

Commodity Ham – Teacher Guide

Objective: To teach how to creatively use commodity ham in recipes and how to handle, prepare and store ham.

Icebreaker: Ask participants: *“Who likes to eat ham?”*; *“How often do you serve ham?”*
“What are some of your favorite ways to serve ham?”

Share with participants:

“We will spend time talking about how to prepare ham and ham leftovers but first let’s take some time to talk about the different kinds of hams.”

Read the ham questions to your participants. But first share with participants: *“I am going to read to you several questions concerning ham. Just listen to the questions and don’t shout out the answers. If you do not know the answers that’s OK because it will be fun and interesting to learn the answers in today’s lesson. At the end of today’s lesson, we will review the questions one more time to make sure everyone has learned the answers.”*

Ham Questions

T or F 1. A ham can be fresh, cook-before-eating, fully-cooked, picnic and country types.

True *There are many kinds of ham. The storage times and cooking directions will vary depending on the type of ham.*

T or F 2. Cured hams do not need to be cooked.

False *Curing does not mean the ham has been cooked. If the label reads fully-cooked or ready-to-eat then the ham has been cooked. Follow cooking instructions on hams that require cooking.*

T or F 3. There are two different types of canned ham; shelf stable and refrigerated.

True *Canned ham that is shelf stable may be stored at room temperature for up to 2 years. Refrigerated canned hams may be stored in the refrigerator up to 6 to 9 months.*

T or F 4. Country hams do not need to be cooked.

False *Country hams are cured, dried and smoked-or-unsmoked meat products that must be cooked before eating. Follow cooking instructions on the label.*

T or F 5. Cook-before-eating cured or fresh hams should be cooked to 180°F.

False *Cook-before-eating cured or fresh hams should be cooked to 160°F in a 325°F oven.*

Share with participants: ***“There are so many different kinds of ham, let’s begin by talking about these differences.”***

“Does anyone know.....?”

- HAM is pork and comes from the rear leg of a hog.
- Ham made from the front leg of a hog is called PORK SHOULDER PICNIC.
- TURKEY HAM is made from the thigh meat of a turkey.

- Hams may be fresh, cured, or cured-and-smoked.
- Hams are labeled either “ready-to-eat” or “cook-before-eating”. Follow package instructions if cooking is required.

Curing* - It is the addition of sugar, seasonings, salt or other preservatives for preserving, coloring and/or flavoring hams.

Smoking* – After curing some hams are smoked. Hams are hung in a smokehouse where they absorb smoke from smoldering fires. This adds flavor and color to the meat as well as helps preserve it from spoiling.

*Cured and/or smoked hams may or may not be “ready-to-eat”. Read package labels to know if cooking is required. If cooking is required follow package instructions.

- Ham is a lean cut of pork.
- Fresh pork is low in sodium but cured ham may be high in sodium.

Ask participants: ***“When you buy a ham how do you know if you need to cook the ham and for how long?”***

Cooking or Reheating Hams

Read ham package to see if it is a fully cooked ham (“ready-to-eat”) or if it is a ham that requires cooking before serving (“cook-before-eating”).

- **Vacuum-packaged fully cooked ham and canned hams.**
 - These hams can be eaten cold just as they come from their package. Fully cooked hams may be heated. Bake in a 325°F oven until an internal temperature of 140°F has been reached as measured with a meat thermometer.
 - Reheat leftover fully cooked ham to an internal temperature of 165°F.

- **“Cook-before-eating” hams.**
 - These hams must be cooked before serving. Cook in an oven set at 325°F until internal temperature of ham reaches 160°F.
 - Country hams (dry cured with salt) may be soaked in water in the refrigerator 4 to 12 hours to reduce the salt content before cooking. Boil or bake ham according to package instructions.

Ham Preparation

- Thaw ham in original package in the refrigerator on a platter. Set on the lowest shelf away from other foods. Allow 3-5 hours per pound thawing time.
- Frozen ham may have an outside casing which is a protective covering, and should be removed before serving.

Share with participants: *“Since there are so many different kinds of ham and some are “fully-cooked” and others are “cook-before-eating”, it can be difficult to know how long you may safely store these different kinds of hams. Another important thing to consider is whether the ham is in an opened or unopened package.”*

HAM STORAGE

(Note: Freezer times given are for quality only. Frozen ham remains safe indefinitely.)

<u>Type of Ham</u>	<u>Refrigerate</u>	<u>Freeze</u>
Fresh (uncured) Ham, <u>uncooked</u>	3 to 5 days	6 mos
Fresh (uncured) Ham, <u>cooked</u>	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 mos

Cured Ham, cook-before-eating; <u>uncooked</u>	5 to 7 days or Use-by date*	3 to 4 mos
Cured Ham, cook-before-eating; <u>after consumer cooks it</u>	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 mos

Fully Cooked Ham, vacuum sealed at plant, <u>undated; unopened</u>	2 weeks	1 to 2 mos
Fully Cooked Ham, vacuum sealed at plant, <u>dated; unopened</u>	Use by date*	1 to 2 mos
Fully Cooked Ham, vacuum sealed at plant, <u>undated or dated; opened</u>	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 mos

Fully Cooked Ham, <u>whole</u> , store wrapped	7 days	1 to 2 mos
Fully Cooked Ham, <u>half</u> , store wrapped	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 mos
Fully Cooked Ham, <u>slices</u> , store wrapped	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 mos

Ham Storage (continued)

<u>Type of Ham</u>	<u>Refrigerate</u>	<u>Freeze</u>
Country Ham**, <u>uncooked, cut</u>	2 to 3 mos	1 month
Country Ham, <u>cooked</u>	7 days	1 month

Canned Ham, labeled "Keep Refrigerated,"	unopened 6 to 9 mos	Do not freeze
Canned Ham, labeled "Keep Refrigerated," <u>opened</u>	7 days	1 to 2 mos
Canned Ham***, shelf stable, <u>opened</u>	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 mos

*Company stands by its “Use-by” date.

**A whole, uncut Country Ham can be stored safely at room temperature for up to a year. After one year the ham is safe but the quality is not as good.

***An unopened Shelf-Stable Canned Ham may be stored at room temperature for 2 years.

Uses & Tips

- Fully cooked ham can be served cold without further cooking in sandwiches, in salads or on cold plates.
- Leftover ham is great in casseroles made with pasta, rice or potatoes.
- While roasting, season ham with juices (apple, pineapple or orange), honey, ground cinnamon or cloves.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS:

- 1 Look at the “Ham Storage” handout. Discuss this handout and how this will impact meal planning including leftover use and storage.
- 2 Discuss different ways ham can be prepared for meals. Encourage participants to exchange recipes and cooking ideas.
- 3 Discuss creative recipes for ham leftovers. Encourage participants to exchange recipes and cooking ideas.



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