



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

Mastering sweet-and-spicy glaze for Easter spiral ham

By ELIZABETH KARMEL
Associated Press

At Easter, there is just nothing better than a spiral-cut ham! Because I grew up with my grandmother roasting fresh, white, uncured hams, a sweet-glazed spiral-cut ham has always been a delicacy to me.

My best friend’s mother bought one every Easter and to me it was heavenly. I loved the crunchy sweet and spicy crust on the ends of the slices. She served the ham cold and kept the leftover ham loosely covered with foil in the refrigerator. It didn’t last long as we — and the rest of the neighborhood kids — kept opening the fridge and pulling off a snack. Because it was spiral cut, you didn’t need a knife to snag a piece. All you needed to do was reach in and grab a thick, meaty slice.

The first Easter I hosted the meal, I ordered a sweet-glazed spiral-cut ham. I felt so grown up and we ate that ham for days. I discovered the joy of a ham sandwich with thick-cut baked ham, crisp lettuce and lots of mayo on toasted white bread.

As time went on, I grew to appreciate the purity of my grandmother’s fresh ham, but soon found that most people expect their holiday hams to be pink. So why not give the people what they want?

The best part is that it is so easy to customize the ham with your own glaze. My “hack” is to make a sweet and spicy dry rub that bakes into a burnished “glaze” (rather than brushing the meat with a wet sauce). It is so quick and easy that I urge you to throw away any packet of sauce that comes with your ham and try it my

way.

A dry glaze is a dry spice rub with both sugar and granulated honey (or honey powder) to add sweetness and flavor. You also could use maple sugar granules. Luckily, these powders are easier and easier to find at the grocer or online. My favorite sweet and spicy rub is a combination of cinnamon, allspice, cloves, white pepper, dried honey, salt and sugar. But feel free to riff with your favorite flavors. Just don’t omit the sugar; it melts and holds the other spices together, creating the glaze.

Elizabeth Karmel is a barbecue and Southern foods expert. She is the chef and pitmaster at online retailer CarolinaCueToGo.com and author of three books, including “Taming the Flame.”

SWEET-AND-SPICY GLAZED HAM

Spiral-cut hams are fully cooked when you purchase them and just need reheating. This is your chance to add tons of flavor in the form of a glaze. This recipe is written for a 5-pound ham, but the recipe is easily adapted to accommodate whatever size you need to feed your Easter crowd. For timing, plan 12 to 15 minutes per pound at 275 F. If you decide to cook a larger ham, you’ll also need to increase the dry glaze (seasoning mixture).

The ham can be cooked either in the oven or on the grill. For the grill, prepare a grill for low heat, indirect cooking. For a charcoal grill, this means banking the hot coals to one side of the grill and cooking on the other side. For a gas grill, this means turning off one or more burners to create a cooler side, then cooking on that side.

One advantage of the grill is that you can add a handful of wet wood chips before heating the ham. I like to do this because the wood adds a fresh layer of smoke to the ham and gives the ham a just-smoked flavor.

- Start to finish:** 1 1/2 hours (15 minutes active)
Servings: 12
- 5-pound pre-cooked spiral cut ham
 - 1/2 cup honey powder or maple sugar granules
 - 1/4 cup sugar
 - 2 teaspoons cinnamon
 - 1 teaspoon ground cloves
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper

Heat the oven to 275 F. (For grilling directions, see the headnote above.)

Use paper towels to pat dry the ham, then set it, cut side down, in a shallow baking pan. Set aside.

In a blender or food processor, combine the remaining ingredients and process until the ingredients are reduced to a fine powder.

Gently pry apart the tops of the spiral cuts. Sprinkle about 1/3 of the seasoning mixture over the ham and push it down between the slices. Cover loosely with foil. Set the ham on the oven’s middle shelf or on the cooler side of the grill. Cook for 45 minutes. Remove the ham from the oven, turn the ham on its other side, then sprinkle another 1/3 of the seasoning mixture over it, again gently working it into the cuts.

Cover the ham with foil again, then return to the oven or grill. Cook for another 30 minutes, or until the ham feels warm all the way through but is not steaming hot.

Remove and discard the foil. Sprinkle the remaining dry glaze over the top of the entire ham. Turn the broiler on in the oven and place the ham under the broiler for 2 to 4 minutes. Watch closely: You want the glaze to bubble and caramelize but you don’t want it to burn. When the ham is burnished to your liking, remove from oven and let rest for 15 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: 280 calories; 120 calories from fat (43 percent of total calories); 13 g fat (4.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 110 mg cholesterol; 2540 mg sodium; 11 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 10 g sugar; 31 g protein.

Cut fat but keep the flavor with cottage cheese cake

By MELISSA D’ARABIAN
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Cottage cheese is a staple in my home. I love its creamy, mild flavor. It pairs perfectly with some garlic and herbs to make a protein-packed crudite dip, yet it also is at home in a quick dessert of cottage cheese and unsweetened applesauce (a d’Arabian weeknight favorite). Half a cup offers tons of protein (14 grams) plus calcium and vitamins, and all for just about 80 calories and only 3 grams of carbs. Plus, it’s inexpensive!

Cottage cheese is more than just a snack; it’s also a handy and nutritious ingredient. I love using it as a swap for ricotta in just about any recipe. Simply spoon the cottage cheese straight from the carton and use or, for extra points, drain or blot the excess moisture from the cottage cheese and pulse in the food processor and you’ll have almost exactly the texture of ricotta cheese.

You can even use cottage cheese as a base for a lusciously creamy salad dressing! Just blend up the cottage cheese with a few tablespoons of very hot water, which will soften the curds just enough to make the results creamy. Add smashed garlic, lemon juice, fresh herbs and black pepper, and you have a tasty dressing or dip.

One of my favorite ricotta indulgences is Italian ricotta cake, which is something between a classic cake and a cheesecake. Sweet and fatty, a little sliver goes a long way.

Here is my cottage cheese makeover of this yummy (calorie-dense) treat. I use cottage cheese, of course, but I also cut the butter way down and kept the sugar on the lower end (1 1/2 teaspoons per serving). Loads of lemon zest keep it exciting, and the almond flour ensures that the fats are healthy (and offer a smidge of protein and nutrients). All of which makes my lemon cottage cheese cake not exactly as authentic as a trip to Rome, but certainly a perfect way to end a springtime meal.



AP Photos/J.M. Hirsch

Low-fat cottage cheese is a great substitute for cream cheese and ricotta cheese when you want to make healthier versions of traditionally higher fat treats.

LEMON COTTAGE CHEESE CAKE

- Start to finish:** 1 hour
Servings: 12
- 3 eggs, separated
 - 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
 - 3/4 cup granulated sugar
 - 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese
 - 1/4 cup grated lemon zest (2 to 3 lemons)
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1/2 cup almond flour or meal
 - 1 1/4 cups whole-wheat pastry flour (or all-purpose flour)
 - 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/4 cup low-fat milk
 - Powdered sugar, to serve (optional)
 - Raspberries and chopped fresh mint, to serve (optional)
- Heat the oven to 350 F. Coat a 9-inch round cake pan with cooking spray, then line with kitchen parchment.
- In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to whip the egg whites to stiff peaks, then set aside.
- In a large bowl, use the mixer to beat together the butter and sugar for 1 minute. Add the egg yolks and mix again until creamy and pale, about 2 minutes. Add

the cottage cheese, lemon zest and vanilla, then mix on medium until very well blended and the cottage cheese is broken down a little.

In a medium bowl, sift together the almond flour, pastry flour, cinnamon, baking powder and salt. Mix half of the dry ingredients into the butter and egg mixture and mix on low with the mixer. Add the milk and the remaining dry ingredients, then mix on low to blend. Using a rubber spatula, fold in half of the whipped egg whites rather briskly until well mixed into the batter. Fold in the second half of the egg whites very gently, until blended in, but not deflated.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake on the oven’s middle shelf until the cake is golden and springs back under light pressure, about 35 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes before removing from the pan, then let cool completely. Once cooled, dust the top with powdered sugar and serve with raspberries and mint, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving: 140 calories; 50 calories from fat (36 percent of total calories); 6 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 60 mg cholesterol; 135 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 5 g protein.



Linda Lombardi via AP

This Dec. 2015 photo shows Kiyosumi Gardens in Tokyo, one of a number of things to see and do in the neighborhood around the Kiyosumi-Shirakawa metro station.

Getting away from Tokyo tourist crowds

By LINDA LOMBARDI
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TOKYO — Explore Tokyo beyond the crowded tourist high-lights and you’ll find many older parts of the city with a different look and slower pace. One of these, the area around the Metro station Kiyosumi-Shirakawa, is a convenient side trip if you’re visiting the Tokyo Skytree, which is four stops away. There’s a charming local history museum, public garden, coffee shops and a contemporary art museum. The neighborhood may not be picturesque in the conventional sense but there’s a lot to see if you have an eye for detail and an appreciation for the charm of urban and slightly shabby locales.

Fukagawa Edo museum

From the Metro station, head south and turn right onto an old shopping street marked by two small decorative towers. On your right you’ll see an old-fashioned candy shop where the proprietor dresses in garb from the Edo period (including an entirely unconvincing wig of a topknot hairstyle). Farther along on the left is the Fukagawa Edo museum.

Most tourists with any interest in history end up at the Edo Tokyo Museum with its indoor re-creations of historic buildings from the Edo era, which began in the 1600s. The Fukagawa museum, which predates the Edo Tokyo museum, is much smaller and more charming, with a life-size Edo-period town re-created on its lower level. Be prepared to take your shoes off to go inside the little shops and

homes, and a guide with adequate or better English will show you how the old-fashioned locks work and how ropes pull a skylight open over a stove. You can even try a rice-pounding device. The guide will also explain how to tell the difference between a nice but tiny house for someone well-off (note the tatami-covered floor) versus a poor person’s home with a mostly bare wood floor and just a couple of rice straw mats. Lighting sets the mood through 15-minute day-and-night cycles with recordings of birds, merchants calling and the cry of the animatronic cat on a rooftop.

Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

If you’re willing to walk a bit farther you can also have a completely modern experience in this old neighborhood at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo. Two exhibits that just opened are running through May 29: “Loose Lips Save Ships,” exploring freedom of expression, and “Pixar: 30 Years of Animation.”

Kiyosumi Gardens

Kiyosumi Gardens is easy to find on your way to or from the Metro, visible across the main street opposite the entrance to the shopping street near the Fukagawa Edo Museum. It’s a beautiful typical Japanese garden laid out around a large pond, first opened for company use by the founder of Mitsubishi in 1880 (Mitsubishi was a shipping firm at the time), then donated to the city and opened as a public park in 1932. The garden is nice to stroll around or find a bench to gaze at the pond.