingerbread Abode is inspired by the resort's *Heartfelt ~ Home for the Holidays* theme. Previous gingerbread displays have included the resort's intricate Pauline Chapel and The Broadmoor Special – a 1918 Pierce Arrow Touring Car that was converted by Broadmoor Founder Spencer Penrose into an iconic race car. The first Broadmoor gingerbread was a fairytale gingerbread house with Hansel and Gretel, complete with a tiny oven where the old witch put the bad children. Since 2013, gingerbread creations have been life-sized and played a vital role in the resort's holiday celebrations – going up at Thanksgiving and remaining on display until the new year. They are beloved by families who visit the resort during the holiday season. In 2020, Chef Adam Thomas and his team of chocolatiers and bakers installed a giant train car known as the “Cog Railway.” This year's display is a magnificent cottage that required 10 pastry chefs and two carpenters to create and construct. For guests and members, the resort offers gingerbread house decorating on special weekends during the holiday season. Breakfasts with Santa on Saturdays in December promise to delight kids young and old.

Ingredients Spotlight: The Broadmoor

- 958 lbs. of powdered sugar
- 475 lbs. of flour
- 650 eggs
- 19 lbs. holiday spices
- 200 lbs. of honey
- 128 lbs. molasses
- 6 lbs. of salt
- 164 lbs. dark chocolate
- 89 lbs. of butter
- 10 lbs. heavy cream
- 2 lbs. fresh yeast
- 160 chocolate bars
- 20 lbs. of candy canes
- 40 lbs. of cherry slices
- 24 lbs. of green apple gummy bears
- 20 lbs. of chocolate leaves
- 20 lbs. of chocolate stars
- 30 lbs. of Hot Tamales
- 960 Gillian Peppermint Sticks
- 21 lbs. of Jordan Almonds
- 3 HO' HO' HO's!

The Drake Hotel (1920)

Chicago, Illinois

Located on Chicago's Magnificent Mile along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, The Drake Hotel naturally displays a *magnificent* gingerbread hotel during the holidays. This year, the Culinary Club of St. Ignatius High School worked alongside the hotel's culinary team to create the gingerbread village on display in the lobby in December 2021. The construction of the annual gingerbread village, a process that takes over 80 hours, incorporates 300 lbs. of powdered sugar, 20 lbs. of meringue mix, 150 lbs. of candies and 45 sheet pans of gingerbread. Framed by white and red poinsettias, the gingerbread village features lighthouses, a Ferris wheel – a ride originally created for the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago – and a speeding toy train. The frosted village is on display in front of the lobby's centennial banner, celebrating 100 years of hospitality at The Drake (1921-2021).

La Fonda on the Plaza (1922)

Santa Fe, New Mexico

La Fonda on the Plaza's annual 30-in. by 30-in. gingerbread hotel replica of its historic Santa Fe, New Mexico, building was spearheaded for decades by its Purchasing Manager, Gil Mesa (b.

1949 – d. 2021). In Gil’s honor and to continue his legacy, Chef Lane Warner continues the annual gingerbread tradition at this Santa Fe historic hotel. After weeks of preparation and baking, construction takes another three days to complete. After Chef Warner cuts out the pieces of gingerbread sheets – ideal for replicating the historic hotel’s traditional stucco/adobe exterior – the La Fonda culinary team gets to work putting icing on the gingerbread pieces while they are laid flat. This is a trick Gil mastered and shared with others over the years. After assembly, the team spends several more hours crafting ice-cream cone trees, adding LED lights for the farolitos (paper lanterns), and finishing it with stiff royal icing before wheeling the masterpiece out to the lobby to add the colorful finishing touches – including gum drops, candy canes, gummy bears, Skittles, and peppermints. La Fonda reveals its gingerbread display mid-December, and it remains in the lobby through the new year for guests and visitors – from Santa Fe and from afar – to enjoy.

[The Settlers Inn \(1927\)](#) ***Hawley, Pennsylvania***

Every year, guests and staff look forward to the annual gingerbread hotel display in the lobby of The Settlers Inn in Hawley, Pennsylvania. This tradition of creating an exact replica of the historic Arts and Crafts-style lodge began over 30 years ago with refinements made over the years. No detail is overlooked in the recreation – from the Inn’s iconic dormer windows to the vintage Victorian sleigh on the front porch. A chocolate roof and windows made from poured melted sugar add to its rich appearance. Victorian-era figurines posed about the display and confectionary sugar snow help to set the festive scene. It’s a three-day process to bake and assemble the display, with staff logging about 28 total hours on the project. The gingerbread house is unveiled during the Inn’s annual Candlelight Christmas celebration on the first weekend of December and remains on display throughout the holiday season. [Watch an interview with the gingerbread director at The Settlers Inn and get a peek at the 2020 gingerbread hotel.](#)

[Hilton Chicago \(1927\)](#) ***Chicago, Illinois***

The Hilton Chicago presents a gingerbread hotel replica of its historic building in 2021, a special edition gingerbread display that breaks from its typical gingerbread house display. Standing over 6 ft. tall, it took three pastry chefs nearly 300 hours to create – using 380 lbs. of flour, 16 lbs. of ginger, 16 lbs. of cinnamon and 16,000 gingerbread bricks – among enormous amounts of other ingredients. The sweet historic hotel is placed near the lobby’s 24-foot Christmas tree which is decorated annually with thousands of metallic ornaments, and which both together are the centerpieces for the lobby’s floor-to-ceiling décor with 2,000 in. of decorated garland, a 30-in. poinsettia “kissing ball,” and 60-ft. wreaths. The Hilton Chicago welcomes guests to spend time in the lobby and to make the gingerbread hotel and skyline the backdrop for seasonal holiday photos or Instagram-worthy moments. Learn more about the team behind the gingerbread Hilton Chicago and its creation in [this behind-the-scenes video](#).

Home Recipe Spotlight: Hilton Chicago's #1 Best Gingerbread

Ingredients

- 20 oz. all-purpose flour
- 10 oz. corn syrup
- 3 oz brown sugar
- 5 oz. butter
- 1 oz. molasses
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt

Steps

1. Mix brown sugar and butter until smooth, then add the corn syrup and molasses and continue to blend until well mixed.
2. Add all the dry ingredients and mix until everything is fully incorporated.
3. Remove the dough from the mixing bowl and refrigerate for at least an hour. Taking a little bit at a time, roll the dough into 1/8 of an in. thickness and cut into desired shape, such as cookie shapes or small brick pieces for gingerbread houses.
4. Bake for about 10 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit or until the bread starts to get golden brown.

[Skytop Lodge \(1928\)](#)

Skytop, Pennsylvania

The gingerbread hotel at Skytop Lodge in Skytop, Pennsylvania, measures 19 ft. wide by 12 ft. deep and reaches a height of 11 ft. from its base. Production on the gingerbread hotel began in early August and the lodge staff set to work assembling the structure the week of Halloween. Once the frame was erected, the entire bakery team labored to attach the gingerbread and then the candy decorations. This holiday season, [Skytop Lodge guests are invited to activities](#) including gingerbread figure decorating, a tree lighting ceremony, and Santa's arrival by horse drawn sleigh and photos in front of the gingerbread house. Between November 28, 2021, and December 19, 2021, Santa joins guests for breakfast and invites children to tell him what they want for Christmas.

Ingredients Spotlight: Skytop Lodge

- 216 lbs. honey
- 216 lbs. molasses
- 175 lbs. brown sugar
- 6.75 lbs. ginger
- 3.5 lbs. allspice

- 3.5 lbs. cinnamon
- 13.5 lbs. baking soda
- 108 lbs. shortening
- 162 lbs. eggs
- 432 lbs. all-purpose flour
- 432 lbs. oxidant flour

The icing used in the Skytop Lodge gingerbread display required 250 lbs. of powdered sugar and 60 lbs. of egg whites.

[Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort \(1946\)](#) *Solvang, California*

As per tradition, starting on December 5, a festive gingerbread village created by the local Solvang Bakery is on display in the dining room foyer of the Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort (1946) in Solvang, California. The arrival of the village is proof that the resort is once again getting into the holiday spirit with ranch-inspired gingerbread houses representing the ranch's barn, front office, library, boat house, and one of the guest cottages. Toy donkeys, lambs, and horses are gathered under holly wreathes iced carefully onto cookie clapboard ranch barns and a miniature golden retriever stands guard between gumdrops, delicate haybales, and shiny packages tied with bows. In addition to the eye-catching display, each guest staying at Alisal between December 22-25 will also be gifted a gingerbread house decorating kit, providing a fun family activity to do on-site or to take home as a celebration of holiday memories made at Alisal.

[Rancho Bernardo Inn \(1963\)](#) *San Diego, California*

The gingerbread house display at Rancho Bernardo Inn (1963) in San Diego, California, is a relatively new tradition for the 58-year-old retreat, but it has become much-beloved over the past 12 Decembers. While the annual gingerbread house is always a little different, with its own style and delights, it is always built with the mission of bringing whimsy and joy to the hotel staff, guests, and visitors around the holidays. A team of about six people, including bakers, pastry cooks, and engineering team members, typically work on the gingerbread house each year. The house is assembled over a four-day period. It takes around 300 hours to make the dough, assemble the frame, make its edible decorations, and attach the décor to the house. The exact weight of the Rancho Bernardo Inn gingerbread house masterpiece is unknown, but its ingredients include 800 lbs. of flour; 400 lbs. of sugar; 12 gallons of eggs; 10 lbs. of cinnamon; 20 gallons of molasses; and over 100 lbs. of candy and edible decorations.

Hotel Captain Cook (1965)

Anchorage, Alaska

The creator and designer of the annual Gingerbread Village at Hotel Captain Cook (1965) in Anchorage, Alaska has been constructing and designing gingerbread displays for over 38 years. Pastry Chef Joe Hickel's gingerbread village is now on display at the Hotel Captain Cook through the end of the year. Comprised of over 50 structures and utilizing 1,000 lbs. of icing, 900 lbs. of powdered sugar, 800 lbs. of gingerbread, and 125 lbs. of chocolate, the village is approximately 4 ft. high atop a 16 ft. by 16 ft. table. Joe Hickel and three pastry chefs started creating the parts of the village in mid-July and worked on the project for 30 hours a week until November. Construction began in mid-November and was completed on December 3, 2021. Visitors and guests can see the Captain Cook Gingerbread Village just outside the Whales Tails restaurant located inside the hotel. Can't make it to Anchorage? Hotel Captain Cook takes the cake for digital savvy: View the gingerbread village through live camera streams and see a time-lapse video of its construction at CaptainCookChristmas.com.

The Lodge at Nemaocolin (1968)

Farmington, Pennsylvania

The grand gingerbread holiday display is a long-standing tradition at Nemaocolin in Farmington, Pennsylvania, where guests at the historic Lodge at Nemaocolin (1968) enjoy the charm and festivity of gingerbread each year. In past years, cottage-sized gingerbread houses have graced the lobby in the resort's The Chateau, an award-winning hotel whose architecture was inspired by European palaces. This holiday season, Nemaocolin features a candy-covered replica of The Chateau. The hotel replica is a sweet-laden, frosted creation with gumdrop windows and candy cane colonnades. But guests can do more than marvel at this yummy masterpiece: Nemaocolin invites guests to join in the sugary fun this season and decorate their own gingerbread house. On Saturdays in December before Christmas Day, guests – the resort's star amateur gingerbread designers – are invited to work under the guidance of Nemaocolin's expert pastry chefs and decorate a delicious domicile to take home after their stay.

“The tradition of gingerbread fairy-tale houses reportedly started in the United States more than 200 years ago with the German immigrants to Pennsylvania. Today, travelers can view life size historic hotels, national monuments, historic buildings, and historic main streets made of gingerbread. A large party of people can dine in the more-than-life-sized gingerbread house at the Fairmont San Francisco,” said Lawrence Horwitz, Executive Vice President, Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. “Congratulations to the thousands of people that worked to create the 2021 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Most Magnificent Gingerbread displays. Run, Run as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man' is from the famous fairy-tale, The Gingerbread Man. This holiday season, run, run as fast as you can and catch the most magnificent gingerbread houses and displays at many Historic Hotels of America.”

Other Noteworthy Magnificent Gingerbread Displays created in 2021:

Historic Hotels Worldwide know that if there was one holiday treat that the nations of the world might agree on, it could be gingerbread. Millennia past, ginger was cultivated in China and spread through Asia and through the Mediterranean world to Europe, Africa, and the Middle East via early trade routes. In the modern era, gingerbread was popularized in the English court of Queen Elizabeth I, where cookie decoration was the height of chic. Gingerbread houses are a German creation – perhaps inspired or popularized by the fairytale "Hansel and Gretel" in early 1800s. Immigrants to the Americas brought ginger and gingerbread traditions with them. As an art form for pastry chefs and a highly anticipated sweet treat for children, gingerbread decorating is a tradition to unite the ages and it is a centerpiece for elegant lobbies at the world's most beautiful hotels. Here are some of the most magnificent gingerbread displays presented this December by award-winning Historic Hotels Worldwide in China, Canada, Ireland, and the Philippines.

Beijing Hotel NUO (1917)

Beijing, China

Beijing Hotel NUO's impressive gingerbread display is a replica of the hotel's iconic heritage building, once known as Grand Hotel de Pekin. The size of the gingerbread house is 142 cm. long and 59 cm. wide, reaching a height of 118 cm. and weighs around 55 lbs. The gingerbread hotel replicates the same classic French-style façade and front gate with delicate, white frosted details. Colorful edible stars, bells, candy canes, snowflakes, and snowmen add whimsy and charm to the grand hotel. The Beijing Hotel NUO was established in 1917 and known as "the most luxurious hotel in the Orient," a social hub for high society in the 1900s. Through the gingerbread hotel windows, guests can see old photographs of the hotel's interiors including the vintage-style rooms and our signature staircase. The concept is to present this legendary hotel in gingerbread and create a 'time capsule' to celebrate its rich and storied history. Approximately 33 lbs. of gingerbread mix and 22 lbs. of icing sugar were used in creation. It took the hotel's pastry team of five chefs over 168 hours to bake and construct. The gingerbread hotel is displayed in the lobby, with the historic, signature staircase behind it and dreamy star lights and crystal chandelier hung above. This December 2021, the sweet gingerbread Beijing Hotel NUO is the very first thing guests see upon entering the historic luxury hotel.

Fairmont Hotel Macdonald (1915)

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Fairmont Hotel MacDonald presents two gingerbread creations in 2021: a life-size gingerbread cottage display in the lobby and a gingerbread replica of the hotel located inside the doorway of the giant gingerbread house. The gingerbread house is an annual. Each year the hotel's pastry chefs make it bigger and more magnificent than the year before. The display this year required 625 hours to mix, bake, and construct and it *is* magnificent! The gingerbread house is over a story tall and features sugar-dusted shingles and twinkling fairy lights that line its roof and windows. The smaller but no less impressive gingerbread hotel showcases the historic hotel's iconic architecture, originally designed to resemble a gorgeous chateau from the French

Renaissance. This year, the hotel unveiled the gingerbread house and hotel at a tree lighting ceremony in November to officially kick off the festive season in the heart of Edmonton. Through December, guests and visitors can enter the Fairmont Hotel MacDonald lobby and walk through the gingerbread house to discover the gingerbread hotel for themselves.

Ingredient Spotlight: Fairmont Hotel MacDonald

- 200kg (440 lbs.) brown sugar
- 260kg (573 lbs.) brown flour
- 260kg (573 lbs.) white flour
- 280 dozen eggs
- 62 liters (16 gallons) molasses
- 41 liters (11 gallons) honey
- 22kg (48 lbs.) cinnamon
- 57kg (125 lbs.) meringue

Great Southern Killarney (1854)

Killarney, Ireland

The Great Southern Killarney hotel in western Ireland was inspired by the local train station to build a gingerbread display, featuring train conductor Tom (a doll) standing at welcome guests. Why a train conductor? Great Southern Killarney originally opened as a railway hotel in 1854, and it is located on the grounds of the historic Killarney train station. Three hotel employees were involved in the construction of the display: a maintenance team member built the structure – which is not edible; then another staff member decorated the house with cotton fluff, candy canes, and dangling icicle lights; and a pastry chef baked and decorated the gingerbread men and women that cover its façade. Located at the gingerbread house is a post box for children to send their letters to Santa. Guests and visitors of all ages are invited to the hotel's Grand Foyer to be delighted and enjoy this tribute to the hotel's railroad heritage.

Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar (1780)

Bagac, Bataan

This season, the Philippines resort Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar (1780) – which was recently awarded the 2021 Historic Hotels Worldwide® Best Historic Hotel for Asia and the Pacific – created a gingerbread house representing a symbol of Philippine culture. The Gingerbread “Bahay-Kubo or Nipa Hut” carries the warmth of the Filipino Christmas Holiday. The Gingerbread Nipa-Hut is a festive sight and smell, with main ingredients of ground ginger and cinnamon powder. It has the unique characteristics of a traditional thatched roof, stilted nipa hut, which includes mobility and suitability to the tropical climate of the Philippines. The Gingerbread Nipa Hut display is 6 ft. long and 8 ft. wide, reaching a height of 7 ft. It weighs nearly 4,000 pounds and requires two people working for two weeks to finish. The Gingerbread Nipa-Hut is currently on display in Casa Juico, a historic mansion in Las Casas Quezon City.

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