

How to cook the perfect Christmas ham

Perfect Christmas ham



Rich, dark and spicy sweet, this is a ham which should carry on bringing festive cheer long after the big day is over.

Serves 8

1 boneless gammon joint, about 2kg
3 tbsp molasses or black treacle
1 tsp cloves
Pinch of mace
1 bay leaf
1 tsp allspice
1 tbsp black peppercorns
Peel of ½ an orange, cut into thin strips
Handful of cloves

For the glaze:

5 tbsp dark brown sugar, plus extra to sprinkle
1½ tbsp mustard powder
Finely grated zest of ½ orange
20ml ginger wine

1. Put the ham in a large stock pot, and cover with cold water. Add the molasses, spices and orange peel and bring slowly to a simmer, skimming off

any scum. Simmer very gently for about an hour and a half, until the internal temperature of the ham reaches 68C.

2. Heat the oven to 220C. Lift the ham out of the liquid (which can be used to make delicious baked beans), allow to cool slightly, then carefully cut off the skin, leaving as much fat beneath as possible. Score this in a diamond pattern, and stud the intersections with cloves. Put the ham in a foil-lined roasting tray.

3. Mix together the glaze ingredients into a thick paste, and brush this all over the fat. Put into the hot oven for about 25 minutes, basting twice during this time, and adding a sprinkle more sugar as you go, until the glaze is caramelised and bubbling. Allow to cool completely before serving.