

Hopping down the bunny trail with Peter and an Easter ham

With the Easter bunny hopping 'round the bend, foodshoppers are likely to stop worrying about prices for a few days and once again prepare the traditional feast. And to many Americans that feast is centered around ham.

Ham also is an Easter menu possibility for those students who won't be able to make it home this weekend.

Ham is available in six cuts: butt and shank halves, ham butt slice, center ham slice, fresh ham roast and rolled fresh ham roast.

This week's food advertisements show most stores selling boneless hams at \$1.19 a pound, regular hams at 79 to 83 cents a pound depending on the cut and 98 cents a pound for center cut ham slices and boneless ham roasts. Boneless canned hams are selling for \$1.11 to \$1.17 a pound.

shelly kalkowski crumbs

Except for ham slices and canned hams, most hams will average seven to 10 pounds. It usually is best to buy the ham slices or four-to-five-pound canned hams.

The first rule to remember when cooking ham or any other pork meats is to cook it to the well-done stage. This will insure the killing of any harmful organisms. Although today's improved farming practices have helped

reduce the occurrence of trichinosis in pork, it is still best to be safe.

Allow 15 to 25 minutes cooking time for each pound of meat. A regular ham will need the full 25 minutes, but hams marked "fully cooked" need to be cooked long enough to be heated through.

After wiping the ham off, place it fat-side-up in a shallow roasting pan. If you are using a meat thermometer place it in the center of the fat side making sure the bulb touches no bone or fat. Inexpensive orange marmalade makes an easy and tasty glaze. Brush it over the ham before placing it uncovered in a 325 F oven. The ham will be finished when the internal temperature reaches 170 for regular hams and 130 for pre-cooked hams.

To help get the most for your money, use the leftovers in the following recipe.

Scalloped Potatoes

1 cup ham, chopped
2 cups thinly sliced, pared potatoes
1/3 cup minced onions
1 tbsp. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. margarine
1/2 cup scalded milk
1/8 tsp. pepper
paprika

Pre-heat oven to 375 F. Arrange layer of potatoes and ham in greased one-quart casserole. Cover with some onions. Sprinkle with some of the combined flour, salt and pepper. Dot with some butter. Repeat layers until all are used, ending with butter. Pour milk over all. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake covered for 30 minutes. Uncover; bake for 10 minutes longer or until tender. Makes 2 servings.

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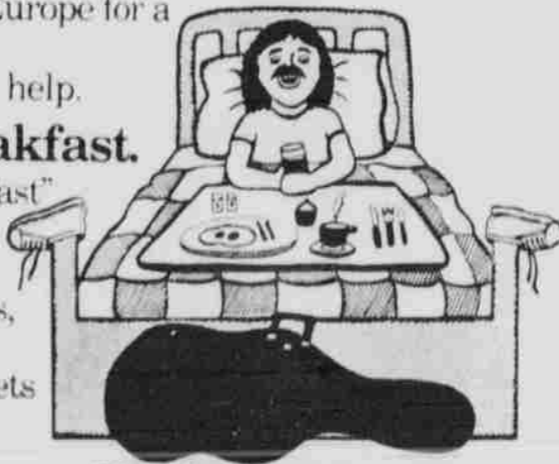
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