

characteristics

Tasting one of our hams or shoulders is the culmination of a long process that combines a tradition of craftsmanship, passed down the centuries, with the most demanding quality control summed up in the following lines:

Choosing the raw material: The hogs admitted by the Regulating Board are 100% Iberian pigs or crosses of 75% Iberian and 25% Duroc-Jersey pigs. The animals have to be under an extensive diet that consists of acorns and meadow pastures. For their control, the animals are marked with a metal ear tag. Once slaughtered, the pieces are sealed, and a sample of fat is taken from the same channel to determine its composition, these are identified with a numbered plastic seal. These tasks are undertaken by Veterinarians who work for the Technical Services of the Regulating Board.



Salting: The salting time varies according to the weight and quality of the pieces (approximately one day per kilo weight). The pieces are stored at a temperature of between 1 and 5°C.

Settling: The pieces are transferred to chambers, allowing the even distribution of salt throughout the tissues and the gradual elimination of water, giving the hams the appropriate consistency.

Drying and curing: In natural drying sheds with rigorous ventilation and temperature control. The Extremadura mountain air continues the drying and curing process, which may last as many as 6 to 9 months.

Ageing in the cellar: Once classified by weight, quality and consistency, our hams and shoulders complete their evolution, attaining the harmony of aromas and textures required by the Designation of Origin (D.O.). The Veterinarian Technical Services place the final identifying label, marking every piece before shipment to the market, thereby providing the Regulating Board's final guarantee of product quality to the consumer.

Technical information:

External shape: Long, slim, with hoof.

Colour: Characteristically pink to purplish red.

Flavour: Delicate, neither too salty nor sweet.

Aroma: Pleasant and full of subtle hues.

Texture: Not very fibrous.

Fat: Shiny, aromatic and pleasant flavour.

Production areas:



iberianham

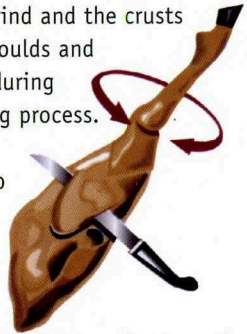
characteristics and cutting instructions



pablito del monte
DELICATESSEN

1 Place the piece securely on the ham-stand, the only requirement for the stand is that it should be secure and comfortable for cutting.

2 Skinning. This consists of separating the ham from the skin, rind and the crusts formed by natural moulds and exudations created during the drying and curing process. Start with a circular cut, perpendicular to the leg, around the hock, then cut tangentially along both sides. If the ham is to be consumed shortly, skin the entire piece, otherwise skin as you eat it.



3 Starting the piece. If you want to consume the piece quickly, or wish to produce a more appealing cut, begin the piece along the main area **A**, juicier and more permeated. For slower consumption you are recommended to begin by the flank **B**, to prevent it drying too much towards the end.

Cut using a ham knife, with a long, flexible, narrow blade. For skinning and auxiliary cuts **5** and **6** use a shorter, more rigid knife.

4 Cutting. Always parallel to one another, following the arrows shown in the diagram, and always leaving a flat surface, free of streaks, open to view. The slices should be very thin, almost transparent, as wide as the piece and no longer than 6 or 7 cm. When cutting the main area (hoof up), you are recommended to combine slices from the central area **A**, the end **C** and the elbow in each serving **D**. The cutting of this main area requires two auxiliary cuts **5** and **6**, the first to prepare the piece for your elbow, and the second, using the point of the auxiliary knife, to gradually free the hip bone. Lay the pieces on the plate in a single layer, if necessary with a slight overlapping.

5 Finally, the meat close to the bones that cannot be cut in slices, but in strips and irregular-shaped pieces, makes an excellent compliment to many dishes and stews, or even to be eaten as little cubes or “taquitos”.

The bones, cut in 10 to 12 cm pieces with a saw, can be used to make exquisite broths.

In short, good instruments, a little organisation, skill and, above all, a good Iberian ham.

