



*Recipe Box*

## **Belmont Butchery Ham Guide**

Nothing feeds a crowd like a ham can. Sourced from the hind legs, the meat tends to have a sweeter taste and a slightly wider grain which lends itself to being sliced thinly. We get a lot of requests for hams around holidays and there's usually a lengthy conversation that follows-- 'ham' may all be cut from the same part but the styles can range widely.

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### **Country Ham/Dry Cured Ham**

Country hams are a style with which many Southerners are intimately familiar. Salty, shaved slices served on biscuits or simmered or baked whole and served as an entrée, this cured ham can hold a lot of nostalgia of warm family memories. Much like prosciutto, country ham is salted and hung to dry for several months to years. Unlike prosciutto, it tends to see more salt and, in Virginia, it's smoked before aging. We don't make our own, but rely on artisans like Edwards Smokehouse in Surry, VA to cure and smoke Virginia Country Hams.

*Instructions:* This will depend on the format of your ham, but the general rule of thumb for a whole country ham is to gently simmer it in water for several hours to wick away some of its saltiness. That being said, there are versions on the market that can be shaved and eaten like prosciutto or ham steak styles that you can fry up. It's best to follow the instructions listed on your country ham.

### **Spiral Sliced/City Ham**

This style of ham is often referred to as a 'sweet ham' or a 'city ham' because it doesn't have the salty bite of a country ham. Generally, these hams have been fully cured to season and create a ham texture, then roasted or hot smoked. The texture of these hams tends to be more like a deli meat and less like a flakier dry cured meat or toothsome like a roasted pork.

*Instructions:* These hams are fully cooked! Reheat in foil on a sheet pan or roasting pan at 350°F for 45-60 mins depending on the size of your ham. Generally, they're already glazed so you probably won't have to add more.

## Roasted/Fresh Ham

Raw hams are just that—raw, uncooked hind leg right off the pig. A whole raw ham can range from 20-35lbs depending on the size or breed of the animal. In commercial settings, raw hams are sold from the shank end (from the center of the leg down towards the foot) and are usually suspended in a salt solution. When you buy a ham from us, it's fresh and unbrined with the skin on and we can cut from either end of the leg. The hip-side tends to have a sweeter, more tender quality while the shank-end has a richer flavor and firmer texture.

### *Instructions:*

Generally, brining a fresh ham is a good habit—it's a big piece of meat so suspending it in salt ensures that the meat is fully seasoned from the inside out. If you've bought one already set in a brine, you can skip ahead to the cooking instructions.

### **Brine**

*For a 12-16lb fresh ham*

- 2 cups kosher salt
- 1 cups brown sugar
- 8 cups water
- 4 bay leaves
- ½ cup whole black peppercorn
- (½ cup bourbon, optional)

1. Bring all ingredients to a boil in a pot large enough for your ham then refrigerate until cold.
2. Score the skin of the ham with a sharp paring knife or utility knife in a diagonal pattern in both directions to create small diamonds around the ham, about 1" wide and maybe 1/2" deep. Be careful not to only score the skin and not the meat.
3. Place ham in brine to cure for at least 12 hours and up to 36.

\*If you don't have a pot large enough, a clean cooler with a bag of ice or a food grade 5 gallon bucket from a hardware store tend to do the trick.

\*Brining a fresh ham for this amount of time will result in a more flavorful ham with a roasted pork texture. If you're interested in fully curing a ham, we're happy to have that conversation in person or on the phone.

### **Cooking**

1. Pull your ham out an hour before it goes into the oven—you want to get that fridge chill off of it so it cooks evenly and doesn't disrupt your oven temperature.
2. Preheat your oven to 250°F. Line a roasting pan with aluminum foil (whoever's doing the dishes will thank you).
3. If you haven't already, score the skin of the ham with a sharp paring knife or utility knife in a diamond pattern running around the ham being careful not to score the meat, just the skin and fat. This is going to help that fat render out and crisp the skin.

- (If you didn't brine, heavily season with salt and pepper, stud with garlic or herbs—whatever dry seasonings sound good). Place your ham on a rack in your roasting pan.
4. Roast until the internal temp reaches 130°F or about 15-20 minutes per pound.
  5. Remove the ham from the oven and raise the oven temp. At this point, you have a couple options for finishing your ham:
    1. *Keep the skin on:* Raise temperature to 425°F and put the ham back in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until the internal temp is 140°F. This high temp will crisp up the skin and brown off any fat left that needs browning. If parts look like they're getting a little too dark, tent ham with foil until desired crispness.
    2. *Remove the skin:* Raise temperature to 350°F. With tongs, carefully remove the diamonds of skin and any residual fat you don't want (if you boil and bake these off later, you can make pork rinds!). Slather your ham with glaze, or mustard and brown sugar, or herbs and oil...any kind of sauce that will stick to the ham and caramelize that sounds delicious to you. Return the ham to the oven and roast until the internal temperature is 140°F or 40-60 minutes. If parts of your glaze start to burn, tent ham with foil.
  6. Let your ham rest for at least an hour—its a big piece of meat and your fingers will honestly thank you. Carve in 1/2"-1" slices, keep the bone for soup.