



Buying & Cooking Ham & Lamb



***For more information, please contact your nearest
Environmental Public Health Services office.***

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Capital Health
EDMONTON AREA

PURCHASING HAM & LAMB

There are a variety of hams on the market today, so it is important to read the label to know how to handle and cook whatever type you buy.

Canned Ham

Some hams do not need to be refrigerated, but others require refrigeration. Read the label carefully. Canned hams with a “Keep Refrigerated” label must be stored in the refrigerator; use them within six to nine months. Shelf-stable canned hams may be stored, unopened, in the pantry for two years. Refrigerate after opening. Heat either type to 60°C (140°F) or slice and eat.



Dry-Cured Hams

Dry-cured (country) hams have special properties that allow them to be shelf stable for up to one year. However, refrigerate country ham after slicing. Sliced country hams may be kept in the refrigerator for two to three months; once cooked, hams may be kept in the refrigerator for five to seven days. Heat to 71°C (160°F) internal temperature.



Ready-to-eat Hams

Fully cooked, vacuumed packaged, ready-to-eat hams must be kept refrigerated. Unopened, they can be kept for two weeks; once opened, use within three to four days. If desired, heat to 60°C (140°F) before serving.

Fresh Hams

Fresh (raw) hams must be refrigerated and used within three to five days. They must be cooked to an internal temperature of 71°C (160°F) before eating. Leftover ham slices will keep up to three to four days in the refrigerator.

Lamb

Most lamb is labeled “spring lamb” or “genuine spring lamb.” The term “spring” does not necessarily refer to the season the lamb was born, but to its age (less than a year) at the time it was sent to market. Lamb is covered with a papery whitish membrane called the fell, which should be removed before cooking as it tends to make the flavor of the meat strong. **Refrigerate all meats promptly.**



COOKING LAMB, BRISKET & HAM

All meat and poultry should be cooked in an oven set no lower than 163°C (325°F). Lower temperatures may not kill bacteria present in the food. Another important factor in keeping foods safe is thorough cooking. All perishable foods must reach a high enough internal temperature to kill bacteria. Brisket requires longer cooking for tenderness and desired flavor. Use a meat thermometer to ensure good quality and a safe internal temperature.

Internal Cooking Temperatures

- ◆ Canned refrigerated ham: 60°C (140°F)
- ◆ Shelf-stable canned ham, fully cooked, vacuum packaged and unopened ham: 60°C (140°F)
- ◆ Fresh ham: 71°C (160°F)
- ◆ Fresh lamb, brisket, medium: 71°C (160°F)
- ◆ Fresh lamb, brisket, well done: 77°C (170°F)

Leftovers

All perishable foods should be refrigerated as soon as the meal is over. They should not be kept at room temperature for more than two hours after removal from the refrigerator or oven. For foods like ham, lamb and brisket, carve the remaining meat and store in small shallow containers in the refrigerator. Use leftovers within three to four days or freeze them.