FREE SAMPLE · SAGESTEAD

Gingerbread chicken coop: your first build

The chicken coop from the Sagestead Gingerbread Homestead Village: six pieces and a beginner build, a great first house for kids. The construction dough, the bake guide and the royal icing come with it, so you can build it this week.

How to build it

1. Print page 7 at 100% (Actual size), not Fit to page, and check its 1-inch square with a ruler.
2. Day 1: make the dough on page 2 and chill it. Half a batch is plenty for the coop's 37 square inches.
3. Day 2: roll to 1/4 inch, cut, chill and bake (page 3). Trim each piece against the template while warm.
4. Day 3: glue the walls with stiff royal icing (page 4), let them set 1 hour, then add the roof (pages 5, 6).

Safety first

- Grown-ups handle the knife, the oven and any melted candy. Kids roll, use cookie cutters and decorate.
- Nobody tastes raw dough or licks fingers: raw flour can carry E. coli (FDA). Wash hands after.
- Battery lights only inside a gingerbread house, never a real candle.

Want the whole village?

The full Gingerbread Homestead Village has four buildings, a farmhouse, a gambrel barn, a candy-glass greenhouse and this coop, plus pines, a picket fence, a farmyard map and a paper village.

On Etsy: scan the code, or type sagestead.net/go/gingerbread-village

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Construction Gingerbread

Firm, flat and strong: made for building. No baking soda, so it bakes without puffing and the edges stay sharp.

You need

5 cups (600 g)	all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp	ground ginger
1 Tbsp	ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp	salt
3/4 cup (145 g)	vegetable shortening (butter works, but spreads a little more)
3/4 cup (160 g)	packed brown sugar
1/2 cup (170 g)	molasses
1/2 cup (160 g)	light corn syrup
2 to 4 Tbsp	water, as needed

Method

1. Whisk the flour, ginger, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl.
2. Warm the shortening, brown sugar, molasses and corn syrup in a saucepan over low heat, stirring, just until the fat melts. Let it cool for 10 minutes.
3. Pour the warm syrup into the flour and stir, then knead into a smooth, firm dough, adding water a spoonful at a time until it holds together.
4. Divide in two, flatten into discs, wrap and chill at least 1 hour.
5. Before rolling, let the dough stand 15 to 20 minutes, until it rolls without cracking.

Do not eat or taste the raw dough, and no licking fingers or spoons: raw flour can carry E. coli, and only baking makes it safe (FDA). Wash hands, bowls and counters after handling it. Allergy note: this dough is egg-free, but that does not make it safe to taste. It follows the classic construction-grade ratio: lots of flour, syrup for strength and no baking soda, so the pieces don't puff.

The whole village is on Etsy: sagestead.net/go/gingerbread-village

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Roll, Cut and Bake

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Roll the dough directly on parchment to an even 1/4 inch, using the two guides under your pin.
3. Lay the templates on the dough and cut around them with a small sharp knife. Don't move the pieces: lift away the scraps around them instead.
4. Bake the door cut-outs too (the farmhouse, barn and coop doors). Once the walls have set, ice each door back in its opening, or a little ajar. The window cut-outs are cook's treats.
5. Slide the parchment onto a baking sheet and chill 20 to 30 minutes, so the pieces hold their shape.
6. Bake until the edges just begin to brown and the centers feel firm (see the chart). Pieces should be completely stiff once cool. If one is still soft, bake it a few minutes more.
7. Straight out of the oven, lay the template back on each warm piece and trim any spread with a sharp knife. (Candy-glass pieces: trim at the candy step, before the candy goes in.) Let the pieces cool on the sheet, then flat on a rack.

Baking guide at 350°F, 1/4 inch

Small pieces (chimney, stands, ramp)	**10 to 14 min**
Walls and small roofs	**15 to 20 min**
Large roof panels	**18 to 25 min**

Ovens differ: start checking at 10 minutes. Leave at least 1 inch between pieces on the sheet.

Candy-glass windows

- For the greenhouse and any window you want to glow: bake the piece until almost done, trim it, then fill each opening level with the dough with crushed clear or colored hard candies: about 2 level teaspoons (2 candies) for a roof pane or the tall greenhouse door, 1 1/2 teaspoons for a wall pane.
- Return to the oven for the last 4 to 5 minutes, until the candy melts smooth. Always on parchment, never a bare pan. Let it cool completely on the sheet before moving it, and don't re-bake or trim it after.
- Grown-ups only: melted sugar is hotter than 300°F and sticks to skin. Don't touch or taste it until fully cool. Candy glass turns sticky in humid rooms, so build it last and keep it dry.

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Royal Icing: the Glue

Made with meringue powder, so there are no raw egg whites.

You need

4 cups (1 lb)	powdered sugar
3 Tbsp	meringue powder
5 Tbsp	warm water

Method

1. Beat everything together on low speed until the icing is thick, glossy and holds a peak: about 7 to 10 minutes in a stand mixer, 10 to 12 with a hand mixer.
2. For building, make it stiff like toothpaste: use about 1 tablespoon less water. For piping snow and details, thin it with drops of water.
3. Keep the bowl covered with a damp towel. Royal icing crusts fast.

Let it set

Walls before the roof	at least 1 hour; up to overnight in humid weather
Each roof panel	prop it and let it set about 1 hour before the next
Before decorating	a few hours after the roof

Building rules for every house

- Pipe a thick line of icing along every edge that touches another piece, then press and hold for a minute.
- Prop walls with cans or jars while the icing sets. Check the corners are square with a cereal box.
- Pipe a second line of icing inside every seam for strength.
- Roofs go on one panel at a time, propped from below.

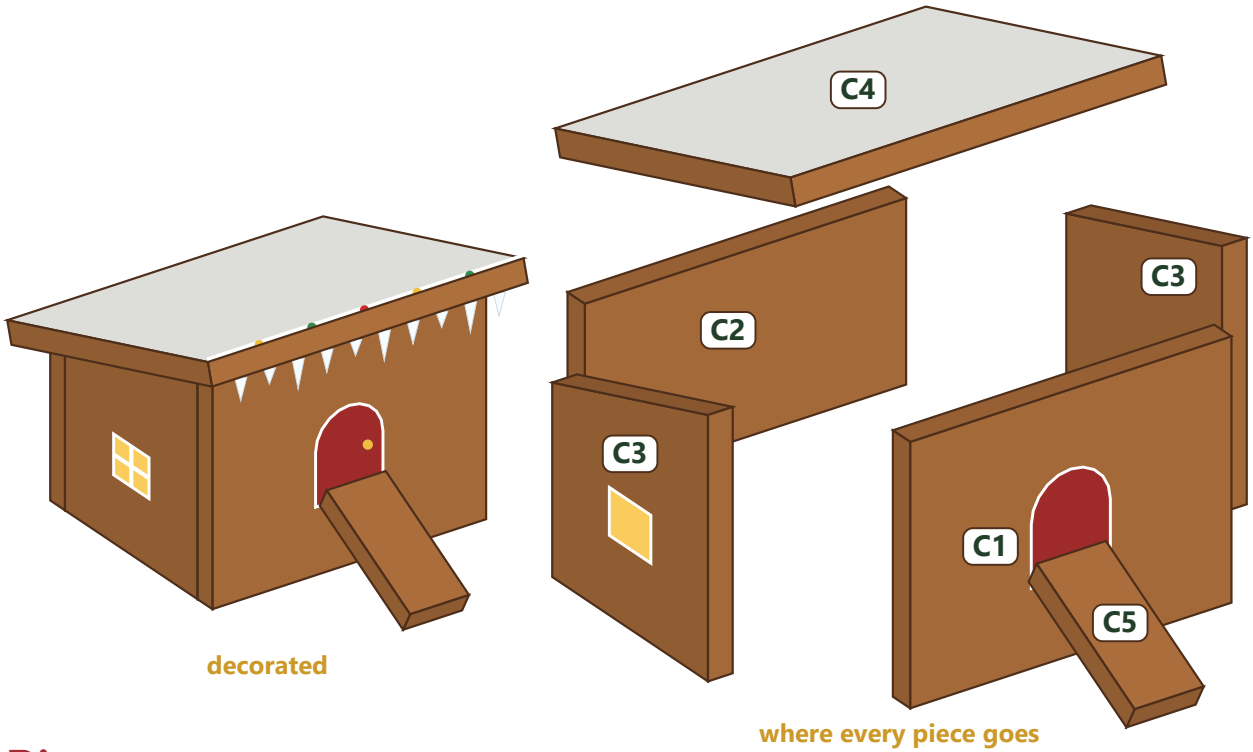
Raw egg whites can carry Salmonella. Meringue powder or pasteurized egg whites are the safe choices.

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Chicken Coop

Beginner · 6 pieces to cut



decorated

where every piece goes

Pieces

☐	**C1**	Front wall	**cut 1**	3 1/4 x 2 1/2 in	template p. 25
☐	**C2**	Back wall	**cut 1**	3 1/4 x 1 3/4 in	template p. 25
☐	**C3**	Side wall	**cut 2**	2 1/4 x 2 1/2 in	template p. 25
☐	**C4**	Roof	**cut 1**	3 3/4 x 3 9/16 in	template p. 25
☐	**C5**	Coop ramp	**cut 1**	11/16 x 1 5/8 in	template p. 25

Dough: about 37 square inches rolled 1/4 inch thick. Sizes are rounded to the nearest 1/16 inch; the templates are exact.

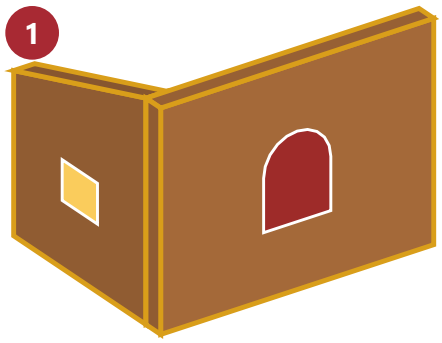
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Chicken Coop: Step by Step

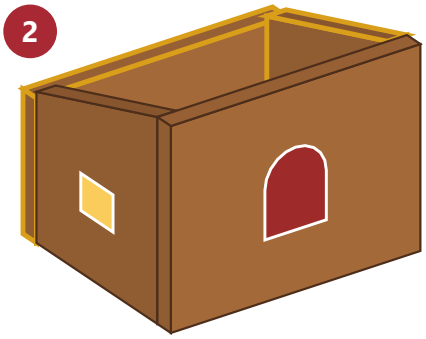
Gold outlines show the pieces you add in each step.

1



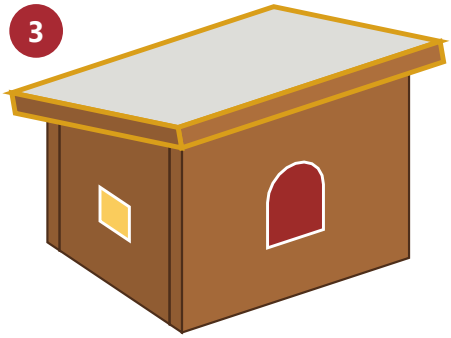
Stand the tall front wall C1 and one side wall C3. The side fits INSIDE the front wall's end, its sloped top running down toward the back.

2



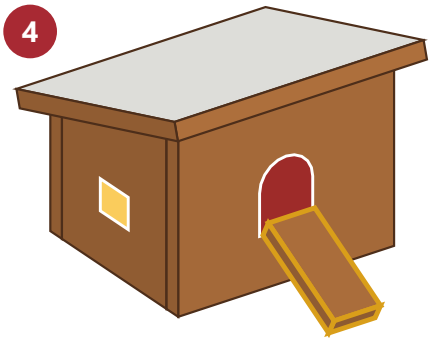
Add the other side C3 and the low back wall C2. Ice the seams on the inside and let set at least 1 hour.

3



Ice the tops of all four walls and lay the roof C4: it overhangs the front by about 3/8 inch and the back and sides by about 1/4 inch.

4



Press lines across the ramp C5 with the back of a knife, then ice its top end under the hen door's sill and its foot on the board.

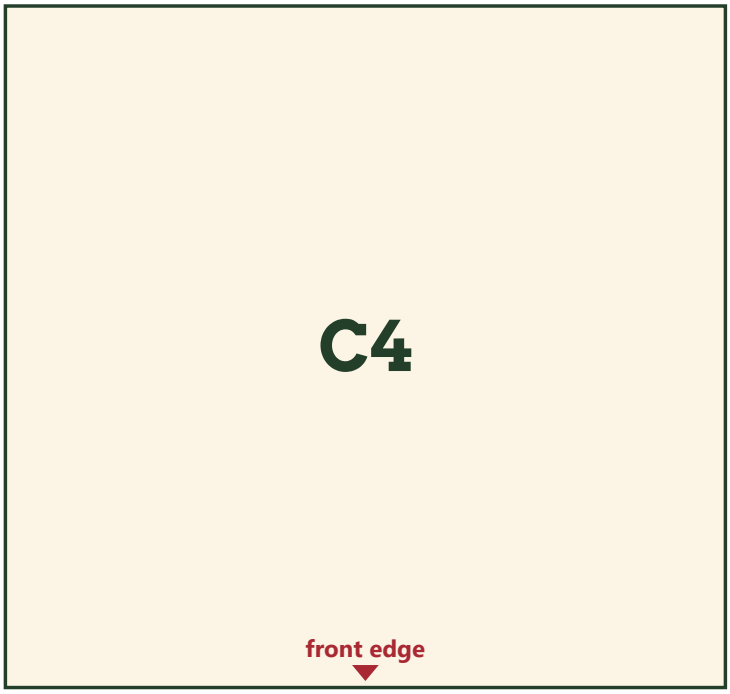
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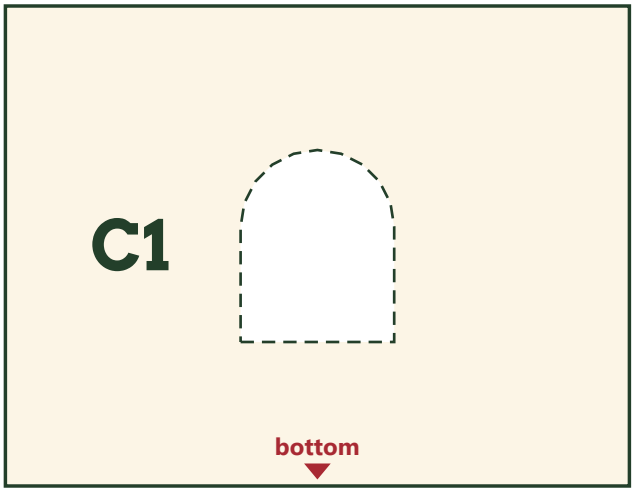
Chicken Coop templates · page 1 of 1

Print at 100% (Actual size). Solid line: cut. Dashed: cut out. Blue: candy glass.

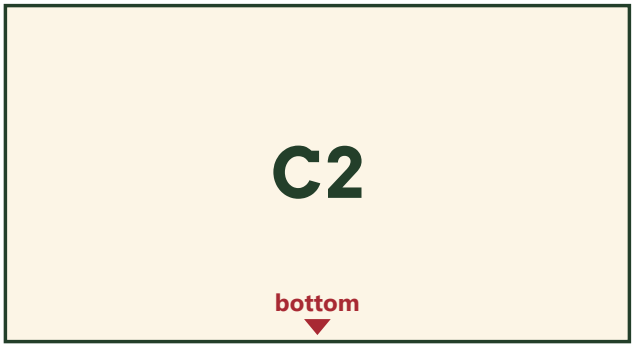
1 inch
check me



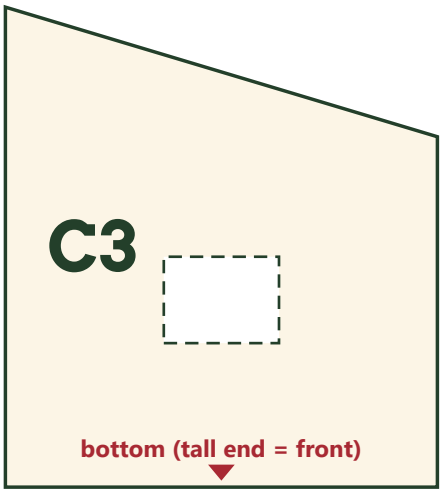
C4 Roof · cut 1



C1 Front wall · cut 1



C2 Back wall · cut 1



C3 Side wall · cut 2



C5 Coop ramp · cut 1

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