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Ham for the Holiday

From choosing the perfect ham and lending carving tips to providing creative ways to spice up your Easter menu, the National Pork Board offers these tasty ideas to cover everything you need to make your holiday celebration a success!

1. Choose the Perfect Ham

All varieties of ham are either bone-in or boneless. Bone-in hams are traditionally seen as more elegant while boneless ham is considered easier to serve. Both have the same mouth-watering taste.

Bone-in hams: Available in a variety of shapes – whole or as a shank or butt half – and typically serve two to three people per pound.

Boneless hams: Recognizable by label and heavy plastic or foil wrapping, boneless hams keep for several weeks in their original packaging in the refrigerator. A boneless ham will yield roughly four to five servings per pound.

2. Select a Cooked or Uncooked Ham

Almost all hams come fully cooked, as noted on the label. If desired, cooked hams can be served directly from the refrigerator without heating. To serve hot, simply unwrap and heat to an internal temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Uncooked hams should be heated to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Uncooked hams typically require 20-30 minutes per pound at 350 degrees Fahrenheit to prepare.

3. Pick from Dry or Wet-Cured Ham

Hams are labeled according to the amount of water added to them during curing, which is a simple process of preserving meat. Hams are either dry-cured with salt and spices rubbed into the meat's surface or wet-cured with a brine solution. Dry-curing is often used for country-style and specialty hams, while wet-cured hams are a favorite choice for dinnertime centerpieces to everyday sandwiches.

Carve it Up

Once you pick the perfect ham to serve, don't forget to embrace the carving board! With the proper equipment and techniques, anyone can slice up a ham with ease.

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Bone-in Ham

- **Carving** – Begin carving by placing the ham on its side on a firm cutting surface. Steady the ham with a large fork and cut several long slices off the thin side and turn the ham onto its flat, cut surface. Make perpendicular slices to the leg bone to the desired thickness. To loosen the slices, cut horizontally along the leg bone, removing each slice with the fork.
- **Serving** – When serving a bone-in ham, plan on two to three servings per pound. Arrange the ham slices, separate from the bone, on a serving platter and garnish with fresh fruit or greens. Be sure to wrap the bone and unused ham in plastic wrap and refrigerate for delicious leftovers.

Boneless Ham

- **Carving** – Cut several long slices off the side. Turn the ham onto its cut surface and slice to the desired thickness.
- **Serving** – Count on four to five servings per pound with a boneless ham. When serving, arrange the slices around the uncut portion of the ham on a platter and garnish.

Leftover Lovers

Many families prepare more than enough ham on Easter to guarantee leftovers for days to follow. Below are some tips on how to ensure your holiday ham doesn't go to waste:

- Make leftover ham ready-to-use by cutting it into smaller pieces before storing in a resealable container.
- Always store ham in the refrigerator as storing it in the freezer can adversely affect the texture of the ham. Keeping leftover ham in the front of the fridge will make it easy to grab for a quick meal.
- Introduce the family to new flavorful twists and substitutions with ham as a main ingredient to some family favorites meals, so leftover ham won't seem so "left over." Update a comfort food and try the **Cheesy Ham and Macaroni** recipe.

To master the art of carving ham, check out the video demonstration streaming day or night on TheOtherWhiteMeat.com. Look in the "All About Pork" menu, click on "Video Demonstration" and select "Carving a Ham" to view a video.

Visit **TheOtherWhiteMeat.com** for leftover and ham recipes perfect for any occasion, as well as free downloadable brochures such as **Celebrate Ham!** and **Ham: 365** designed to keep mealtime blahs at bay.