



WATERCREST

SENIOR LIVING

Generations of Gingerbread

Ginger spice is derived from the root of the ginger plant, native to Asia. It was used medicinally for nausea and indigestion 5000 years ago in China. While ginger has been thought to be beneficial for several conditions, it should be noted that evidence to support such usage is not always present, and as with any supplement or change to diet, your physician should be consulted beforehand.

Today, ginger is used in baking and cooking in recipes ranging from gingerbread to cookies to cleansing juice blends to . . . gingerbread houses!

These handmade creations have become a traditional symbol of the Christmas holiday season and are even the spotlight of competition baking championships. In the 1812 Brothers Grimm story of Hansel and Gretel, two children fall into the hands of an evil witch who lives in a gingerbread house; they ultimately defeat her. And so, a holiday tradition was born; it is said that villagers believed that certain shapes of gingerbread could be charmed or cursed, and the witch's house soon took shape of all sorts of charming holiday cottages, decorated with a variety of sweet confections.

A few fun facts:

- In 2013, The Guinness Book of World Records reported the largest gingerbread house – 60 feet long, 42 feet wide and 10.1 feet tall at his highest point.
- Gingerbread Lane is a non-profit display by chef Jon Lovitch, begun in 1994. In 2022, the village was made up of 1500 houses, using 1000 pounds of gingerbread and over 8000 pounds of icing.
- In 2006, “Smitty” the gingerbread man weighed in at 1308 lbs. 8 oz., measured 20 feet from head to toe and was made with 750 lbs of flour, 49 gallons of molasses and 72 eggs.
- Queen Elizabeth I served gingerbread figures created in her guests’ likeness; while gingerbread was not new, her idea to shape them into men is believed to be the first of its kind.
- Around the same time, it is said that English women would eat a “gingerbread husband” in hopes of finding a real one.
- The Swedish “Pepparkakor” (pepper cookie) tradition involves placing a cookie in a cupped hand and making a wish, then pushing down on the center of the cookie with the other hand. If the cookie breaks in 2, 4 or more pieces, eat it! If it breaks into 3 pieces, don’t make a sound --- and your wish will come true! Then you can eat your cookie!
- June 5th is National Gingerbread Day, but this delicious treat is perfect at any time!