



Hotels' Over-the-Top Gingerbread Displays Are the Perfect Recipe for Holiday Fun

Here's a Taste of Some of the Nation's Most Remarkable Displays

(November 29, 2017) – In case you're worried that holiday travel stories seem less "ho-ho-ho" and more "ho-hum" than they ought to be this year, we'd like to roll out this idea: Top hotels and resorts around the country are blending culinary creativity with architectural advancement to offer some of the season's most memorable gingerbread creations.

Gingerbread has been a part of American Christmas celebrations right from the start, with colonists from throughout Europe bringing it as part of their culinary tradition. In fact, the first cookbook published in the United States included seven recipes for the molasses-based holiday treat.

Somewhere along the way, pastry chefs got in touch with their inner Frank Lloyd Wright and started designing elaborate gingerbread structures that took the classic rolled cookie to an entirely new level. Culinary teams at hotels across the country now look at gingerbread displays as one way to demonstrate their artistic talents, each year finding innovative methods to outdo their past creations. In short, the modern gingerbread house displayed in a hotel lobby is anything but cookie-cutter.

Here's a taste of what top properties in Pennsylvania, Maryland, South Carolina and Missouri have cooked up (or is that cooked up?) this festive season:

The Gumdrop Toy Shoppe

[Nemacolin Woodlands Resort](#)

Farmington, Pennsylvania

November 26 – January 1

The shopping list for the gingerbread house at this luxury resort in Pennsylvania's Laurel Highlands reads like a sugar rush for a bunch of giants: 500 pounds of flour, 110 pounds of brown sugar, 120 pounds of molasses, 3 pounds of cinnamon, 15 gallons of egg whites and 200 pounds of assorted candy. But when all those ingredients (and many more) are combined – along with the skill sets of both the pastry shop and the carpentry team – it results in a life-sized, super-sweet toy store called The Gumdrop Toy Shoppe. Measuring a whopping 12 feet tall, 14 feet long and 12 feet deep, the structure is crafted out of gingerbread bricks, icing mortar and candy details. The inside is furnished with a collection of vintage-style wooden toys, plus a charming rocking horse, complete train set, and antique playthings peeking out from gingerbread shelves. The structure, which is set up in the lobby of the Chateau Lafayette, one of three hotel properties on the 2,000-acre resort, is so enormous that guests can get a whiff of gingerbread before they enter the building. On weekends, "elves" are on hand to help guests decorate their own (standard-sized) gingerbread cookies. The gingerbread experience is open to everyone, whether or not they're overnight guests of the resort.

Christmas on the Potomac

[Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center](#)

National Harbor, Maryland

November 18 – January 1

www.ChristmasOnThePotomac.com

We could debate all day about whether the folks in Washington, D.C. are working hard on behalf of the citizenry ... but one thing is certain: the pastry team at Gaylord National Resort, located right across the Potomac River from the nation's capital, continues to exceed everyone's expectations. As part of the hotel's annual holiday celebration – which also includes a massive ice display, over-the-top suspended tree and all-new musical production – the team of bakers spent 340 hours building, shaping, baking and assembling a gingerbread version of the capital city. The culinary team used 200 pounds of gingerbread dough, 200 pounds of powdered sugar, 170 pounds of Rice Krispies cereal, 216 pounds of marshmallows, 90 pounds of candy and 200 pounds of powdered sugar to make tasteful versions of the White House, Lincoln and Jefferson memorials, and Capitol, along with a 3.5-foot tall Washington Monument and some of D.C.'s signature rowhomes. In case kids are inspired by what they see on display in the main lobby, they can try out their own culinary skills at the Gingerbread Decorating Corner in the resort's Christmas Village. Gingerbread house kits are available for purchase; kids can exercise their creativity, then take home their edible architecture.

Greenwood INN Gingerbread

[Inn on the Square](#)

Uptown Greenwood, South Carolina

November 26 – December 10

The town of Greenwood gained national exposure this year for its position along the “line of totality” during the Great American Eclipse back in August, but apparently the outpouring of hospitality extended during that event was just a warm-up exercise. The general manager of the town's beloved Inn on the Square says that the real treat for visitors this year will be seeing the classic Southern town re-created in gingerbread. The project was inspired by Inn owner Jim McGuinness, who simply adores Christmas ... and who also holds a degree from the Culinary Institute of America. In the past, McGuinness has crafted elaborate gingerbread houses to display during the holiday season. This year, however, the Inn encouraged individuals and organizations to put the (royal) icing on things by recreating shops, historic sites and landmarks from around Greenwood in gingerbread form. The results of their efforts are on display in the hotel's lobby from November 26 through December 10. The Inn also annually hosts a gingerbread-building event for children, who delight in decorating pre-built gingerbread frames with a variety of candies and other confections. The kids' decorating event will take place on Sunday, December 10 at 4 p.m.; admission is a requested donation to Bowers Rogers Children's Home.

Candy and Cookie Village

[Chateau on the Lake Resort Spa & Convention Center](#)

Branson, Missouri

November 1 – January 1

This legendary property nestled along Table Rock Lake in the Ozark Mountains takes a new twist on the classic gingerbread house, creating an entire village out of a variety of confections. The resort's award-winning culinary team has created a total of six buildings out of candy canes, cookies, Pop Tarts, jelly beans, licorice, malt balls, pretzels, graham crackers, candy bars, gummy bears and

other sweet treats. The tallest of these confectionary structures is the sweet village's church, which boasts a bell tower that stands 5.5 feet. The tasty town's Christmas trees are made from upside-down sugar ice cream cones with green icing and chocolate-covered sunflower seeds; sleighs are crafted from candy canes and graham crackers; and the village's dogs are created from Frosted Mini Wheats and M&M's. Since just looking at the village tends to make guests' mouths water, it's a good thing that the resort's Sweet Shoppe is right nearby, ready to serve up sugar and gingerbread cookies.

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