

Gather Around Ham

words and photos by **Mallorie Boggs**

How to prepare ham and why it's more than just a centerpiece for the holidays.

When I think of the holidays, I often think of juicy ham. The smell of the glaze in the oven takes me back to Christmas of years past. The smooth texture with the crisp skin makes any mouth water. Ham certainly is a staple centerpiece for a family table. With the holidays quickly approaching, we thought that we'd share our favorite tips for serving cooking ham.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT HAM

Choosing what ham that is right for your feast may be a daunting task. When deciding on the size of the ham, it's best to account for 2-3 servings per pound.

Cured Ham: Curing refers to the process to preserve hams. Hams are cured with brine, salt rub, or are smoked.

Fresh Ham: Fresh ham is a product that has not been cured or smoked. Before baking fresh ham, you will need to score the skin with a sharp knife. This raw cut takes 20-28 minutes when cooked at 325 degrees in the oven. Fresh ham is ready once it reaches an

internal temperature of 145 degrees followed by a three-minute rest before serving.

Pre-Cooked or "City Ham": A pre-cooked ham is a great option for any cook that is crunched on time. At 350 degrees bake your ham for 10 minutes per pound to re-heat it. Pre-cooked ham can also be served cold if desired.

COOKING

Before going in the oven, I like to brush a butter and honey mixture on the ham. These small steps add more juice and flavor to the ham during the baking process. When ready to go in the oven, cover your ham with tin foil and bake with the flat side down on the pan. Keeping your ham covered will help lock in those juices and prevent your ham from drying out.

Adding a glaze on your ham is a game-changer. From citrus to sugar to spicy a glaze can elevate your ham flavor to new heights. With about 45 minutes left, brush a glaze over your ham every 10-15 minutes. Re-cover with foil after every brush!

GO-TO GLAZES

SWEET PINEAPPLE GLAZE

2 c. pineapple juice
1/4 c. sesame oil
1/4 c. brown sugar

1. Mix all together in a bowl.
2. Brush on ham before putting into the oven. Add pineapple slices on top of ham, if desired.

HOLIDAY HONEY GLAZE

2 c. apple cider
1/2 c. granulated sugar
3 tbsp. honey
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 tsp. paprika

1. Mix all together in a bowl.
2. Brush on ham every 15 minutes during the last 45 minutes of cooking.

LEVEL UP YOUR LEFTOVERS

If your family is like mine, it feels like the delicious holiday dinner unintentionally lasts for a few days after the meal. Ham can be more than a simple slice on your plate. From the next day's breakfast to an easy lunch slider to another delectable dinner, your leftover ham doesn't have to be forgotten about the container in the back of your fridge.

DICE IT

Diced ham can be an easy add to almost any dish. These are some of our favorites:

1. Ham and Corn Risotto
2. Ham Pot Pie
3. Cheesy Ham Chowder
4. Ham and Cheese Stromboli
5. Ham and Cheese Dip

SLICE IT

Odds are your ham may be already sliced and ready to store for these simple sandwiches:

1. Ham Biscuit Sandwiches
2. Ham Hawaiian Roll Sliders
3. Baked Croissant Breakfast Sandwiches
4. Ham and Cheese Roll-Ups
5. Ham French Toast

GRIND IT

Using a grinder attachment can quickly take leftover ham and turn it into these new meals:

1. Ham Loaf
2. Ham Balls
3. Ham Mashed Potato Cakes
4. Ham and Cheese Hand Pies
5. Ham Salad

PULL IT

Two forks can easily shred ham that has already been cooked to juicy perfection for these bites:

1. Mac and Cheese with Ham
2. BBQ Shredded Ham Sandwich
3. Slow Cooker Brown Sugar Shredded Ham
4. Mustard Beer-Braised Pulled Ham
5. Pulled Ham Penne