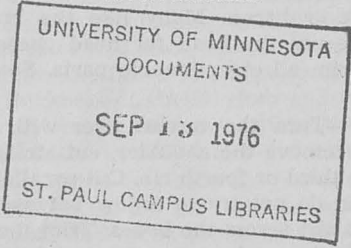


Cutting

PORK and LAMB

for Home Use

P. A. Anderson



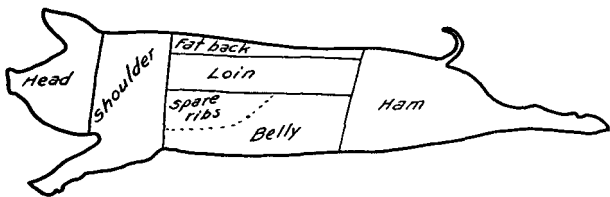
With meat animals at present low prices, nearly every farm family can reduce its meat bill appreciably by slaughtering some animals at home. To provide meat of good quality, slaughter only suitable, healthy, young animals, in good grain-fat condition. Select lean type hogs that are 200-225 pounds live weight. The 240-260 pound hogs naturally are fatter and are more wasteful unless you want the lard.

Cleanliness is essential; and avoid rough handling and bruising. Generally, however, the work of cutting the carcasses for cooking is a much more troublesome task than the slaughtering. Many people take advantage of locker service to avoid this process.

CUTTING THE HOG CARCASS

The essential tools in cutting any carcass are a good cleaver, a good meat saw, and a sharp butcher knife.

Split the hog carcass down the middle of the backbone while it is hung up and still warm. Some people prefer to split with a cleaver, others with a saw. It will help if the carcass is thoroughly cooled before the two sides are cut further, but it should not be frozen. Lay the half carcass on a table, skin side up.



Head—Remove the head by cutting straight across about three-fourths of an inch back of the ear. This cut should strike the "atlas joint" and make it unnecessary to use the saw at all. Use all the head in sausage and lard, or trim the cheek out and use it as salt pork or bacon. Many like the brain fried. Many people use the head for head cheese. Shave, clean, and trim all objectionable parts. Soak in cold water.

Shoulder—Turn the carcass over with the bone side up. To remove the shoulder, cut straight across at about the third or fourth rib. Cut parallel with the neck cut and do not try to follow between the ribs but saw straight across the bones. Trim the shoulder by removing the neck spare ribs and breast pieces. Round off the upper end and trim off all tag ends, making a smooth well rounded shoulder. Remove the leg at the knee joint or slightly above. Should the shoulder be large and over-fat, remove the skin and most of the fat, making what is commonly called a skinned shoulder. You can cure the shoulder or use it fresh. If you use it fresh, cut it into steaks or roasts by just slicing or taking off the size of piece desired. You may also cut the shoulder into a pork butt or a picnic for roasts or steaks.

Ham—Remove the ham by cutting straight across at the rise of the pelvic arch or at an angle to the rear leaving the rear flank long. Remove the tail bone by cutting under it. Remove the tag ends, trimming the ham down to a smooth, well rounded cut. Remove the leg at the hock joint. If the ham is heavy and fat, remove the excessive fat to within $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch of the lean, making a skinned ham of it. The ham is generally cured and smoked, though you may use it fresh as boiled or roast hams or cut into steaks and roasts. Use the fat trimmings for lard and the lean for sausage.

Middle—Trim the middle by removing the leaf fat and the kidney. Separate the back from the belly piece by cutting from below and parallel to the tenderloin muscle in the rear, to 1 inch down on the rib on the shoulder end. Saw through the ribs and then make a straight cut with the knife to complete the separation. Remove the fat from the back piece, cutting close to the lean but not into the lean.

Remove the spare ribs from the belly piece, making sure to get the cartilages and breast bone off with the spare ribs. Then pound the belly piece or bacon strip with the cleaver to flatten it out, and trim it up square and even on all four edges. Use the leaf fat and fat back from the middle piece for lard, the back and loin pieces fresh for roasts and pork chops, the bacon or belly strip cured and smoked for bacon, and the spare ribs fresh. You may cure and smoke spare ribs barbecue style. You may cut the bacon strip into two or three portions for easier handling, as the large slab may be difficult to use in the kitchen.

Lard—Cut all pieces of clear fat trimmed from the pork carcass into 1-inch cubes and render it for lard. Put a little water into the bottom of the lard rendering kettle. This will prevent the fat from burning. Start heating the rendering kettle with a moderate fire. Keep the fat heating until the cracklings are a chestnut color and float on top. Remove from the fire and allow the fat to cool. Then strain it through a double thickness of cheese cloth and press out the cracklings. Store the lard in earthen jars or wooden tubs. Stir the lard to whiten it, but don't stir too long.

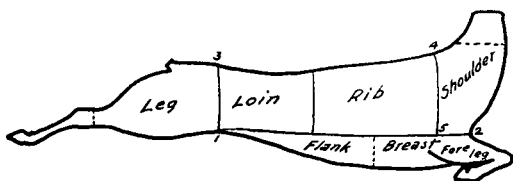
Meat for curing—As soon as you've cut the carcass, rub salt on all the fat and lean surfaces on the shoulder, ham, and bacon pieces that are to be cured, place it on a table, and leave it for 48 hours before you start to cure it. However, do not delay too long before you place the meat in cure, as the meat surface darkens and dries out.

CUTTING THE LAMB CARCASS

Lamb or mutton carcasses are small, and, during winter months, may be used to advantage by one family. In dressing sheep, be careful that the carcass isn't soiled or it will have a strong sheep flavor when you cook it. Be sure to remove all soiled parts and bruised areas.

Flank, breast, and foreleg—The best method for the beginner in cutting up a lamb carcass is to first split the carcass lengthwise through the back. Then remove the flank, breast, and foreleg in one piece beginning at the rear flank and cutting on a straight line to a point where the front leg and breast meet. Saw through the ribs and lower part of the shoulder.

These parts are best for stews, though the breast is often used as a pocket of lamb or mutton. Insert



the knife under the ribs and make a generous opening; the housewife can later fill this with a bread dressing and roast it. See diagram 1 to 2. Be sure to remove the inside membrane of the flank as this will produce more tender stew meat.

Leg—The leg of lamb is removed across the back from the point where the flank was removed (point 1 to 3). Remove the shank portion above the hock. Use the leg for roasting or boiling, or, if it is too large, cut a few slices of steak off and roast the remaining portion. The leg may be boned and a standard dressing used to fill the portion where the bone was removed. Use string to hold the parts together.

Back—Separate the back from the shoulder by cutting between the third and fourth ribs (point 4 to 5). If you desire a large shoulder, remove between the fourth and fifth ribs. Use the back cut for chops. Each chop should be cut about 1 inch thick for best serving, although thinner chops are preferred by some. Thin chops dry out a great deal in frying or broiling and do not hold their shape as well.

Shoulder—Leave the neck on the shoulder or cut it off and use it for stewing. Small shoulder chops and steaks may be cut, but the shoulder is generally used as a roast. This cut may also be boned and filled with a dressing as a cushion or pillow style roast.

Removing the Fell

If a lamb or mutton carcass is excessively soiled, you can remove much of this by taking off the fell, a thin parchment-like covering. Start pulling on the lower side of the carcass and pull straight toward the back. If you pull in the other direction, the fat covering will adhere to the fell and be removed from the lean meat. Trim most of the fat from excessively fat mutton cuts before cooking them.

Serve lamb hot or cold but never when it is partly cooled. Lean trimmings may be ground the same as beef for lamb-burgers. Shape and wrap them with a slice of bacon. Broil or pan fry.

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