

Smoking Store Bought Ham

Oldman:

Michelle,

I know you place this posting under Hot Smoking. However, I believe what you are after is a sweet mild smoke flavor throughout the ham. If I'm correct then read on.

I do a fair amount of hams. When I say hams I'm not talking about a fresh ham. Curing it, smoking it and let it hang in a house for several months I will leave to the younger folks.

I use a full Hamilton Ham. It is very low in salt. Now I use the T-Shirt method of smokin'. That is to say the ham is covered with a light white cotton cloth single layer all sides. I generally cut up 2 or 3 T-shirts and then sew them into one large piece. I use oak wood, and smoke for 6-8 hours depending upon how big the ham is. I try my best to keep the box temp between 160-180; this again has to do with the size of the ham. At the 3-4 hour mark I turn the ham upside down. Make sure to empty the water bowl and refill with water at that time. I use to smoke my hams to a temp of 155-160 remove it, even if that happened before the full smokin' time is up. Now I only allow the ham to go to 140-145 degrees. It is ok to have a little lower ham temp when the smokin' is over with, but do not cook this ham in the smoker. You might have to adjust the box temp in order to get the full 6-8 hours of smokin' but do not exceed a ham temp of 145 degrees. (The reason for this will be explained below.)

Once the smokin' is done remove the ham, remove the T-shirt. Place T-shirt in a Plastic page if wet. Once ham has cooled to room temp re-wrap the ham in the T-shirt. If T-shirt is dry then take a clean spray bottle and mist it with clean water until the T-shirt is wet but not running water out of it.

Next wrap the whole ham/ T-shirt in plastic. Place it into the refig. Allow several days for the smoke to "cure" all the way through the ham. When ready to serve remove ham from T-shirt and plastic wrap and "warm" ham to 170-180 degree in the oven at an oven temp of not more than 200-210 degrees. This will take a few hours. This is why you cannot "cook" the ham while smokin' it. You cook it twice even at low temp and you run the risk of a ham that will fall apart. I cannot stress this enough--you even cook the ham a little in the smoker and when you do cook it for serving you run a chance the ham will be over cooked and fall apart on you. Remember all store bought hams have already been "cooked" to 150 degrees.

I cannot express how important it is you give a full ham several days to allow the smoke to go to the bone. Several here have taken my advise on the importance of allowing a larger piece of meat this dwell time and have posted that it really is important.

Next I never cut the ham into two piece when smokin' it. For whatever reason cutting them into two has never worked out for me.

So recap in summary:

- 1.) Wrap ham in a SINGLE layer of (white) T-shirt material. Do bunch up any excess T-shirt on the edges. Cut that off and hold T-shirt to ham using straight pin. (no plastic heads)
- 2.) Smoke ham 6-8 hour
- 3.) Never allow ham in smoker to exceed 145 degree while smoking
- 4.) Adjust temp when needed to insure the full smoke time without exceeding 145 degree in the ham
- 5.) After smoking remove ham from T-shirt and allow it to cool to room temp.
- 6.) Place T-shirt in plastic bag if wet.
- 7.) After ham has cooled re-wrap ham in T-shirt and spray with water if T-Shirt is dry.
- 8.) Wrap Ham and T-shirt in plastic.
- 8.) Place into frig for several days to all smoke to "cure" through the ham.
- 10.) When serving heat ham to 170-180 degrees using an oven.
- 11.) Try not to allow the oven temp to exceed 210 degrees or the juices in it will leave and your ham will start to shrink and go dry. Depending upon the temp swing of your over you may have to adjust the cooking temp.

One final thought. If you have any ham left over all I can say it look-out eggs~~~!
Breakfast time! Just fry up a little of the ham after you render out some of the fat for the grease!

Umm me thinks it is time for another ham [:D]

Good Luck

Olds