

This recipe has been a Tradition in our family, my Mother's family, and Her Grandmother's family. It is not normally written down, it just was handed down from Generation to Generation. Here is my attempt at re-creation:

Ingredients:

- 17-20 Pound Fresh (not cured)
- Box Salt (you will not use all, but will be easier to apply.)
- Box Black Pepper (you will not use all, but will be easier to apply.)

Utensils Supplies Needed:

- Very Large Canning Kettle (Aluminum)
- Long Carving Fork
(Type used to Hold Prime Rib or other such while carving. Prongs should be long enough to go to center of Ham.)
- 1 package 3-1/2 by 3-1/2 square yard of Cheese Cloth.

Preparation:

About 5 days before day cooking, pick up Ham From Store or Butcher Shop. (Make sure the Skin and Fat **has not** been removed.) Ask if they have any large Brown Paper Bags if so get two or three.

When you get home with the Ham put on a cutting Board or in a Roasting pan set on Kitchen Table or large Counter, skin side down. Open a Box of Salt (not curing salt – just plain table salt), pour salt out of container in to palm of your hand, rub on the ham working into ham until all is salted.

Now turn over the ham so skin side is up. Repeat salting.

Now slide Ham into the brown paper bag, take scissors and split the side of the bag over the top of the ham in half from opening of bag to bottom. Split another Bag so it can lay over the other. Leave in refrigerator until day of cooking. Once each day just sprinkle a hand full of salt on top of Ham and re-cover with paper bag.

Cooking:

Open package of cheesecloth and place on Kitchen Table. Unfold full length, one direction, but leave folded in half the other direction. Get the ham out of Refrigerator. Place ham so long side Wraps, around ham, with the bone sticking out each side. Now make a knot like your tying a shoestring. Pull as tight as possible. Now tie knot. Now with what's left create an open Loop and tie a knot. This creates a handle used to Place ham in Kettle and remove when finished cooking.

Put Kettle on Stove, place ham in kettle. Put warm water in Kettle until Ham just barely floats and ham is covered completely. Turn burner on medium to slightly hotter than medium heat. Allow water to come to Boil. Add salt to water and about 10 minutes later taste water should be just salty to taste.

Let ham Boil 7-8 hours. From time to time add a pan of warm water to boiling water to keep covered. Start at about the 6hr. mark periodically pushing fork in to ham. When blood (pink water) no long comes out ham should be cooked. Or you use a meat thermometer to test for proper doneness. Use the handle created to pull ham out of water and wait until all water drains out.

Put on cutting board and let rest until just barely warm. Get out Large Serving Platter. While on cutting board cut off cheesecloth (it's no longer needed). Lift ham and have someone peel it off the bottom. Place on platter.

With sharp pointed knife, peel just the skin off leaving the fat.

Now pour Black Pepper in a small bowl (such as a Cereal bowl) touch finger on fat then dip in pepper. Dot ham and repeat until ham is completely decorated. Wrap in saran wrap or aluminum foil, place in refrigerator let cool, or serve hot.

Serving:

Fresh ham taste just as good served hot or cold. Slice in thin slices allow each person to get the amount they want. Great with meals, for or making ham sandwiches. Each Person should decide if they want to leave fat on, or off.

Notes:

When cooking the fat serves two purposes seasoning, and keeping Ham moist. After cooked, fat serves as decoration.

Despite all the salt, most of it draws the fluid and blood out of the ham. The salt that affects the taste of the ham is what is added to cooking water, and as the water is boiled down and new water added the salt is weakened.

Even cooked this way, ham is better for you than beef, and almost as good for you as fish or chicken/turkey.

Here is what the finished product looks like:

