

Whole Baked Country Ham

This is an artisanal process best done with hams from pastured hogs. It takes more time than effort to cook a whole ham, but the payoff in flavor can't be beat.

First, scrub the ham with a stiff brush and warm water, removing any excess salt. You can remove the hock if you desire; I usually don't. Soak completely covered in cold water for 24 hours under refrigeration or in a big cooler with ice, changing the water three times, or every eight hours.

Place the ham in a large pot hock end up, cover with water and bring to a hard rolling boil. Boil for twenty minutes, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes per pound, or about four hours, to an internal temperature of 160. Allow to cool enough to safely remove from pot then carefully remove skin, leaving one half inch of fat on the ham.

Score the fat with a sharp knife into diamonds without cutting into the meat. Rub with a mixture of 1 cup brown sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup good Kentucky bourbon, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sorghum. Place in a 350-degree oven until mixture caramelizes (the ham is already fully cooked). Serve warm or at room temperature from a large platter, slicing thinly from the large end. Use leftovers in any recipe that calls for ham, especially on biscuits or with eggs for breakfast.