Gingerbread House Contest 2026

4TH ANNUAL COMPETITION SCHEDULE

- **Friday, November 27, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.** Entry Form Due (or until available spaces are all filled).
- **Friday, December 4, 2026 4-6 p.m.:** Gingerbread House Drop Off at Barren's Distillery + Restaurant, 2 Wayfarer Dr., Camden. (competitors only)
- ONE DAY ONLY! **Saturday, December 5, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.:** Gingerbread Display open to the public with People's Choice voting until 2:30 p.m. all winners announced at 3 p.m. silent auction ends at 3 p.m..

RULES AND ENTRY FORMS

The following rules and procedures have been set forth and established by United Midcoast Charities herein known as the organizer of the Gingerbread House Contest at Christmas by the Sea 2026. Please read the rules and procedures carefully and retain for your records. Organizer reserves the right to refuse any entry deemed inappropriate. For additional questions, please email: gingerbread@unitedmidcoastcharities.org

ENTRY SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

To be eligible for the competition, a completed Competitor Entry Form and applicable registration fee must be submitted and received by 5 p.m. on Friday, November 27, 2026 or until available spaces are filled. All correspondence, notifications, and updates regarding the competition will be sent via email to the registered competitor. If the competitor is under the age of 18, a signature from a parent or legal guardian is required for the minor to participate. Each participant may only submit one entry. A printed copy of the Entry Description Form and optional photos are due by or at registration on Friday, December 4, 2026.

ENTRY CATEGORIES

The following categories are open for entry into the 2026 Gingerbread House Contest at Christmas by the Sea

- **Adult Individual:** 18 years of age and older entering a personal creation.
- **Youth Individual:** 17 years of age or younger entering with parent permission.
- **Group Entry:** Any creation made my more than one individual regardless of age.

ENTRY ACCEPTANCE AND CONFIRMATION

Entries will be accepted on a first come first served basis. A fixed number of entries will be accepted into each category. Once that category is filled, registration will be closed. Please make sure your Competitor Entry Form is filled out correctly before submitting. Entries will be reviewed as they are received, if there are additional questions we may reach out to you for clarification.

JUDGING AND CRITERIA

Entries will be judged on:

A) Overall Appearance
B) Originality & Creativity
C) Difficulty
D) Precision
E) Consistency of Declared Theme

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There is no required theme for the competition and the entry is not limited to the structure of a house. Competitors are encouraged to use their creativity when designing and constructing their entry, as long as it adheres to the competition rules, procedures, and judging criteria. The theme should be a competitor's own and consistent throughout the entry. The organizer reserves the right to refuse any entry deemed inappropriate. We respectfully ask that the design be appropriate for families with young children.

There must be at least 25% exposed Gingerbread on the entry, the entries with less than 25% of the Gingerbread exposed will be disqualified. The Gingerbread can be painted or dyed, but must clearly be recognizable as Gingerbread. Decorative elements that are handmade will carry more weight than similar prefabricated items. Using store bought kits is permissible and should still maintain individual creativity beyond the original kit. All rulings by the judges are independent and final. In the event of a tie, the competition Call Judge will be asked to break the tie. Judging will be closed to the public and competitors.

SIZE LIMITATIONS

The entry must be placed on a board base. Combined with a base, the entry must not be larger than 24 inches high, 24 inches wide and 24 inches long. We suggest using a plywood as a base for your entry. The usage of pegs or risers on the bottom of the base may be used, but is not required. If you wish to install pegs or risers on the underside of your base, they are considered as part of the base and should not cause the entry's height to exceed 24 inches.

MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION

- Everything above the base of your entry that is visible must be constructed and composed completely of edible materials.
- Non-visible supports may be made of non-edible materials.
- The main structure of your entry must be constructed of at least 50% Gingerbread, and at least 25% of the Gingerbread must be exposed.
- The Gingerbread can be painted or dyed light colors, but must clearly be recognizable as Gingerbread.
- Edible materials are not limited to candies and icings.
- Use of gum paste, fondant, pastillage, chocolate, modeling chocolate, royal icing, isomalt, cast sugar, gelatin, and pressed sugar is encouraged.
- **Due to the danger of working with hot sugar, techniques using poured hot sugar or isomalt are reserved for the adult categories.**
- Any entry with non-edible components visible will be automatically disqualified.
- No external or internal lighting may be used.
- Candies must be unwrapped and free of any non-edible materials.
- Non-edible materials such as paint and/or ribbon can be used only to decorate the outer edge of your plywood base and are considered as part of the base and should not cause the entry's height to exceed 24 inches.
- All entries must be solely constructed by the individual entering the competition.
- For safety precautions, Junior competitors may be supervised, by a parent, legal guardian, or classroom teacher when Junior competitors require assistance with operating the oven and/or stove top.

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ENTRY IDENTIFICATION

Entry must be clearly labeled with the assigned entry number visible on the front of the base for judging reference. If you arrive without your entry number clearly showing, you will be required to add it at registration.

ENTRY DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this description is to inform the voters of your vision, process, materials, and techniques used in creating your entry. This is also where any backstory of your entry or interpretation of your theme that can be briefly explained. The Entry Description Form and optional supporting photos are due on or before December 4 and can be sent digitally to gingerbread@unitedmidcoastcharities.org or brought in person during drop off.

ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION PROCESS

We ask that you keep to the 4-6 p.m. time frame and arrive with the majority of the piece assembled, you will only have this window of time to make any final touches.

Registration on set up day, Friday, December 4, 2026 will be located just inside the ground level of Barren's Distillery + Restaurant, 2 Wayfarer Drive, Camden. This is accessible from either side of the Lyman Morse parking lot. You must promptly move your vehicle to an approved parking area once you have unloaded your entry. We strongly encourage having someone designated to move the vehicle while the entry is being moved into the venue. Prior to judging, entries are not to be handled by any member of the Barren's Distillery + Restaurant staff or volunteers. The organizer, staff and volunteers will be on hand to hold doors open and direct entrants where to go.

We ask that after you register at the desk, place your entry in its designated space you return to park your car, if not already done and not linger on the wharf as other activities and business are being conducted.

FINAL TOUCHES

Any components of the entry that need to be added, fixed, or secured may be made during the drop off and registration period. We reserve the right to disqualify competitors who do not adhere to this time constraint.

DEPARTURE PROCESS

After the judging has concluded competitors who wish to bring their Gingerbread creations home can retrieve them after the competition on Saturday, December 5 between 3-4 p.m. Winners of auctioned houses will be notified and required to retrieve those upon payment between 3-4 p.m. as well.

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION AND COMPLIANCE

We ask that anyone who is feeling ill refrain from attending, but we expect all attendees to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

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CANCELLATION POLICY / SNOW

The organizer acknowledges that situations may cause competitors to withdraw from the competition. In the event you are no longer able to compete, please inform us by email, at gingerbread@unitedmidcoastcharities.org. Adult participants will forfeit their registration fee. Christmas by the Sea takes place despite inclement weather, please plan accordingly.

PLACING & PRIZES

Organizer will award prizes for the winner in each category. If a winning entry is taken home prior to the end of the viewing period the competitor will forfeit their prize.

- **Adult Individual Category: First ($100), Second ($50), Third ($25)**
- **Youth Individual Category: First ($100), Second ($50), Third ($25)**
- **Group Category: First ($100), Second ($50), Third ($25)**
- **People's Choice Award: Each visitor to the Gingerbread House Contest at Christmas by the Sea can cast one vote for their favorite entry to help choose the overall People's Choice winner. Voting will take place during viewing on Saturday, December 5, 2026 from 10-2:30. People's Choice winner receives $100.**

ENTRY PICK-UP OR DISPOSAL

Competitors that would like to keep their gingerbread entry after the competition has ended must pick up the entry between 3-4 p.m. on Saturday, December 5, 2026. Organizer reserves the right to distribute or dispose of unclaimed houses at their discretion for any entries not retrieved by 4:00 p.m., on Saturday, December 5, 2026.

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