

GLAZED GLEAMING HAM

Most hams sold at grocery stores are smoked and fully cooked. They only require heating before eating. However, by adding a glaze to your ham, you can add flavor and texture.

You can glaze any ham. My favorite hams to make are bone-in hams. I like the flavor and texture of these hams the best. Many people like to buy spiral-cut hams are because they are pre-sliced, which makes serving more convenient. Sometimes spiral-cut hams will come with a glaze packet, but I recommend making a homemade glaze.

Before adding glaze to a ham, it is important to score the ham. Scoring means making shallow cuts on the surface of the ham. Once a ham has been scored, the glaze can get through the thicker skin to flavor it. Creating a rougher texture also allows more of the glaze to cling to the outer layer of the ham. Any time of ham can be scored, but it is not necessary to score spiral-cut hams.

To score the ham, use a chef's knife to cut shallow ¼-inch deep slits through the skin of the ham about 1 inch apart. Making the cuts in a diamond pattern can add visual appeal. To do it in a diamond pattern for visual appeal, make diagonal cuts in all one direction and then make cuts in the opposite direction. Inserting cloves into the ham is also an option to add flavor and create an appealing appearance. However, make sure that cloves will be compatible with the flavor of the glaze you are using.

There are countless variations of glazes for ham, but most are made with fruits, jellies, or chutneys that include citrus fruits such as oranges. They can also use cherries, cranberries, apricots, or pineapple to create sweet fruity flavors that go great with the saltiness of ham. Glazes will always contain added sugar or ingredients that contain sugar, such as marmalade. When the glazed ham is heated in the oven, the sugar caramelizes, which creates a glossy coating with a strong flavor. Often, cooks may like to spice up their sweet glazes by adding chopped chile peppers to the blend. Another common addition to sweet glaze for ham is mustard, which creates a classic flavor combination. The best part about creating glazes is that you can personalize them to suit your own taste preferences.

The two most common ways to cook a ham are to bake it in the oven or to cook it in the slow cooker. A slow cooker works well for cooking the ham, but it will need to be transferred to the oven to properly complete the glazing step.

When cooking a ham in the oven, plan for baking it for about 20 minutes per pound in the oven at 325°F. In a slow cooker, plan on cooking it on low heat for around 3-4 hours.

A ham should bake for about 20 minutes per pound in the oven at 325°F. If you choose to cook it in the slow cooker, plan on cooking it on low for around 3 to 4 hours.

Glazing a ham should only be done after the ham has been cooked. It is the last step. The USDA recommends the ham should reach an internal temperature of 145°F to ensure that it is fully cooked or reheated before glazing.

When adding a glaze to a fully cooked ham, the glaze should be added during the last 15 to 30 minutes of the heating process. If you glaze a ham sooner than recommended, the sugar in the

glaze could cause it to burn. You will need to use at least 1 cup of glaze for every 5 to 10 pounds of ham.

Glaze the ham using a spoon or basting brush when the internal temperature registers 135-140°F. Continue cooking until the ham reaches the internal temperature of 145°F. Additional glaze can also be served on the side when serving the ham. You can follow the same glaze instructions for a spiral-cut ham if you want to use your own glaze recipe. Remove from oven and carve.

Glazing takes ham from a humble to show-stopping meat, adding layers of flavor. It is easy! Simply combine glaze ingredients and brush it on the ham to create a delicious variation on the traditional ham.

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