

By using traditional methods and choosing pigs with a good level of fat to protect the lean part of the meat, they dry-cure, wash and then air-dry their hams in a slow process that culminates with the fat being trimmed off to leave the full-of-flavour meat.

As for why Taste Tradition can lay claim to authenticity...that goes back to another legend. It is said that a York Ham is only entitled to call itself that if it is produced within the city's walls. Raising pigs in the centre of York isn't very likely in this day and age...but the Ashbridge's farm

in Cold Kirby is little more than 20 miles away as the proverbial crow flies...and infinitely closer than most of the world's other producers.

A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

A ham is every bit as much a part of our Christmas tradition as turkey and cranberry sauce. Here's a simple tip from Nigel Haworth and Joyce Ashbridge on how to cook in to perfection.

Simply boil your York Ham in water, or water with cider, orange juice or Guinness for 20 minutes per pound. Then 'skin' the ham, put on a layer of breadcrumbs, mustard and honey and roast in a hot oven for 30 to 45 minutes...until the crust is brown and crispy. Heaven!



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THIS LITTLE PIGGY...
THE STORY OF YORK HAM

Wherever you go in the world, in butchers, markets and restaurants you'll find something called 'York Ham'. Sadly, the vast majority of these offerings will fall woefully short of the wonderful tastes and textures of the real thing.

Unlike many products today, York Hams don't enjoy protected regional status...in other words, anyone can call their product a York Ham, regardless of where or how it was produced. Happily for us, however, we can enjoy York Ham that's true to its roots and absolutely the way it was meant to be, thanks to local producers who uphold the traditions of one of Britain's greatest delicacies.

BORN AND BRED IN YORK

Turn the clock back to the 14th and 15th centuries and the time when the breathtakingly beautiful York Minster was under construction. Legend has it that the waste oak and sawdust found at the site was used to smoke and cure the meat of the Large White pigs which thrived in the area and could produce hams of up to 50lbs!

Those who doubt the legend believe that these hams were actually dry-cured by rubbing in a mixture of salt, saltpetre and sugar...a process much closer to the way real York Hams are prepared today.

Either way, the result is a fabulous matt-pink

'meaty' meat with a deep, slightly saltier flavour and a drier texture than other hams...thanks to a curing period that can last anything from 7 or 8 weeks...up to 2 years.

THE LARGE WHITE

Tradition has it that a York Ham should only be produced from Large White pigs, although other fine Rare Breeds can also be used to achieve delicious results. A rugged and hardy breed, Large Whites originated in Yorkshire and are well suited to an active, outdoor life, thriving in the variable climate experienced during a typical year in this part of the country. They're distinguished by their erect ears, slightly dished faces, long bodies and, of course, fine white hair. But it's their well-fleshed hams that are the real secret of an enduring popularity.

TASTE TRADITION



CHARLES ASHBRIDGE

Joyce Ashbridge and her son Charles come as close as anyone to being true producers of real and authentic York Ham. Using the finest

Large White, Saddleback and Gloucester Old Spot breeds, they produce up to 80 hams a week.

