



Ham in Coca-Cola

Ingredients:

2kg mild-cure gammon
1 onion peeled and cut in half
2 litre-bottle coke

For the glaze

handful cloves
1 heaped tablespoon black treacle
2 teasp English mustard powder
2 tablespoons demerara sugar

Instructions:

I find now that mild-cure gammon doesn't need soaking. If you know that you're dealing with a salty piece, then put it in a pan covered with cold water, bring to the boil then tip into a colander in the sink and start from here; otherwise, put the gammon in a pan, skin side down if it fits like that, add the onion then pour over the Coke. Bring to the boil, reduce to a good simmer, put the lid on, though not tightly, and cook for just under 2 1/2 hours. If your joint is larger or smaller work out timing by reckoning on an hour a kilo altogether, remembering that it's going to get a quick blast in the oven later. But do take into account that if the gammon's been in the fridge right up to the moment you cook it, you will have to give a good 15 or so minutes' extra so that the interior is properly cooked. Meanwhile preheat oven to 240C/gas mark 9.

When the ham's had its time (and ham it is now it's cooked, though it's true Americans call it ham from its uncooked state) take it out of the pan but **DO NOT THROW AWAY THE COOKING LIQUID** and let cool a little for ease of handling. (Indeed you can let it cool completely then finish off the cooking at some later stage if you want). Then remove skin, leaving a thin layer of fat. Score the fat with a sharp knife to make fairly large diamond

shapes, and stud each diamond with a clove. Then carefully spread the treacle over the bark-budded skin taking care not to dislodge the cloves. Then gently pat the mustard and sugar onto the sticky fat. Cook, in a foil lined roasting tin for approximately 10 minutes or till the glaze is burnished and bubbly.

Should you want to do the braising stage in advance and then let the ham cool, clove and glaze it and give it 30-40 minutes, from room temperature, at 180C/gas mark 4, turning up the heat towards the end if you think it needs it.

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