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|  | **MAHARASHTRA COSMOPOLITAN EDUCATION SOCIETY**  **Azam Campus, Pune – 411 001** |

E-Content Description

Name of School / College: M A Rangoonwala Institute of Hotel Management and Research

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| Name and Designation of content creator /Producer | Assoc. Prof Imran Sayyed |
| Title of E content | Ham bacon and gammon |
| Theory/practical | Theory |
| Title and No of Module | Ham bacon and gammon |
| Title and code of Paper | Principles of International Cuisine 401 |
| Broad Subject | Food Production |
| Course | BScHS |
| Class | TY |
| Semester | Sixth |
| University /Board | SPPU |
| Date of Content Creation | 1 Jan 2020 |
| Name of Reviewer  HOD/Principal | Imran Sayyed |

[What's the difference between Ham bacon and gammon?](https://cooking.stackexchange.com/questions/3328/whats-the-difference-between-bacon-and-gammon)

The thigh of a slaughtered animal, used for food; spec. that of a hog salted and dried in smoke or otherwise; also, the meat so prepared.

It defines gammon as:

The bottom piece of a side or flitch of bacon, including the hind leg. In later use also: a smoked or cured ham.

It defines bacon as:

The back and sides of the pig, ‘cured’ by salting, drying, etc. Formerly also the fresh flesh now called pork.

In Britain there is a street-wisdom about when to describe meat as ham, as bacon or gammon. Ham is usually bought ready-cooked. Gammon usually comes as a joint, bacon in slices.

But is there a clear distinction which is not being picked up here?

My understanding is: Ham and gammon both come from hind legs and are cured meat, but gammon is the raw state. Bacon is cured meat from the back and belly. –

In the US, bacon is "pork belly", cured, smoked, and optionally sliced. Not really part of the "ham". Not sure I've ever heard "gammon".

The following extract tries to outline the main differences:

Gammon, ham and bacon are all cured meats (which means they are preserved using salt or brine), and all can be smoked. However there are some key differences between them.

The main difference between gammon and ham is that gammon is sold raw and needs to be cooked, whilst ham is sold cooked and ready for eating. Therefore it is true that a gammon is a ham that has not yet been cooked. If a gammon is prepared and cooked it can be called a ham, and is generally sold as a gammon ham.

Gammon and bacon are both cured pork. The main difference between them is the part of the pig from which they originate. Gammon is the hind leg (haunch) of a pig whilst bacon is the meat from other parts of the pig such as the loin, collar or belly.

In America 'bacon' comes from the belly of the pig. Whereas, according to Wikipedia bacon in the UK typically comes from the back of the pig (we call this canadian bacon). Either way these are usually dry-cured. Gammon cuts come from the hind legs of the pig.

"Both ham and gammon are cut from the leg of a pig. The meat is the same but the preparation and treatment is different. Ham and gammon are both cured meats. This means that they are treated with salt, known as brining, and other substances before being eaten.

Ham is meat that is cut from the carcass and then treated.

Gammon is meat that is cut from the carcass after the brining treatment.

Both gammons and hams might also be smoked.

Traditionally, regional variants in the process and the ingredients used would bring different flavours to the cured meats. This explains the origin of distinctive varieties such as York ham, Bayonne ham and Prague ham.

Air dried hams are also cured first but then usually eaten raw whereas brined hams are baked or boiled before serving."

Bacon is defined as any pork that has been cured through a process of salting, either as a dry-cure or a wet-cure where the meat is either packed in salts or brine respectively. With wet curing, other ingredients can be added to impart other flavours, such as beer or sugars.

Typically, rashers are made from the body of the pig with streaky bacon coming from the belly, and back bacon coming from, well, the back (so the same cut as a pork loin chop). Bacon joints are typically made by combining cuts of bacon from the shoulder and collar, whilst the hind quarters are sold as gammon with a premium on price.

Traditionally ham referred to cooked gammon, although in modern uses, it is often extended to include other cooked bacon joints, which include moulded meats made from combining cuts together with other additives to help bind them.

Bacon

In England good bacon is dry salted, (without sugar) and is mostly cut from the back and side of the pig and has a 'pork chop' appearance, with an eye (tenderloin), and muscle streaks and fat attached to the tail end (side of the ribs).

It is called a rasher, often has the skin attached, and can be either 'green' (unsmoked) or smoked (never hot smoked like in N. America).

It may be cooked to a crisp, or just till it turns opaque. Depends on taste.

There are many regional varieties, with Wiltshire and Danish being premium varieties. In Scotland, Ayrshire bacon is excellent and the rasher is rolled so the bacon rasher has a round appearance. Good bacon and gammon does not ooze white stuff, nor does it shrink much when it is fried.

Gammon

Gammon is always cut thicker and is composed mostly of meat like a ham slice. It also tastes different. From my understanding it is usually made from salted leg meat.

You can find photos of 'English bacon rasher' and 'gammon rasher' on the web if you include UK in the search. If you haven't tasted this kind of bacon you can get an idea of the British bacon taste by salting a piece of pork belly in the fridge (it really needs fat to be delicious). Just leave out the sugar and spice. There are recipes on the web. You may never go back to the water soaked meat in a plastic bag that is sold as bacon in supermarkets

Ref:

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