



## Cooking with Ham: Safety Tips

**Cooking with ham this season? Keep these tips from the USDA in mind as you prepare spring's popular ham entrées.**

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Safely enjoy the different kinds of ham this spring by following these USDA guidelines. Ham has long been a spring favorite. Before refrigerators and the establishment of federal safety services, hogs were slaughtered in the fall, cured for six or seven months on the farm and enjoyed in the spring.

Today, even though we can buy ham any day of the year from our local grocery store, we continue the tradition of ham as a popular spring meal.

Follow these safety guidelines to get the most out of your pork and avoid possible foodborne illnesses.

### Ready-to-eat Spiral Cut Hams

Ready-to-eat spiral cut hams are best served cold, but they can be reheated to at least 165 degrees F.

Reheat only the slices you need since reheating dries the meat.

To reheat the entire ham, cover the ham with heavy aluminum foil and set the oven no lower than 325 degrees F. The ham should reach an internal temperature of 140 degrees F as measured with a food thermometer, which will take about 10 minutes per pound.

Leftovers from spiral-cut hams may be stored in the refrigerator three to five days or frozen one to two months for best flavor and texture.

Individual slices may be reheated to 165 degrees F as measured with a food thermometer.

### Fresh Hams (Must Be Cooked Before Eating).

Fresh hams need to reach 160 degrees F to be safely cooked.

Cook in an oven set no lower than 325 degrees F.

Hams can be safely cooked in a microwave oven, other countertop appliances and on the stove. Consult a cookbook for specific methods and timing.

### Country Hams

Country hams can be soaked four to 12 hours or longer in the refrigerator to reduce the salt content before cooking.

They can be cooked by boiling or baking. Follow the manufacturer's cooking instructions.