

2026 Port Jefferson Gingerbread House Contest

<https://gingerbread-contest.com>

Held at the Historic Port Jefferson Masonic Temple
during the 30th Annual Charles Dickens Festival of Port Jefferson Village

Dec. 5-6, 2026

Official Rules & Guidelines - 2026

INTRODUCTION

Please read carefully. All entrants must agree to these rules and guidelines. Violation of any rule may result in disqualification, in which event no refund will be provided.

Questions may be directed to the Contest Registrar at registrar@gingerbread-contest.com.

IMPORTANT - DISPLAY SPACE AND THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES ARE LIMITED. Entries are accepted on a first-registered, first-confirmed basis, and registration may close before the deadline when capacity is reached.

ENTRY REGISTRATION

Registration dates

- Registration opens: July 1, 2026
- Registration deadline: Friday, November 6, 2026 at 11:59 PM ET

Registration is completed by purchasing the appropriate entry ticket through <https://gingerbread-contest.com> and submitting the required registration information for each entry.

Entry limit and confirmation

Due to limited display space, the Contest Committee will accept only the number of entries that can be safely and attractively exhibited. Suffolk Lodge No. 60 F&AM may maintain a waiting list and may close registration at any time after capacity is reached.

An entry is not considered registered until all of the following have occurred:

- The registration form has been completed.
- The applicable registration fee has been paid in full.
- The entrant has received a confirmation email from the Contest Registrar.

Entry fees are non-refundable except if the organizers cancel the contest.

COMPETITOR CATEGORIES

Each entry must be registered in one of the two categories below. The Contest Committee may reclassify an entry when necessary to preserve fair competition.

Professional

The Professional category is for an individual or team entering on behalf of a business, or for anyone who earns income from baking, pastry, confectionery, cake decorating, culinary arts, or closely related work.

- Entry fee: \$75 per entry
- Sponsor recognition: Each Professional entrant's business will be listed as an event sponsor and promoted in the Festival's social media, press releases, and promotional materials from August through December.
- Display card: The Festival will produce a 4 x 5-inch card showing the business name and a QR code supplied or approved by the entrant. The card will be displayed next to the Professional entry.

The Professional First Place is equal to 50% of all Professional entry fees collected, with a guaranteed minimum award of \$200.

- First Place: 50% of Professional entry fees collected (minimum \$200)
- Second Place: \$150
- Third Place: \$100

Non-Professional

The Non-Professional category is open to anyone age 13 or older who does not qualify for the Professional category. Entrants under age 18 must have permission from a parent or legal guardian.

- Entry fee: \$20 per entry
- First Place: \$200
- Second Place: \$100
- Third Place: \$50

ENTRY ACCEPTANCE AND QUALITY STANDARDS

The Gingerbread House Contest is intended to present a high-quality, family-friendly public exhibition as part of the Port Jefferson Dickens Festival. All entries must be substantially complete, structurally sound, and suitable for public display.

The Contest Committee may refuse, remove, or disqualify any entry that:

- Does not comply with the published contest rules.
- Exceeds the stated size or weight limitations.
- Is incomplete, unfinished, or damaged to the extent that it cannot be reasonably displayed.
- Contains prohibited materials or is unsafe for handling or public exhibition.
- Is offensive, inappropriate, or inconsistent with the family-friendly nature of the event.

Acceptance of a registration does not guarantee acceptance of an entry for exhibition.

CONTEST SCHEDULE

Entry drop-off

Sunday, November 29, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Port Jefferson Masonic Temple, 312 Main Street, Port Jefferson, NY 11777

Public exhibition

- Saturday, December 5, 2026, from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- Sunday, December 6, 2026, from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Winners announcement

Sunday, December 6, 2026 at 4:00 PM

Entry pickup

Monday, December 7, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Entries not picked up during this window will be discarded unless advance arrangements are made with the Contest Registrar.

JUDGING

- Overall Appearance - 30 points
- Creativity & Originality - 25 points
- Precision & Craftsmanship - 25 points
- Difficulty & Complexity - 20 points

There is no required overall theme; any building or structure is acceptable. Handmade decorative elements are preferred. Judges' decisions are final.

ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION

In addition to the category prizes, the Contest Committee may present a People's Choice Award and a Best Dickens-Themed Entry award. Unless separately announced, these additional awards do not include a cash prize.

SIZE LIMITATIONS

The following maximums include the base:

- Height: 20 inches
- Width: 18 inches
- Depth: 18 inches
- Weight: 50 pounds

MATERIALS, CONSTRUCTION, AND RESTRICTIONS

- No store-bought entries: Preassembled, commercially produced, or kit-based gingerbread houses or completed structures are not permitted. Individual store-bought ingredients and decorations may be used, but entrants must make and construct the entry themselves.
- All visible portions above the base must be made entirely from edible materials.
- At least 75% of the visible structure must be gingerbread, cookie, or another baked edible product.
- Gum paste, fondant, chocolate, royal icing, unwrapped candy, and other edible decorations are permitted and encouraged.
- Entries must be constructed by the registered entrant or team. Adult supervision is allowed when needed for safety.

Non-edible structural supports are prohibited, including:

- Wood, plastic, foam, or cardboard above the base
- Metal armatures or wire
- Toothpicks or skewers
- Commercial display stands
- Any other non-edible material that contributes to the frame, support, or stability of the entry

Battery-powered LED lighting is permitted only when fully contained within the entry, used solely for illumination, and not used for structural support.

ENTRY IDENTIFICATION

Each entry must be accompanied by:

- Entry title
- Entrant name or team name
- Competitor category
- Current contact information
- A valid entry ticket purchased through gingerbread-contest.com

Professional entrants must also provide the exact business name and QR-code destination requested by the Contest Registrar for the Festival-produced display card.

PHOTOGRAPHY, PROMOTION, AND PUBLIC DISPLAY

By entering the contest, entrants grant Suffolk Lodge No. 60 F&AM and the Festival permission to photograph and video record submitted entries, and to publish those images for event publicity, press, social media, and other promotional purposes.

LIABILITY AND DISPLAY CONDITIONS

Contest organizers will exercise reasonable care in handling entries but assume no responsibility for damage occurring during transportation, drop-off, setup, judging, public display, storage, or pickup.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Participation in the contest constitutes acceptance of all rules and guidelines. Suffolk Lodge No. 60 F&AM reserves the right to interpret these rules, resolve unforeseen circumstances, and make decisions necessary for the safe and fair administration of the contest.