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CURED PORK for your table



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Shown on the cover are slices of smoked shoulder butt. The cover photo and all photos inside this bulletin are used through the courtesy of the National Livestock and Meat Board.

The cooking timetables in this bulletin are adapted from tables prepared by the National Livestock and Meat Board.

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Cured Pork for your table

Cured pork, available in many styles and stages of preparation, is included in the ranks of today's convenience foods. It no longer is necessary to soak, parboil, and skin hams. Modern processing methods and improved quality in the initial pork carcass contribute to the production of convenient and delicious cured pork for your table.

Cured pork offers the same high nutritional value as fresh pork. It contains high quality protein for growth and maintenance of tissue. And it contains the especially valuable B vitamin, thiamine, that you need for sugar breakdown in tissues to supply you with energy. Pork also contributes some iron to your diet. The caloric value of cured pork is influenced by the amount of fat it has.

Selecting Ham

Most hams are labeled as to type and style. Ham type refers to the kind of cooking/curing process a ham undergoes before it is sold. Ham style is determined by the amount of skinning, defatting, and boning a ham undergoes before it is sold.

Ham Type

With few exceptions, hams are labeled either "smoked" or "fully cooked." If there is no label, you can assume that it is smoked. Ham that is labeled smoked should be cooked before eating unless the label also states fully cooked. Hams labeled smoked or "to be cooked before eating" are heated to an internal temperature of 140° F. when they are smoked. This temperature is high enough to destroy the trichina parasite, but you still must cook these hams.

Hams labeled fully cooked have been heated to an internal temperature of 150° F. This temperature is sufficient to kill any trichina. You do not have to cook this type of ham any further, though many people think the additional cooking improves its quality.

Smoked and fully cooked hams also may be labeled “moisture added.” Pork is cured by pumping a salt solution into it, increasing its original weight. Then the meat is smoked. During the smoking process, enough evaporation can take place to bring the meat back to its original fresh weight. If it does not come down to the fresh weight, the meat either is returned for further smoking or is labeled “ham, water added.” Products labeled this way may contain up to 10 percent added moisture. Some consumers prefer the added juiciness of products with moisture added; others don’t want to pay for water. Both smoked and fully cooked hams may have added moisture.

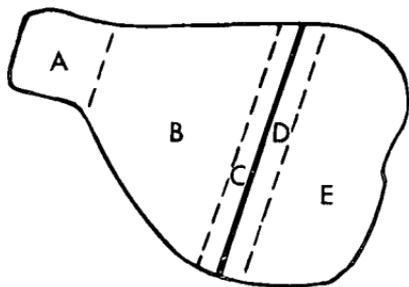
Ham Style

The diagram below identifies most ham styles. The **semiboneless ham** is not shown in the diagram. In this style, both the shank and aitchbone (on the butt end) are removed to make carving easier. The round leg bone is left in.

Boneless hams have all the bones removed.

In purchasing portions of ham, note the difference between shank half and shank end and between butt half and butt end. Half indicates that the center slices remain, while end indicates that the center slices have been removed and sold separately. Butt halves sometimes cost more per pound than shank halves because they contain slightly more meat.

<u>Cut</u>	<u>Section</u>
WHOLE HAM	____A, B, C, D, E
SHANKLESS HAM	____B, C, D, E
SHANK HALF	_____A, B, C
SHANK END or PORTION	____A, B
CENTER SLICES	_____C, D
BUTT HALF	_____D, E
BUTT END or PORTION	_____E
HAM HOCK	_____A



Canned hams are skinned, defatted, and boned before they are cured. Some canned hams may be smoked, as indicated on the label. To prepare a canned ham, a raw, cured ham is placed in a sterile can with a controlled amount of dry gelatin. The gelatin and meat juices help maintain the shape of the boned ham. The congealed gelatin acts as a shock absorber during shipping and storage.

Canned hams are vacuum sealed and have been fully cooked.

Though you can serve all canned hams without further cooking, you cannot assume that you can store them without refrigeration. Some canned, cured products are shelf stable, others are not. Check the label for storage instructions.

Cooking Ham

Baked Ham

Baking is the easiest way to cook smoked or fully cooked ham. Place the ham on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Insert a meat thermometer into the center, taking care that the bulb does not touch bone. Roast the ham according to the following schedule or follow the directions on the wrapper. Follow this guide for baking ham.

Guide for baking ham*

Cut	Approximate weight (pounds)	Oven temperature	Interior temperature	Approximate cooking time (minutes per pound)
Smoked ham				
Whole	10-14	300°-325° F.	160° F.	18-20
Half	5-7	300°-325° F.	160° F.	22-25
Shank or butt portion	3-4	300°-325° F.	160° F.	35-40
Fully cooked ham				
Whole		300°-325° F.	Allow 15 minutes per pound	
Half	5-7	325° F.	130° F.	18-24
Canned ham				
Piece	1½-3	325° F.		10
Whole, small	6-7	325° F.		20
Whole, large	10-12	325° F.		15

* Source: National Livestock and Meat Board.

To score and decorate a ham with glaze and cloves, remove any skin, slash through the fat in diamond shapes, and stud the ham with cloves as desired. Cover the surface with any one of these glazes:

- 1 cup brown sugar and 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup orange marmalade

Return the ham to the oven for ½ hour to brown the surface and set the glaze.

Baked Ham Slices

Place ham slice in a baking dish. Add brown sugar, spices, and fruit juice, if desired. Cover dish. Bake at 325° F. Uncover the dish for the last 15 to 20 minutes; glaze and brown the slice. Follow this baking schedule.

Style	Thickness	Weight	Approximate baking time
Smoked	1½ inches	2 pounds	1½ hours
Fully cooked	1½ inches	2 pounds	1 hour

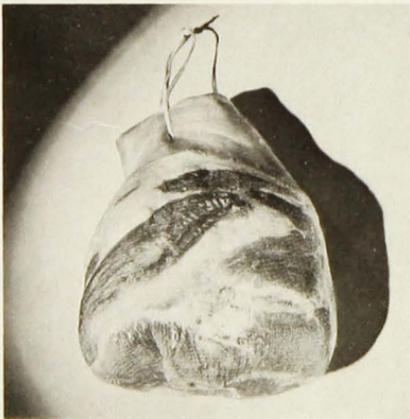
Broiled Ham Slices

Slash fat edges to prevent curling. Place slice on a rack in a preheated broiler about 3 inches from heat. Broil the ham slice according to the following schedule.

Style	Thickness	Approximate broiling time (minutes per side)
Smoked	½ inch	4
.....	1 inch	9
Fully cooked	½ inch	3
.....	1 inch	5-6

You can broil ham slices on an outdoor grill. Use moderate heat.

Other Smoked Products



Smoked picnic shoulder



Smoked shoulder butt

Cured Pork Shoulders

Though often called picnic hams, these products are not ham, as they come from the front or shoulder of the hog. They are processed and labeled in the same manner as ham and have a similar flavor and appearance. They cost less per pound than ham, but they have less usable meat.

Pork shoulder butt preferably is called Boston shoulder to eliminate confusion with the ham butt end. The Boston shoulder comes from the upper part of the shoulder and is rather square in shape. It often is boned, rolled, and sold as smoked shoulder butt. This compact roll makes a convenient roast for a small family. You can slice and broil or fry shoulder butt in the same manner as you would Canadian bacon.

Picnics or pork shoulder picnics come from the lower end of the shoulder. They are cone shaped with the hock on one end.

Cooking Cured Pork Shoulders

You can bake pork shoulders like ham, depending on whether they are smoked or fully cooked. Picnic shoulders and rolled smoked shoulder butt may be simmered in water. Follow package directions for smoked shoulder butts. Simmer a 6-8-pound smoked picnic in water 3 to 4 hours.

For baking, use the following schedule.

<u>Cut</u>	<u>Approximate weight (pounds)</u>	<u>Oven temperature</u>	<u>Interior temperature</u>	<u>Approximate cooking time (minutes per pound)</u>
Picnic shoulder	5-8	300°-325° F.	170° F.	35
Shoulder roll	2-3	300°-325° F.	170° F.	35 to 40

Cured Pork Loin (Canadian Bacon)

Not really bacon at all, Canadian bacon is the large eye muscle from the pork loin. It is almost completely defatted and shaped into a compact roll. Most people slice and broil or panfry it. Because of its leanness, Canadian bacon can easily be overcooked, making it hard and dry.

You may roast Canadian bacon by placing it on a rack in an open pan. Roast it at 325° F. until the internal temperature reaches 170° F. Roast Canadian bacon according to the time schedule at the top of the following page.

<u>Weight (pounds)</u>	<u>Approximate roasting time</u>
1	¾ hour
2	1¼ hours
3	1½ hours

Canadian bacon makes a fine roast for your outdoor grill rotisserie. Cook it over low, even heat.

Smoked Pork Chops

Large, lean pork chops may be cured and smoked. You may pan-broil, broil, or cook them over an outdoor grill. Since they are partially cooked, you should not cook them as long as fresh chops.

Bacon

Bacon is the cured, smoked side of the hog. You can buy bacon by the slab to slice yourself or presliced in sealed packages. Bacon of high quality is firm. The white fat is well streaked, and the lean is a bright pinkish red. Bacon strips 1½ inches wide are best; wide bacon often is too fatty, and narrow slices may be too lean.

You can buy regular, thin sliced, or thick sliced bacon in packages. Keep packages closed and refrigerated. Use packaged bacon within a week. You can buy partially defatted bacon in cans. This product usually is imported. Check the label for cooking and storage directions.

Cooking Bacon

Pancooking. Remove the desired number of slices from the package using a rubber spatula to prevent tearing. Place slices in a cold frying pan so they won't curl. Pull the slices apart as they warm through. Cook bacon slowly, turning slices often until they are as crisp as you desire. Bacon firms up after it is removed from the pan, so stop cooking it a little before it is as crisp as you like. Drain strips on absorbent paper. It is not necessary to pour off the fat as bacon cooks.

Broiling. Let bacon warm slightly at room temperature to make separation of slices easy. Place separate slices on a broiler rack and place the rack 3 to 4 inches from the heat. Broil bacon until lightly browned, 2 or 3 minutes. Turn strips and broil the other side. Watch it closely.

Baking. Arrange separate slices on a wire rack. Overlap them slightly. Set rack in a shallow pan. Bake at 400° F. for 12 to 15 minutes, until the bacon is crisp and brown. Do not turn it. Baking is a convenient way to cook large quantities of bacon.

Storing Cured Pork Products

Refrigerator Storage

Because of the light salting today's cured pork products receive, they are perishable foods. Keep them under refrigeration like any other fresh meat. Leave them in their original wrapping. If you buy unwrapped products, wrap them closely in foil or plastic wrap. You should refrigerate canned hams and picnics unless labels indicate otherwise.

Maximum refrigeration storage time at 38° to 40° F. for cured pork products is:

Ham, whole	1 week
Picnic, whole	1 week
Ham slices	3 to 4 days
Bacon	5 to 7 days
Canned ham	6 months

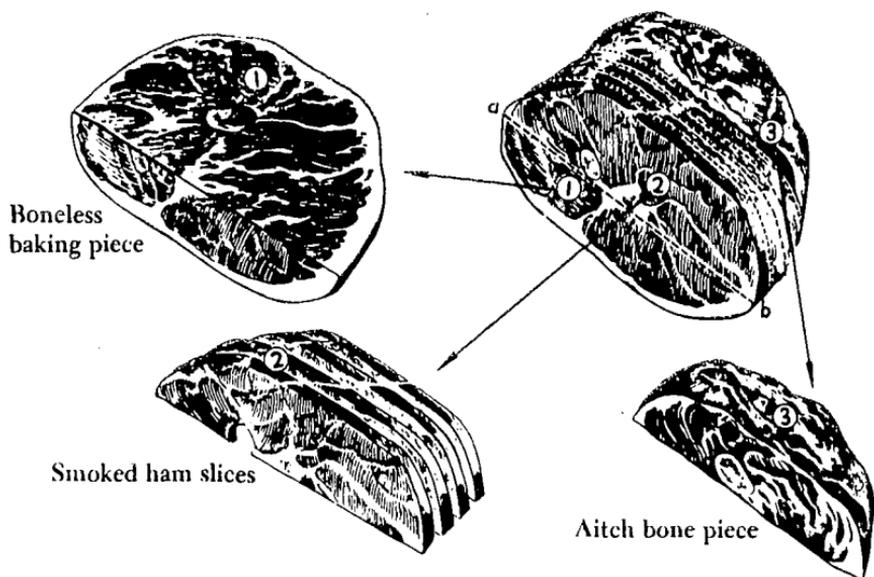
Freezer Storage

Long term freezer storage is not recommended for cured meats, because the salt used in them hastens flavor changes. To freeze whole pieces, wrap the meat closely in heavy duty aluminum foil or some other high quality wrap. Force out the air, and seal or roll the ends securely. Store meat at 0° F., and use it within 60 days. Use sliced bacon and ham within a month.

Storing Cooked Cured Pork

Cool the meat rapidly, cover or wrap it closely, and refrigerate it. Plan to use it within 4 or 5 days. For freezer storage, wrap the meat securely in good quality material, seal the package, and store it at 0° F. Use it within 2 months. Pouring a little broth or sauce over the meat will help retain the quality of cooked, frozen ham slices.

Getting More Meals From Smoked Ham



You can make a variety of meals from a butt half of smoked ham. Cut it up as follows:

1. Split the butt half into two pieces by cutting under the round bone along a-b (see the drawing). This baking piece will be boneless and have a covering of fat. Cook it with the fat side up. It will be easy to carve.

2. Cut slices from section 2 (see the drawing). The slices will contain the round leg bone. If you don't have a saw, simply loosen the meat from the bone with a knife. You can broil, panbroil, or pan-fry these ham slices.

3. Use the remaining piece (section 3 in the drawing), the aitch bone piece, for seasoning beans or soup. Or, remove the bones, cut the meat into small pieces, and use it as diced ham. Here is a recipe calling for a ham bone.

Dry Bean or Pea Soup

1 cup dry beans or whole peas
6 cups water
Meaty ham bone

1 small onion, chopped
Salt and pepper

Boil beans or peas in water for 2 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and soak 1 hour or overnight in a cool place.

Add ham bone. Boil gently for 2 hours in a covered pan.

Add onion and continue cooking for 30 minutes or until beans are soft. Remove bone and cut off meat. Add meat to soup. Season soup to taste and re-heat it.