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# HISTORIC HOTELS of AMERICA

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National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

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## 2019 Historic Hotels of America Top 25 Most Magnificent Gingerbread Displays Announced

WASHINGTON, D.C.—December 19, 2019 Historic Hotels of America® have the best historic hotels to celebrate the holiday season and see the most spectacular (and delicious) [gingerbread creations](#). From life size gingerbread houses to complete gingerbread creations with animation and sound effects, these historic hotels are the place to feel the holiday spirit.

Here are The 2019 Historic Hotels of America Top 25 Most Magnificent [Gingerbread Displays](#) :

### **Williamsburg Lodge, Autograph Collection** (1750) Williamsburg, Virginia

The Williamsburg Lodge is showcasing a life size gingerbread house. Located in the lobby of the hotel, it took 15 people over 330 hours to bake, construct, and decorate. Approximately 150 pounds of icing, 55 pounds of candy, and a whopping 375 pounds of gingerbread were used to make this gingerbread creation come to life. The interior of the gingerbread house is complete with a mantelpiece, and a Christmas tree.

### **The Omni Homestead Resort** (1766) Hot Springs, Virginia

This year, the Homestead's pastry team made a gingerbread version of the hotels' iconic tower. The structure is eight feet wide, five feet deep and 15 feet tall. The hotel's engineering team built the wooden frame and 10 members of the pastry team led by Executive Pastry Chef Leen Kim, created the finished piece. The baking process took a month to complete using more than 3,000 gingerbread "bricks." In addition to the tower, there is a life size gingerbread man that guests can pose next to for selfies.

### **Woodstock Inn & Resort** (1793) Woodstock, Vermont

It takes four people from the resort's pastry department to create and implement the gingerbread creation for this resort. The bakers start at the beginning of November working on the shingles and the setup was completed the first week of December. The bakers had help from the Inn's carpenters to create a wooden structure and then the pastry team placed the shingles onto the wood, and after that the decorating commenced. This year's theme for the gingerbread creation is Dr. Seuss and is five feet long, four feet wide and six foot tall. Ingredients used include: 150 pounds of flour, 51 pounds of molasses, 40 pounds of shortening, six pounds of ginger, six pounds of cinnamon, two pounds of baking powder, one pound of salt, a ton of eggs, and adorned with 15 pounds of candy.

### **The Willard InterContinental** (1818) Washington, DC

The Willard's 2019 gingerbread display this year is of the Jefferson Memorial, including The Tidal Basin and D.C.'s iconic cherry blossom trees in an effort to bring awareness to the hotel's campaign and the ongoing efforts needed to preserve the Tidal Basin, named one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Standing at eight and a half feet by five feet, The Willard's gingerbread display will feature a southeast view of the famed Jefferson Memorial, and include the famed bronze statue of Jefferson by Rudolph Evans and all four quotations from Jefferson's writings that are carved into the walls of the actual memorial. The display also includes an audio feed of Thomas Jefferson's Inaugural Addresses, as well as a real water component to simulate the

Tidal Basin complete with live fish. Intricate chocolate techniques, along with the use of fondant, will bring the famed cherry blossom trees surrounding the memorial to life.

**French Lick Springs Hotel (1845)** French Lick, Indiana

Now on display on the second level of the Event Center all throughout the 50 Days of Lights at French Lick Resort, is a dazzling gingerbread that guests might even be able to smell from a mile away. One of the most unique parts about this year's version is that the resort's audio/visual department got involved to kick it up a notch. This Santa's-workshop-themed gingerbread house is tech-savvy, with animated scenes scrolling on one of the front and side windows. You can "see inside" the house and watch St. Nick and the elves busy at work. This gingerbread creation involves a couple hundred pounds of gingerbread, dozens more pounds of icing and sugary decorations, and roughly 450 hours of work by the hotel's bakery staff to make this happen.

**Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa (1847)** Point Clear, Alabama

The gingerbread construction at the Grand Hotel starts with baking gingerbread bricks in mid-October. At the beginning of November, the construction of the Grand Hotel in gingerbread begins. A team of eight pastry cooks works on the display each day while continuing daily production. They spend approximately 20-30 hours a week creating it. The entire construction process took about a month to complete and is unveiled on Thanksgiving night. This year the pastry team decided to build the resort brick by brick instead of using sheets of gingerbread, as in the past. More than 4,000 bricks have been used and the Grand culinary team puts great details in the display.

**Mohonk Mountain House (1869)** New Paltz, New York

2019 marks the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hudson Valley Gingerbread Competition at Mohonk Mountain. Mohonk invited its guests, members of the local community, and employees to construct their best gingerbread creation for a chance to have it displayed throughout the resort during the holiday season. A panel of local judges selected three prize winners and two honorable mentions in three categories and the top five finishers have their creations on display throughout the Mountain House. Similar to the Holiday Tree Tour where guests can view multiple decorated trees, Mohonk has created a self-guided Gingerbread Tour for guests to explore the winning creations.

**The Peabody Memphis (1869)** Memphis, Tennessee

Each year, The Peabody pastry kitchen turns into Santa's workshop. The staff were busy for months leading up to the holidays, designing, ordering supplies, baking and prepping for their gingerbread creation. The amount of ingredients used is staggering. This year, almost 400 pounds of sugar, 150 pounds of flour, 3 gallons of molasses, 5 gallons of egg whites and 30 pounds of candy were used to create the annual holiday masterpiece. In the past, they have created giant gingerbread houses, Whoville from the *Grinch* movies, Chutes and Ladders (the board game) and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* displays. This year's display is a complete gingerbread village with certain items, snowmen and trees that rotate, bringing the gingerbread display to life.

**Palmer House®, a Hilton Hotel (1871)** Chicago, Illinois

This year Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel has one "L" of a gingerbread installation to loop in the holiday merriment to downtown Chicago with the introduction of interpretation of the holiday CTA redline. The train rolled into the Palmer House Monroe station on Friday, November 22. Created by Executive Chef Christian Brassfield, the installation was assembled by five Palmer House team members who clocked in 1,400 hours to create. Comprised of 34 sheet pans of gingerbread, 150 pounds of royal icing, 15 pounds of sassy spheres, 15 pounds of chocolate curls, 10 pounds of lollipops, five pounds of gumballs, which is sure to be a crowd pleasing stop for photo ops throughout the holiday season.

**The Jefferson Hotel** (1895) Richmond, Virginia

This year's confectionery showpiece is an Arctic scene depicting Santa and his elves making a Christmas visit to the indigenous animals. The gingerbread scene includes several igloos, a polar bear, a penguin and an otter, all made with hundreds of pounds of gingerbread and royal icing and decorated with individually placed candies.

**West Baden Springs Hotel** (1902) West Baden Springs, Indiana

West Baden Springs Hotels created a gingerbread replica of its breathtaking dome. This is the first year for the pastry team at West Baden to take on a gingerbread house for the holidays, and they decided to tackle a replica version of the hotel itself— no small task considering all the curves, quirks and details that make West Baden unique. See it on display on the mezzanine level above the lobby all throughout the holiday season.

**Fairmont San Francisco Hotel** (1907) San Francisco, California

Since 1907, Fairmont San Francisco has delighted generations with its heartwarming holiday festivities. For more than a century, the hotel has provided a winter wonderland where families can gather to celebrate the season in style. In 2008, the hotel began the tradition of creating a life size gingerbread house for children (adults too!) to enjoy in the hotel's magnificent lobby. With each passing year, the house has grown larger in majesty and size. This year's creation was inspired by San Francisco's Painted Ladies and Victorian architecture. Visitors can also have holiday tea located in the Santa Suite and have Gingerbread Private Dining. The engineering team and culinary team begin planning/baking as early as July in preparation for mixing, bake, and setup. The Pastry Shop spends approximately 450 hours creating the gingerbread house and the engineering department spends 772 hours to build, light and animate.

**The Skirvin Hilton Oklahoma City** (1911) Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

This year's creation took over three days and three five gallon buckets of royal icing, 50 full sheet pans of gingerbread, five pounds of poured sugar work, and over one pound of candy to create. The theme is Victorian homes and it took the pastry team 26 days to make. The gingerbread village is a popular backdrop during the holiday high tea the hotel conducts.

**HOTEL DU PONT** (1913) Wilmington, Delaware

From ornate, hand-carved wood ceilings, terrazzo floors and hand-etched Sgraffito plastered walls to imported European chandeliers, the 2019 "Art of Gingerbread" display is truly a celebration of the beauty found within the landmark, century-old hotel. Each art piece made of gingerbread (10 total) will then be displayed in a gallery within the lobby area. All 12 pastry cooks were involved and they were given the opportunity to recreate art found throughout the hotel, through their own artistic vision, using gingerbread as a base. Some pieces in the exhibit incorporate other pastry mediums, like gum paste, chocolate, royal icing, and even HOTEL DU PONT almond macaroons. Staff worked over a period of four weeks to decide on inspiration and recreate their own historic piece of the hotel. The Art of Gingerbread will offer a self-guided tour of HOTEL DU PONT, taking guests through The Green Room, Gold Ballroom, DuBarry Room, the Lobby and even hallways and foyers on a scavenger hunt to find all of the inspirations behind the 2019 gingerbread exhibit.

**The Broadmoor** (1918) Colorado Springs, Colorado

Led by The Broadmoor's Executive Pastry Chef Adam Thomas, this year's gingerbread display is a tribute to The Broadmoor Special! The Broadmoor Special is founder Spencer Penrose's 1918 Pierce-Arrow "Broadmoor Special" touring car that was a legendary roadster famous for racing in the Pike's Peak International Hill Climb. The gingerbread display was delicately put together and crafted by The Broadmoor's talented Baking and Pastry Team over two weeks to create this life size replica car. The ingredients include 375 pounds of all-purpose flour, 47 pounds of molasses and 482 pounds of sugar!

**The Drake Hotel** (1920) Chicago, Illinois

The Drake, a Hilton Hotel, a symbol of holiday elegance for nearly 100 years, has constructed a gingerbread replica of a 1950s holiday tea service at Palm Court under the guidance of Pastry Chef Claire Crenshaw with the help of Gloria Hafner, Culinary Chef Instructor, and 70 After School Matters Students. Each student contributed to the new gingerbread installation with Drake Hotel team members to create a confectionery holiday-inspired tea service from archival hotel images. A process that takes over 225 hours and incorporates 285 pounds of gingerbread, 150 pounds of royal icing and 90 pounds of candy.

**La Fonda on the Plaza** (1922) Santa Fe, New Mexico

Building the gingerbread house is a serious undertaking spearheaded by the purchasing manager, Gil Mesa and Chef Lane Warner. After Chef Warner cut out the pieces of gingerbread sheets (ideal for replicating the hotel's traditional stucco/adobe exterior) Gil put the icing on the gingerbread pieces while they're flat—a trick he's learned after building the gingerbread house for the past eight years. After assembly, the team spent several more hours crafting ice-cream cone trees, adding LED lights for the farolitos, and finishing it with stiff royal icing before wheeling the masterpiece out to the lobby to add the finishing touches.

**Fairmont Olympic** (1924) Seattle, Washington

The oversized gingerbread house at this historic hotel is large enough for guests small and tall to walk through and experience. The recipe includes 4,000 gingerbread tiles, 2,500 candy canes, 50 pounds of crusted candy and many other ingredients. Seven pastry chefs, eight hard-working engineers and the whole team at the Fairmont Olympic got into the spirit helping with the gingerbread house from opening candies to icing and adding on bricks. All are welcome to walk through the gingerbread house and take photos, watch the lights twinkle and the toy train circle its tracks. During the season, guest can visit the hotel and after experiencing the gingerbread house, they can head up to the Teddy Bear Suite on the second floor – a winter wonderland full of teddy bears.

**InterContinental Mark Hopkins Hotel** (1926) San Francisco, California

The theme of this year's gingerbread creation is winter carnival and can be found throughout the hotel over the holidays. It is part of the décor at the hotel's historic Top of the Mark lounge (on the 19<sup>th</sup> floor) for special holiday events including the Holiday Champagne Brunch and Children's Magical Tea. The display also moves to the lobby throughout the season, becoming a focal point of the festive decorations throughout the space. The gingerbread creation is over 100 pounds completed and used 50 pounds of gingerbread and 30 pounds of icing.

**Omni San Francisco** (1926) San Francisco, California

A complete 10 foot-tall replica of the hotel, using over 50 pounds of gingerbread and 10 pounds of candy is the gingerbread creation this historic hotel brought to life. In addition to the replica gingerbread hotel, guests are also able to take part in a gingerbread competition. Each department at the hotel created a gingerbread house and the guests are able to vote for their favorite. Last year's competition garnered over 250 votes.

**Hilton Chicago** (1927) Chicago, Illinois

This year's gingerbread display features Chicago's iconic cityscape with notable structures including the Historic Hilton Chicago, Buckingham Fountain, Willis Tower, John Hancock Tower, and Soldier Field, amongst a few others. It took the hotel's pastry team over 270 hours to bake and construct and is estimated weighing in at over 750 pounds, utilizing over 16,500 gingerbread bricks to build this creation.

**Mayflower Park Hotel** (1927) Seattle, Washington

The Mayflower Park Hotel has created an intricate and detailed gingerbread village this year, consisting of four houses and of course, a hotel. A gingerbread replica of the 91 year-old Mayflower Park Hotel is prominently displayed in the middle of the edible village. Guests can peek inside and see the front desk and the lobby chandelier. Visitors and guests of the hotel who visit during the holiday season are encouraged to vote for their favorite house. This was an all-hotel effort to get this project done. Many hands assisted to make this magical event happen in a timely fashion.

**The Settlers Inn** (1927) Hawley, Pennsylvania

The historic Settlers Inn has an annual gingerbread display that guests have come to know and love throughout the years. The windows of the gingerbread house have intricate details with noted similarities to the Inn. This replica of the hotel features most details of the hotel including the sign out front. It takes three days to bake and assemble about 28 hours of total manpower to put together this replica gingerbread creation.

**Nittany Lion Inn of Penn State University** (1940) State College, Pennsylvania

Penn State is all about tradition, and the holiday season brings with it a favorite tradition for The Nittany Lion Inn: a gingerbread replica of the historic hotel, created by the Penn State Bakery. This is the 13th year that the bakery has delivered the much-anticipated gift to the inn. The replica, constructed from about 50 pounds of gingerbread, 100 pounds of icing, and 20 pounds of candy, takes approximately 32 hours to prepare.

**Hotel Captain Cook** (1964) Anchorage, Alaska

The hotel's completed gingerbread village is over 1,000 pounds, with over 700 pounds of gingerbread. The finished houses can be over 17 inches tall. The gingerbread houses were started in July, assembled in late November, and finished by the first week in December. It is named "Marina's Village" after the daughter of the pastry chef and co-owner of the Hotel Captain Cook. Each house is named after longtime friends and employees of the hotel. The village is up until after Christmas, and many Alaskans come to visit and take photos.

In addition to the above, here are other noteworthy and magnificent gingerbread creations at Historic Hotels Worldwide:

**Sopwell House** (1603) St. Albans, United Kingdom

This year the hotel features a fantastic Bavarian Christmas Market gingerbread display. Against the backdrop of snow-capped mountains is a village that features festive market stalls, a church, a park, an ice skating rink and a traditional moving carousel. There is also a train running on a track around the entire village and over a bridge.

**Hamilton Princess & Beach Club** (1885) Hamilton, Bermuda

This year's gingerbread creation is a lighthouse, designed in conjunction with the Keep Bermuda Beautiful campaign. The campaign raises ocean conservation awareness. In addition to the gingerbread lighthouse, the creation features lighting elements and sculptures of local wildlife created from recycled ocean plastics.

**Fairmont Hotel Macdonald** (1915) Edmonton, Canada

This year, the hotel unveiled the largest standing gingerbread castle in Alberta. Soaring approximately 20 feet high and 18 feet wide, the colossal structure is brought to life by the hotel's engineering and culinary teams with over 600 hours of time invested into the piece. The gingerbread castle pays homage to the hotel's onsite honeybees where fresh honey harvested from the hotel's hives were used as a key ingredient in the creation of the castle.

**Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge** (1922) Alberta, Canada

This gingerbread creation is Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge's take on a life size classic gingerbread house. Weighing in at over 2,495 pounds fully decorated, it is a holiday masterpiece taking over 390 hours to construct, 100 hours of baking over 1,800 gingerbread "bricks" and 220 hours to decorate. There is a long list of ingredients and candy used to decorate this gingerbread creation, including 440 pounds of flour and 45 pounds of sugar.

**The Fairmont Royal York** (1929) Toronto, Canada

This is the first year for a life size gingerbread display at Fairmont Royal York created by Executive Chef JW Foster and his engineering and culinary elves. Inspired by a New York Brownstone, the gingerbread creation stands more than 24 feet high and six feet deep. It holds 4,500 bricks and 500 delicious pounds of royal icing.

**Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth** (1958) Montréal, Québec

The Fairmont's gingerbread house does not reproduce a famous building but rather a classic-style gingerbread cottage with icing decorations, chocolate characters and pulled sugar ornaments. A train circles the house for a traditional Christmas décor. It took one pastry cook to prepare the different shapes of gingerbread cookies, one person for assembly for a total of 55 hours of work. The base and frame of the house from 2018 was reused. The final decoration and garnishes were done by the Executive Pastry Chef for another 10 hours of work.

For a complete listing of magnificent gingerbread displays, visit [www.HistoricHotels.org/gingerbread.php](http://www.HistoricHotels.org/gingerbread.php).

"The tradition of gingerbread fairy-tale houses reportedly started in the United States more than 200 years ago with the German immigrants to Pennsylvania. Today, travelers can view life size historic hotels, national monuments, historic buildings, and even a full-size 1918 Pierce Arrow touring car made of gingerbread. 12 people can dine in the more-than-life-sized gingerbread house at the Fairmont San Francisco," said Lawrence Horwitz, Executive Director Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. 'Run, Run as fast as you can! You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man' is from the famous fairy-tale, The Gingerbread Man. This holiday season, run, run as fast as you can and catch the most magnificent gingerbread houses and displays at many Historic Hotels of America."

**About Historic Hotels of America®**

Historic Hotels of America is the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing and celebrating the finest Historic Hotels. Historic Hotels of America has more than 300 historic hotels. These historic hotels have all faithfully maintained their authenticity, sense of place, and architectural integrity in the United States of America, including 44 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Historic Hotels of America is comprised of mostly independently owned and operated historic hotels. More than 30 of the world's finest hospitality brands, chains, and collections are represented in Historic Hotels of America. To be nominated and selected for membership into this prestigious program, a hotel must be at least 50 years old; has been designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark or listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and recognized as having historic significance. For more information, please visit [HistoricHotels.org](http://HistoricHotels.org).

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