

All About Ham

Selecting

- **Bone-in whole ham** is the cured and smoked whole leg of pork. This ham contains the whole muscle and may be cut and sold as smaller shank or butt portions. The rind may be partially or completely removed. Some of these hams are labeled fully cooked and are ready-to-serve, but can also be heated and glazed. Others are labeled uncooked or partially cooked and must be cooked before eating.
- **Boneless hams** such as Old Fashioned, Black Forest, Honey and Toupie Style are processed ham products. Some varieties contain the whole muscle but have the bone removed. Others are formed from fresh boneless ham meat which is pressed into netting, casing or moulds to give the characteristic ham shape. The flavour and quality of hams vary from brand to brand. Boneless hams are usually ready to serve and easy to carve.
- **Picnic shoulder** is the lower part of the shoulder which is cured, smoked and sold bone-in or boneless. It generally has a greater percentage of fat. It must be cooked before eating.
- **Cottage roll** is the butt end of the shoulder which is boned, cured and often smoked. It is an economical cut and is fully cooked.
- When purchasing a ham, make sure there is a good proportion of lean meat to fat. The outer fat covering should be firm and white.
 - **Bone-in hams** provide 2 - 3 servings per pound (500 g).
 - **Boneless hams** provide 3 - 4 servings per pound (500 g).

Storing

Unless otherwise specified by a best-before date, refrigerate ham in its original wrapping for up to 7 days. If vacuum packaged, check package for best-before date. **Leftover cooked ham** should be refrigerated within 2 hours of cooking. Keep refrigerated for up to 4 days. For best quality, do not freeze ham either before or after cooking as freezing temperatures result in changes in flavour and texture. If necessary to freeze ham, wrap ham in moisture-proof wrapping and store in freezer for 1 – 2 months. Thaw in refrigerator before using. Plan to use thawed ham in cooked dishes such as casseroles and soups. Do not refreeze.

Cooking

Follow recipe directions along with any specific package directions for baking a ham or use the following general method. If desired, remove rind from ham prior to cooking. Without cutting into the meat, score fat in a criss-cross fashion to make diamonds. Place ham, fat side up, in a shallow roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer into centre of thickest part of ham without touching bone. Do not add water or cover ham.

- For hams labeled fully cooked and ready to serve, bake, uncovered, at 325°F (160°C) for 12 - 15 minutes per pound (500 g) or until a meat thermometer registers 140°F (60°C).
- For hams labeled uncooked or partially cooked, bake, uncovered, at 325°F (160°C) for 20 minutes per pound (500 g) or until a meat thermometer registers 160°F (71°C).
- If you are not sure if the ham you have purchased is fully cooked, cook until a meat thermometer registers 160°F (71°C).

If ham is to be glazed, apply glaze during last 30 minutes of cooking. Transfer ham to a warm platter and cover with foil. Let stand for 10 - 15 minutes before carving.

Glazing a Ham

Approximately 30 minutes before end of cooking time, remove pan from oven. Remove drippings from pan. Brush some of prepared glaze over ham. Continue cooking for 30 minutes, brushing frequently with remaining glaze. If glaze is not caramelizing, increase temperature to 375°F (190°C). Transfer ham to a warm platter and cover with foil. Let stand for 10 - 15 minutes before carving.

For a quick ham glaze, baste with any one of the following:

- tart applesauce seasoned with cinnamon and brown sugar
- maple syrup, melted crabapple jelly or carbonated lemon-lime beverage
- a combination of 1 cup (250 mL) packed brown sugar, 1 tsp (5 mL) dry mustard and 3 tbsp (40 mL) vinegar
- a combination of 1/2 cup (125 mL) marmalade or apricot jam, 1/2 tsp (2 mL) dry mustard, 1/4 tsp (1 mL) ginger and 1 tbsp (15 mL) water

CARVING A HAM

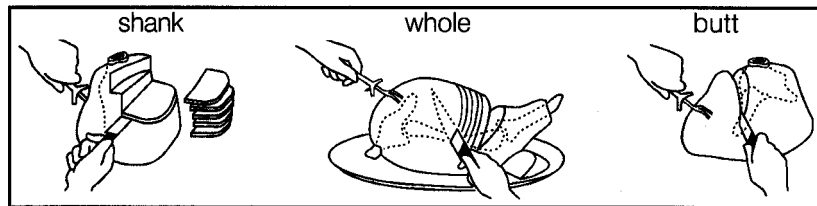


Diagram Courtesy Alberta Pork

BAKED HAM WITH A GINGERSNAP CRUST

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| 7 1/2 lb (3.5 kg) ready-to-serve (fully cooked) bone-in ham | 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) ground cloves |
| 2 tbsp (25 mL) sieved apricot jam | 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) nutmeg |
| 2 tbsp (25 mL) Dijon mustard | 1/2 cup (125 mL) gingersnap crumbs |
| | 1/2 cup (125 mL) packed golden brown sugar |

Leaving a thin layer of fat, trim rind and excess fat from ham. Score fat in a criss-cross fashion to make diamonds. Place ham on a rack in a roasting pan. Bake, uncovered, at 325°F (160°C) for 1 1/2 hours. Remove pan from oven. Increase temperature to 375°F (190°C). Let ham cool for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, combine jam, mustard, cloves and nutmeg. Spread jam mixture evenly over ham. Combine gingersnap crumbs and brown sugar. Gently press gingersnap crumb mixture onto ham. Continue baking for 45 minutes or until a meat thermometer registers 140°F (60°C). Let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Serves 8 - 10.

CRANBERRY GLAZED HAM

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| 7 1/2 lb (3.5 kg) smoked pork picnic shoulder | 1 bay leaf |
| 1 small onion, cut into chunks | 1/2 cup (125 mL) whole berry cranberry sauce |
| 1 medium carrot, peeled and cut into chunks | 2 tbsp (25 mL) Dijon mustard |
| 6 whole cloves | 2 tbsp (25 mL) packed brown sugar |
| 2 whole allspice | 1/2 tsp (2 mL) ground allspice |
| 1 tsp (5 mL) black peppercorns | 1/4 tsp (1 mL) ground coriander, optional |

Place ham in a large stockpot. Cover ham with cold water. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Drain; cover with fresh cold water. Add onion, carrot, cloves, allspice, peppercorns and bay leaf to stockpot. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Remove ham from cooking liquid and place on a cutting board. Discard cooking liquid. Leaving a thin layer of fat, trim rind and excess fat from ham. Score fat in a criss-cross fashion to make diamonds. Place ham in a roasting pan. Combine remaining ingredients (cranberry sauce through coriander) and spread evenly over ham. Bake at 425°F (220°C) for 30 - 35 minutes or until a meat thermometer registers 160°F (71°C). Let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Serves 8 - 10.

MAPLE GLAZED HAM

7 1/2 lb (3.5 kg) smoked pork picnic shoulder	2 tbsp (25 mL) maple-flavoured pancake syrup
1/4 cup (50 mL) maple-flavoured pancake syrup	1 tsp (5 mL) dry mustard
1 cup (250 mL) packed dark brown sugar	1/4 tsp (1 mL) ground cloves
1/4 cup (50 mL) apple juice	2 cups (500 mL) raisins

Place ham in a large stockpot. Cover ham with cold water. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight. Drain; add 6 cups (1.5 L) fresh cold water and 1/4 cup (50 mL) syrup. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Remove ham from cooking liquid and place on a cutting board. Reserve 1 cup (250 mL) cooking liquid and discard remainder. Leaving a thin layer of fat, trim rind and excess fat from ham. Score fat in a criss-cross fashion to make diamonds. Place ham in a roasting pan. Stir together next 5 ingredients (brown sugar through cloves) and spoon over ham. Add raisins and reserved cooking liquid to roasting pan. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 40 - 45 minutes, basting occasionally, until ham is glazed and pan sauce is bubbling and a meat thermometer registers 160°F (71°C). Let ham stand for 15 minutes before carving. Serve with pan sauce. Serves 8 - 10.

HORSERADISH AND MARMALADE GLAZED HAM

7 1/2 lb (3.5 kg) ready-to-serve (fully cooked) bone-in ham	1/2 cup (125 mL) orange marmalade
24 whole cloves	2 tbsp (25 mL) cream-style horseradish
2 cups (500 mL) water	2 tbsp (25 mL) packed golden brown sugar
	1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) dry mustard

Leaving a thin layer of fat, trim rind and excess fat from ham. Score fat in a criss-cross fashion to make diamonds. Press one clove into centre of each diamond. Place ham on a rack in a roasting pan. Pour water into roasting pan. Bake at 325°F (160°C) for 1 1/2 hours. Meanwhile, combine marmalade, horseradish, brown sugar and dry mustard. Remove pan from oven. Increase temperature to 350°F (180°C). Brush marmalade mixture over ham. Continue baking for 30 minutes or until a meat thermometer registers 140°F (60°C). Let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Serves 8 - 10.

HERBED SPIRAL HAM WITH PORT GRAVY

*A spiral-cut ham has been sliced on the bone in a spiral fashion, making carving easy and elegant.
The slices remain in place during cooking but release neatly and easily for serving.*

9 lb (4.0 kg) ready-to-serve (fully cooked) spiral-cut ham	1 tsp (5 mL) freshly ground pepper
2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh rosemary	1/2 cup (125 mL) ruby port
2 tbsp (25 mL) olive oil	1 1/2 cups (375 mL) canned chicken broth
2 tsp (10 mL) grated lemon peel	1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped	1/4 tsp (1 mL) freshly ground pepper
1 tsp (5 mL) dry mustard	4 tsp (20 mL) cornstarch
	1/2 cup (125 mL) cold water

Place ham, flat side down, on a rack in a large roasting pan. Combine rosemary, oil, lemon peel, garlic, dry mustard and 1 tsp (5 mL) pepper. Pat rosemary mixture onto sides of ham. Loosely tent ham with foil. Bake at 325°F (160°C) for 2 1/2 - 3 hours or until a meat thermometer registers 140°F (60°C). Do not overcook. Transfer ham to a platter and cover with foil. Let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Meanwhile, to prepare port gravy, skim fat from drippings in pan. Set pan over low heat. Add port, broth, salt and 1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper to drippings. Bring to a boil over medium heat, scraping to loosen browned bits. Boil, stirring frequently, for 3 - 4 minutes. Whisk together cornstarch and cold water until blended. Whisk into port mixture along with any accumulated juices from ham. Bring to a boil, whisking frequently. Reduce heat and simmer, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 1 - 2 minutes. Carve ham and serve with port gravy. Serves 10 - 12.

HERBED SPLIT PEA SOUP

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| 2 cups (500 mL) split peas, rinsed and drained | 2 cloves garlic, chopped |
| 8 cups (2 L) chicken stock or water | 1/2 tsp (2 mL) rosemary, crumbled |
| 1 meaty ham bone | 1/2 tsp (2 mL) each salt and freshly ground pepper |
| 1 medium onion, chopped | 1/4 tsp (1 mL) each savory and thyme, crumbled |
| 2 cups (500 mL) diced potatoes | 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) cayenne pepper |
| 1 cup (250 mL) chopped carrots | 1 bay leaf |

Combine all ingredients in a Dutch oven and bring to a boil; skim off foam. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 1 1/2 hours, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf and ham bone. Remove meat from bone and chop; set aside. Puree soup in batches in a blender. Return soup to Dutch oven and stir in ham. Heat to serving temperature. May be frozen for up to 1 month. Serves 6.

Cook's Note: *This soup is even better made a day ahead so the flavours can mellow overnight in the refrigerator.*

OVERNIGHT BREAKFAST LASAGNA

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| 3 cups (750 mL) diced cooked ham | 1 jar (435 mL) Alfredo pasta sauce |
| 3 cups (750 mL) shredded cheddar cheese | 1 cup (250 mL) water |
| 3/4 cup (175 mL) chopped drained canned roasted red peppers | 9 oven-ready lasagna noodles |
| 1/2 cup (125 mL) thinly sliced green onions | 1/2 cup (125 mL) soft fresh bread crumbs |
| 8 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and chopped | 2 tbs (25 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese |
| | 2 tbs (25 mL) butter, melted |

Combine ham, cheddar cheese, roasted peppers, green onions and eggs. Combine Alfredo sauce and water. Place 3 noodles in bottom of a greased 9x13 inch (23x33 cm) baking dish. Layer one-third each of ham mixture and Alfredo sauce mixture over noodles. Repeat layering twice using remaining noodles, ham mixture and Alfredo sauce mixture. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight. Remove from refrigerator and let stand for 20 - 30 minutes. Bake, covered, at 350°F (180°C) for 35 minutes. Meanwhile, toss bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese with melted butter. Remove baking dish from oven. Uncover and sprinkle with bread crumb mixture. Continue baking, uncovered, for 30 minutes or until noodles are tender and lasagna is bubbly and heated through. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

Cook's Note: *Oven-ready lasagna noodles are sometimes referred to as no-boil or instant lasagna noodles. They do not need to be cooked prior to assembling the lasagna.*

CAJUN HAM HASH

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| 3 tbs (40 mL) oil | 3 cups (750 mL) frozen hash brown potatoes, thawed |
| 2 cups (500 mL) diced cooked ham | 3/4 tsp (3 mL) Cajun seasoning |
| 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) sliced green onions | 1/2 tsp (2 mL) thyme, crumbled |
| 1 cup (250 mL) diced red bell pepper | |

Heat oil in a large nonstick frypan over medium heat. Add ham, onions and red pepper; saute for 5 minutes. Stir in hash browns, cajun seasoning and thyme. Cook until hash browns are heated through and slightly crisp, about 5 - 7 minutes. Serves 4.