

All About Gingerbread Boy



Hi everybody!

When I was little and read the story of the Gingerbread boy, I wanted to jump into the book and save him from being eaten up by the crafty fox.

Read on, and I'll tell you all about how I changed his story in my version of this folk tale.

Jan Brett

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I decided to illustrate the story and add a twist to the tale.

Children often solve problems in ways no one else can. In my story Matti finds a way to bring the Gingerbread Baby home ALIVE! Matti was inspired by a real-life boy named Alexander who is also creative and always looks as if he has a plan! His mom makes intricate, colorful candy sculptures and seeing them gave me ideas too!



Springerle Cookies

I love to make cookies! In most cookie cookbooks you'll find a recipe for Springerle, pale anise-flavored cookies pressed into wooden molds. In the old days, great care was taken when carving fanciful designs.

The pale cookies you see in the borders of my book are my own designs, inspired by a collection of antique European molds. Some days my house smelled like the gingerbread I needed to sketch.

Some folks use inedible dough to create decorations from the molds.

Cookie mold designs come in an amazing variety!

My house smelled like anise spice when I baked Springerle cookies.



I went to the Swiss village of Zermatt to get ideas for my book. That's why you'll see Swiss goats in the barn and a Swiss dog pulling a milkcart. The Bernese Mountain dog is modeled after Tory, a dog who went to school every day with her friend, a wonderful teacher named Shelley.

See if you can find a page in *Gingerbread Baby* that has colorful shields pressed into the Springerle dough. They represent the 25 cantons (or districts) of Switzerland.



Houses in Zermatt are made from timber and have slab stone roofs.

Stumped for a fun gift idea? Hedgie suggests a basket containing *Gingerbread Baby*, a cookie cookbook and a big wooden spoon all wrapped in red and white cloth (the colors of the Swiss flag.)

A source for replicas of antique cookie presses is: The-House-on-the-Hill, Post Office Box 70103; Villa Park, IL 60181



My gift to you! It's on the Internet!

Hedgie and I spent long hours painting and planning some fun props to help you create a play from *Gingerbread Baby*. You'll see the pieces of a gingerbread house that you can download, stick to foam core or cardboard and assemble to make your own cozy home for your *Gingerbread Baby*. You'll also find play masks for the different characters in the book and your very own *Gingerbread Baby*.

