17th Annual Gingerbread House Competition

Rules and Procedures

The following Rules and Procedures have been set forth and established by Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Committee for the purpose of the 2026 Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Competition. Please retain these rules for your records. For additional information, visit www.simsburycelebrates.com or email questions to simsburycelebrates@gmail.com.

REGISTRATION

The competition is open to all individuals and businesses, however the Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Committee reserves the right to refuse any entry deemed inappropriate. **Due to space limitations, only the first 30 entrants are guaranteed acceptance into the competition.**

The registration deadline is Tuesday, November 17, 2026. Completed entry forms may be submitted online at www.simsburyrec.com or mailed to Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Competition, c/o Simsbury Parks and Recreation Dept., 933 Hopmeadow St, Simsbury, CT 06070. Entry forms must contain all required signatures and the entry fee to be considered complete.

All entries must be registered. Entry numbers will be assigned upon receipt of the completed entry form. Competitors will receive a confirmation email. All participants must be listed on the entry form.

Only one Gingerbread House per entry form is permitted, and individuals may have only one entry in each category for which they are eligible to compete. The 2026 Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Competition Entry Form must be signed by the individual(s) entering the competition. If the individual is younger than eighteen (18) by November 17, 2026, a signature from a parent or legal guardian is required in addition to the minor's signature.

CATEGORIES AND PRIZES

The Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Committee will award a prize to all first-place winners in the competitive categories. In the case of a group entry, the prize will be awarded to the lead team member on the entry form.

Masters - bakers, chefs, caterers, artists, etc.; may include one or more individuals
Adults- Entrants age 16 and older; may include one or more individuals
Youth - Entrants age 15 and under; may include one or more individuals
Mixed Groups - Groups comprised of both youth and adults; may include two or more individuals
Display Only - any individual or group entering the competition that does not wish to compete for a prize
People's Choice - viewers are voting for their favorite and will be announced the night of the event

For any team entering the competition, one entrant should be listed as the group lead team member, and all other entrants should be listed. A signature from a parent or legal guardian is also required for each member under the age of 18. **The Youth category is for youths (individual or team) age 15 or under who design, construct and decorate their entry (i.e. appropriate parental supervision is expected, but not parental participation).**

The Mixed Group category is for groups consisting of both Youth and Adult members. This includes youth groups, scout troops, and families with adults and children. **Adults participating in creating, decorating and assembling a gingerbread entry with children should submit an entry in this category.**

ENTRY SPECIFICATIONS

All entries must be constructed of 100% edible materials. The board base may be of, and covered with, non-food related material (for example a plywood base covered with fabric or plastic). Battery operated lighting is permissible.

Kits may be used; however, difficulty and originality scores will be impacted. Non-edible decorations and ornaments, including figurines or dolls, are not permitted.

Entries must be submitted on a board base. We suggest using a ½ or¾ inch plywood. Entries, including the base, must not be larger than 24 inches wide and 24 inches long (no restriction on height), however entries **are not required** to reach this maximum size. **Anything exceeding these measurements will be disqualified.**

Ingredients List Required: Please include, on a separate sheet that will be displayed in your area, the materials used in the gingerbread house construction process. The top of your sheet should have the name of your gingerbread house. **Please DO NOT include your name in the name of your gingerbread house.**

JUDGING

Entries will be judged in the following categories:

Overall Appearance, Originality & **Creativity, Difficulty, Precision,** and **Consistency of Theme.** The special theme for the 2026 Gingerbread House Competition is **"250th Birthday of the USA and American Historical Significance"** and entries incorporating this theme will receive special recognition. Following the theme is encouraged, but not required, for the competition. The theme is also not required to be holiday related.

Each competitive category will be awarded ribbons for first, second and third place finishes, with the first-place finishes also receiving a prize. Each group is responsible for determining how to share any prizes. After the initial judges scoring, any tie-breakers may be broken at the sole discretion of the judge.

Judging will be held Sunday, November 22, 2026. All entries must be delivered between 1:00 pm and 3:00pm. The judging will take place from 3:30-4:30pm, and winners will be announced at the Free Library at 4:30pm. Winning entries will be marked following the judging and until entries are picked up.

POST COMPETITION

We anticipate the Gingerbread House Exhibit will be open for viewing on November 24, December 1st and 3rd during the Free Library's regular business hours of 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Committee has sole permission to print or otherwise duplicate the picture or likeness of the entry and/or the entrant with the entry for either internal or external release; this includes print and online publications as well as local television. It is understood that the image of the entry becomes property of Simsbury Celebrates Gingerbread House Committee.

All entries should be **picked up on Sunday, December 6, 2026 between 12-1 PM.** Entries not picked up by this time will be disposed of or donated.