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## **HOW TO CELEBRATE HAM: AN EASTER CLASSIC** *This Family Favorite Offers Great Value for the Holiday*

**DES MOINES, Iowa (March 3, 2009)** – Ham is the perennial favorite for Easter feasts with about 70 percent of Americans serving ham for their holiday dinner<sup>1</sup>. The treasured festive centerpiece is also an affordable choice for the Easter table that won't break the bank - welcome news to most Americans who are looking to save, not spend, this holiday!

While it's traditional and affordable, ham is also versatile. It pairs well with any flavor, so it's easy to add a new taste to your holiday meal this year.

The latest trend research shows "exotic" flavors and fruits will make a big impact in 2009<sup>2</sup>. Contemporize a classic and add a little zing to this year's holiday ham with on-trend recipes that incorporate spicy, fruity ingredients.

"While ham is delicious on its own, you can easily pair it with so many flavors," says Pamela Johnson, director of consumer communications for the National Pork Board. "The tang or sweetness of glazes, sauces and chutneys is a sure-fire way to bring flair to your holiday feast."

This Easter, the National Pork Board recommends **Baked Ham with Sweet 'n' Sour Plum Sauce** which blends the Chinese five-spice powder with sweet honey and brown sugar for a dish that is irresistible. A glaze made with flavorful ingredients such as purple plums and Asian spices results in an incredibly appetizing slice-of-ham-heaven. Or for another twist, try celebrity chef Rick Bayless' **Chipotle-Glazed Ham with Cherry Jicama Salsa**. With flavors such as dried cherries, chopped cilantro and chipotle chile, it will leave your mouth watering.

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<sup>1</sup> National Pork Board Survey, The survey was conducted online with a random sample of 1,506 men and women 21+ representing a cross-section of the U.S. population - all members of the CyberPulse™ Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel has been carefully selected to closely match U.S. population demographics. Research was conducted in February 2006. The overall sampling error for this survey is +/-2.5% at the 95% level of confidence.

<sup>2</sup> Mintel Research, November 2008.

If you are entertaining a small crowd this year, the budget-friendly bonus is both recipes will yield plenty of leftover ham. Hosts can include these leftovers in the next day's breakfast, lunch sandwich or dinner – yet another way Easter ham offers a valuable “bang for your buck.”

Ham's versatility makes it easy to turn leftovers into masterful dishes the family will love. From **Ham Quesadillas** to a **Ham & Rigatoni Casserole**, find culinary inspiration and enjoy all the tasty possibilities with holiday ham.

### **Ham-tastic Choices**

While ham may be the perennial Easter favorite, nearly 50 percent of people who serve this dish admit they need help selecting one for their special meal<sup>3</sup>. Hams are labeled according to the amount of water added during the curing process. Dry-cured hams have been rubbed with salt and spices onto the meat's surface; wet-cured hams contain a brine solution including water, salt, sugar and spices. Below is a simple guide to take the guesswork out of choosing the right ham for your holiday gathering:

- **Ham (Old-fashioned, Country-style or Southern-style)** – A Southern specialty, this style of ham is dry-cured and contains no added water. It is extremely salty and is usually served in small portions, very thinly sliced.
- **Ham with Natural Juices** – A favorite choice for a dinner centerpiece, this ham has little water added in the curing process. Its velvety texture and attractive appearance make this crowd-pleaser an ideal choice for holiday meals.
- **Ham – Water Added** – Ideal for steaks, thin slicing and shaving, ham with water added is a versatile choice for any menu. It retains more water during the curing process than ham with natural juices.

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- **Ham and Water Product** – A good choice for sandwiches, this ham is commonly found in the deli and has the most water added. It's a delicious choice for enjoying as cold cuts, either shaved or sliced.

Each ham variety comes in either bone-in or a boneless style:

- **Bone-in hams:** Serving up an elegant meal? Dish-up a bone-in ham for a classy centerpiece that is picture perfect. Available in a variety of shapes – whole or as a shank or butt half – these traditional hams typically serve two to three people per pound, but note that this type of ham can be a little tricky to carve. Visit [TheOtherWhiteMeat.com](http://TheOtherWhiteMeat.com) for easy to follow, step-by-step carving video demonstrations. Searching for an even more trouble-free option? Try a pre-sliced, spiral-cut ham.
- **Boneless hams:** In need of something simple to make that's sure to please guests? Try the boneless ham - a terrific option for a large family gathering. This easy-to-carve cut provides four to five servings per pound, ensuring that going for seconds is a cinch. Recognizable by label and heavy plastic or foil wrapping, boneless hams in their original packaging keep for several weeks in a refrigerator.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For leftover ideas that won't taste "left over," more than 100 ham recipes, video demonstrations about preparing and carving ham, and free downloadable **Celebrate Ham!** and **Ham: 365** brochures with recipes, information and tips for enjoying ham, visit **[TheOtherWhiteMeat.com](http://TheOtherWhiteMeat.com)**.

The National Pork Board has responsibility for Checkoff-funded research, promotion and consumer information projects and for communicating with pork producers and the public. Through a legislative national Pork Checkoff, pork producers invest \$0.40 for each \$100 value of hogs sold. The Pork Checkoff funds national and state programs in advertising, consumer information, retail and foodservice marketing, export market promotion, production improvement, technology, swine health, pork safety and environmental management.

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