



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

Your Holiday Ham “How-To” Guide

November/December

Having a cured ham for a holiday dinner? This issue of *Dining on a Dime* takes the guesswork out of buying, cooking and storing this holiday treat!

How Much Ham to Buy?

For boneless and canned hams, buy 1/4 pound (0.25 lbs.) for each person. For hams with a bone, buy 1/2 pound (0.5 lbs.) for each person. If you plan to serve the ham on a “help yourself” basis, or you want to have leftovers, buy a little extra!



How to Cook Smoked Ham?

Follow the cooking instruction on the label, if provided. Some hams are not pre-cooked and need to be cooked until hot enough for a food thermometer to reach the internal temperature of 145 degrees F., then allowed to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating it. The following chart shows ways to cook ham.

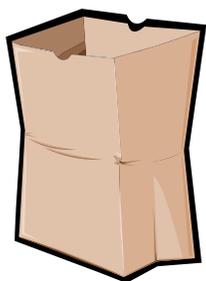
Ham Cooking Methods	Ham Weight	Approximate Total Cooking Time
Simmer ham covered in liquid in a pan on a stove.	5-8 pounds	3 to 4 hours
	10-16 pounds	4 1/2 to 5 hours
Bake ham in an uncovered pan in an oven set at 325 degrees. If desired, bake with favorite vegetables.	5-7 pounds	1 1/2 to 3 hours
	10-14 pounds	3 to 4 1/2 hours
Microwave pre-cooked ham slices that are 1/4 inch thick in a covered microwave-safe dish on 50% power.	1 1/2 pounds	10 minutes
	3 pounds	25 minutes

How to Store Cured Ham?

Refrigerate sliced ham up to 5 days, and an unsliced whole ham in original wrapping up to 7 days. Leftover ham should be tightly wrapped and refrigerated or frozen within 2 hours. Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 5 days. Use frozen ham within 2 months. To thaw a 3-pound frozen ham, put it on a tray and refrigerate it for about 15 hours.

Source (accessed 10/28/2013): [Ham and Food Safety](http://ow.ly/qgKvj), USDA FSIS, <http://ow.ly/qgKvj>

Making It Special: Lunch Ideas



Do you fix the same foods for lunch? Are you tired of the routine? Whether you're packing for a child or for yourself, read on for *Dining on a Dime's* tips to make your lunch extra special.

Enticing Lunch Ideas

- Frittatas are an uncommon but easy-to-make menu item that can liven up your lunchtime experience. Check out the recipe on page 4. It uses ingredients that you may have left from a holiday meal, too!
- Sprinkle a small amount of your favorite salad dressing over leftover cooked vegetables. Wrap them up — along with shredded lettuce and low fat cheese — in a whole wheat tortilla.
- Mixing flavors and textures is a great way to make a packed lunch seem special. Add nuts or seeds to salads, soups or sandwiches for their “crunch appeal.” Or put toasted spiced nuts in your bag instead of chips. Baby carrots are ready to pack, super nutritious and delicious! A bag of dry ready-to-eat cereal adds crunch, too. Dried fruit, such as raisins, adds a sweet taste that stands alone or dresses up yogurt or a sandwich.
- There's no need to limit lunch items to cold foods. An insulated bottle keeps foods hot when you're craving warmth in the colder months. Try soups, pastas, stir-frys or hot beverages.
- If you and some reliable co-workers take your lunches to work every day, consider starting a Brown Bag Lunch Club. Each day, one of you brings lunches for the group. When it is your turn, you'll find that it takes less time to make several lunches one day a week than one lunch every day. And you'll get added variety!



Keep in Mind Food Safety

Storing lunches for hours brings concern for food safety. Cold food should remain cold and hot food hot. How? An insulated lunch bag will help ensure safe food until the noon hour. Here are more ways to keep food safe:

- *Cold Food.* Keep cold foods at 45 degrees or lower. Even with an insulated bag, it helps to include frozen gel packs, a freezer bag of ice cubes, or other cold items such as a frozen juice or water bottle.
- *Hot Foods.* Keep hot foods at 140 degrees or higher. Fill an insulated bottle with boiling water, wait a few minutes, and then dump it out and add hot food. Keep the insulated bottle closed until lunch time to lock in heat.
- Discard perishable foods that were not eaten at lunch.

Slow Cooker Food Safety Tips

Now that schedules are busier than ever, wouldn't you like a meal that's waiting for you when you arrive home? A slow cooker can offer great tasting, inexpensive, nutritious meals that require little preparation time. Check the library or go online for slow cooker recipes for roasts, soups, stews and even desserts! To start, search for "slow cooker" at www.kidsacookin.org or at www.montana.edu/nep/recipes.htm#s

Read on for *Dining on a Dime's* guide to safe food handling when preparing slow cooker meals.



- Thaw foods to be used. If you prepare ingredients ahead of time, store them separately in the refrigerator. Never reheat leftovers in the slow cooker.
- Preheat the slow cooker before adding ingredients, or cook on the highest heat setting for the first hour.
- Place any non-leafy vegetables (such as potatoes or carrots) at the bottom and sides of the slow cooker, near the heat, since they will cook slower than other ingredients.
- Cut meat and poultry into chunks or small pieces. This will ensure rapid heat transfer. Avoid adding large pieces of meat, such as a whole chicken or roast.
- When cooking meat or poultry, almost cover the ingredients with water or broth. This will ensure effective heat transfer throughout the crock.
- Use the right amount of food. Fill your slow cooker from half to two-thirds full.
- Do not remove the lid or cover while the food is still cooking. Each time the lid is lifted, the internal temperature drops 10 to 15 degrees and the cooking process is slowed by 30 minutes.
- Use a food thermometer to test meat doneness. Poultry should reach 165 degrees F. and ground meats should reach 160 degrees F. Pork and beef cuts should reach 145 degrees F. and then rest for at least 3 minutes.
- Do not let cooked food cool in the crock. Refrigerate leftovers in covered, shallow containers within 2 hours.

Sources (Accessed 10/28/2013): [Slow Cooker Safety](http://www1.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/preserving/safe-meals/slow-cooker-safety), University of Minnesota Extension Service, www1.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/preserving/safe-meals/slow-cooker-safety; [Is It Done Yet?](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/teach-others/fsis-educational-campaigns/is-it-done-yet), USDA FSIS, www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/teach-others/fsis-educational-campaigns/is-it-done-yet

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Green Beans and Meat Frittata (Makes 2 servings)

Meal suggestion: Serve this baked main dish with fruit and toast.

Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked green beans, drained
- 1/2 cup cooked lean turkey or ham, chopped or cut into strips
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- Several dashes of ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) of your favorite shredded cheese

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9-inch round baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Add cooked green beans, cooked meat, and chopped onion evenly over the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle with black pepper.
3. In a bowl, lightly beat eggs together using a fork. Pour eggs evenly over meat mixture to cover.
4. Sprinkle cheese over the mixture.
5. Bake until a food thermometer reads 160 degrees F. and the center is firm, about 20 to 25 minutes.
6. Let cool slightly. Cut into 4 wedges. Serve warm or cold.
7. Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Each portion (two wedges) provides: 270 calories, 15g fat, 8g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 8g carbohydrate, 25g protein, 245mg cholesterol, 270mg sodium (if fresh turkey is used) and 3g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 20% vitamin A, 8% vitamin C, 25% calcium, 10% iron.



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