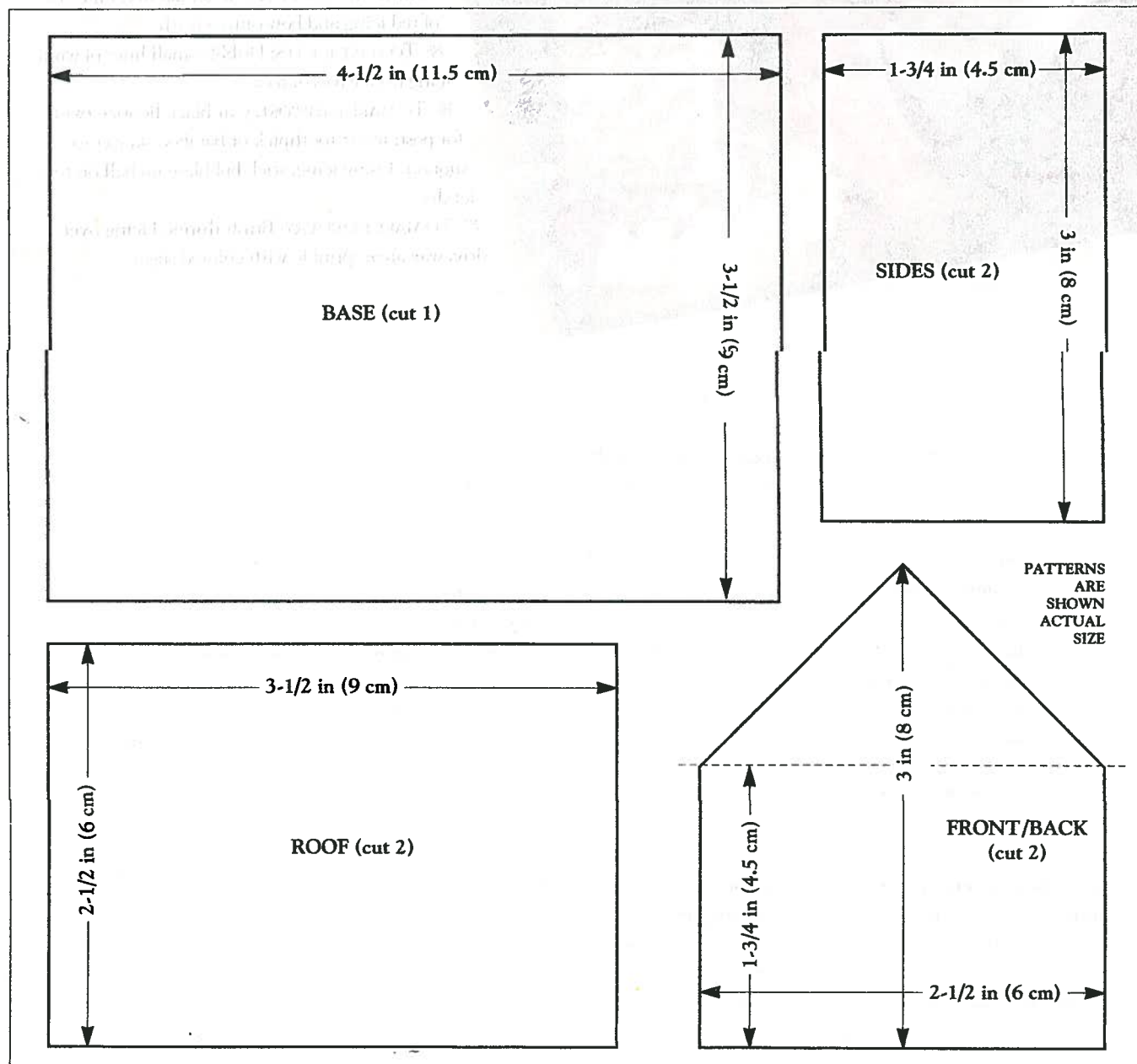


Royal Icing

Since this icing dries out very quickly, it's important to keep it covered with plastic wrap or a damp towel.

- | | | |
|---------|-----------------|------|
| 4 cups | icing sugar | 1 L |
| 1/2 tsp | cream of tartar | 2 mL |
| 3 | egg whites | 3 |

In bowl, sift together icing sugar and cream of tartar. Using electric mixer, beat in egg whites for 7 to 10 minutes or until icing is thick enough to hold its shape. Makes about 2-1/2 cups (625 mL).



EASY DECORATING IDEAS

Making gingerbread houses isn't just for kids! Enlarge our pattern pieces to make a family-size house — then gather everyone together for an afternoon of pre-Christmas fun. Here are some easy decorating ideas to get you started.

✿ **FOR VARIOUS COLORS:** Tint Royal Icing with food coloring. Paste colors, available at cake-decorating stores, produce the most vivid colors.

✿ **TO PAINT WITH ROYAL ICING PAINT:** Thin a little icing, tinted to desired shade, with a few drops of water until consistency of heavy cream. Use small watercolor brush to paint onto gingerbread. (This icing paint is ideal for decorating cookies as shown in photo, p. 21.)

✿ **TO MAKE SHINGLES:** Pipe interlocking scallops of icing onto roof pieces.

✿ **TO SIMULATE BRICKWORK:** Pipe small rectangles of icing onto wall pieces.

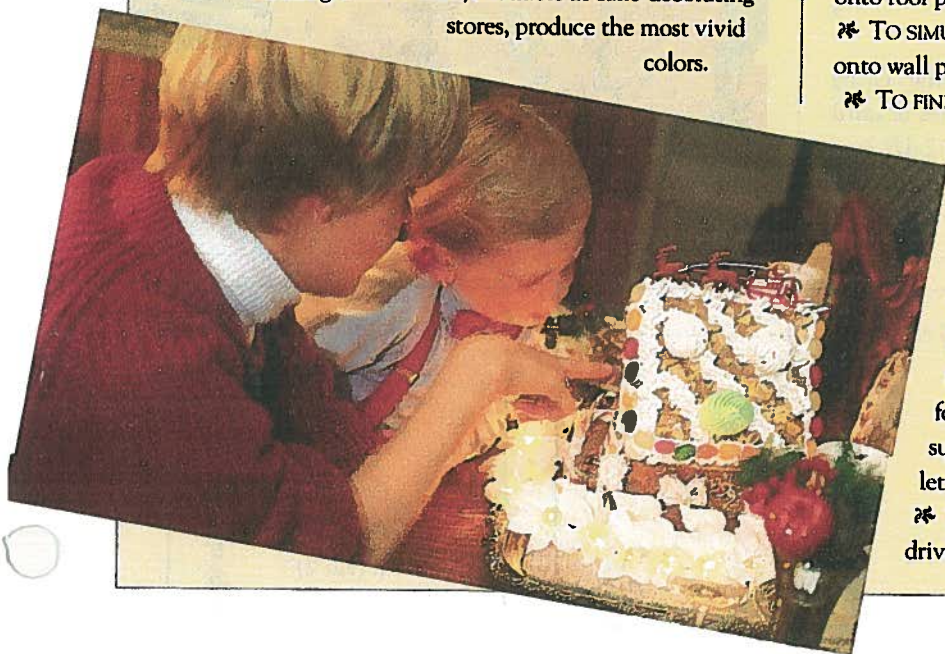
✿ **TO FINISH EDGES:** Pipe scallops or rosettes of icing along house seams.

✿ **TO MAKE WREATHS:** Pipe circle of icing on door or wall. Pipe connecting rosettes of contrasting color over circle. Let dry. Pipe dots of red icing and bow onto wreath.

✿ **TO MAKE ICICLES:** Dribble small lines of white icing from eaves of roof.

✿ **TO MAKE LAMPOST:** Cut black licorice twists for post; insert toothpick or bamboo skewer for support. Using icing, stick bubble-gum ball on top; let dry.

✿ **TO MAKE DRIVEWAY:** Brush thinned icing over driveway area; sprinkle with colored sugar.



Gingerbread Dough

This easy dough is equally good for small and large houses. It also bakes into several dozen fragrant cookies, depending on size and shape of cookie cutters.

1 cup	shortening	250 mL
1 cup	granulated sugar	250 mL
2	eggs, lightly beaten	2
3/4 cup	fancy molasses	175 mL
1/2 cup	blackstrap or cooking molasses	125 mL
5-1/2 cups	all-purpose flour	1.375 L
2 tsp	ginger	10 mL
1 tsp	each baking soda, salt, cloves and cinnamon	5 mL

In large bowl and using electric mixer, beat shortening with sugar until light; beat in eggs and fancy and blackstrap molasses. ✿ Stir together flour, ginger, baking soda, salt, cloves and cinnamon; using wooden spoon, gradually stir into molasses mixture. Mix well, working with hands if necessary.

✿ Divide dough into four discs; wrap each in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until firm, or for up to 1 week.

✿ Meanwhile, referring to measurements on diagrams (next page), draw pattern pieces on waxed paper; label and cut out.

✿ Between sheets of waxed paper, roll out one disc at a time to 1/4-inch (5 mm) thickness. Remove top sheet of paper; arrange pattern pieces on dough. Using tip of knife, trace and cut out shapes. Freeze on waxed paper-lined baking sheet for 20 minutes or until hard.

✿ Transfer cutouts to parchment paper-lined or lightly greased baking sheets, reserving dough scraps for rerolling. Bake in 325°F (160°C) oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden and firm to the touch. Transfer gingerbread to racks and let cool completely. Makes enough for 1 large or 5 small gingerbread houses.