CUSTOM MEAT GUIDE · STEP 2: PLANNING YOUR CUTS

Ordering a Half or Whole Hog

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THE SHORT ANSWER

Half of a 250 to 270 lb hog gives roughly **60 to 70 lb of pork**: ham, chops, bacon, shoulder roasts, spareribs, and ground pork or sausage. The big decisions are **smoked or fresh** for the hams and bacon, bone-in or boneless chops, and how much of the shoulder becomes roasts versus sausage.

What's in a Half Hog

Here's how the University of Minnesota describes a typical half:

Cut	About
Ham	15–18 lb
Pork chops	12–14 lb
Bacon	8–10 lb
Ground pork or sausage	6–10 lb
Shoulder roasts	3 roasts, about 4 lb each
Spareribs	about 3 lb

That's about 70% of the hanging weight, which matches Washington's own yield chart and Kansas State's cutting tests. Like beef, more boneless cuts and more curing and smoking mean fewer pounds. See hanging weight vs. take-home meat.

Section by Section

Ham (the leg)

Cured and smoked, or fresh. Whole or half, bone-in or boneless, or cut into ham steaks.

Loin

Bone-in chops, or boneless chops plus the tenderloin. Boneless chops free up the back ribs. Blade chops and country-style ribs come from here too.

Belly

Cured, smoked, and sliced into bacon, or kept fresh as side pork.

Boston butt (upper shoulder)

Roasts (the classic for pulled pork) or blade steaks.

Picnic (lower shoulder)

Roasts, or ground pork and sausage.

Spareribs

One set from each half.

Hocks and jowl

Two hocks and a jowl per half. They can be smoked and used in soups.

Common cut sheet defaults for chops are 3/4 or 1 inch thick, two to a package.

Smoked or Fresh?

This is the decision that shapes a hog order most. A smoked, cured ham and smoked bacon are what most people picture; a fresh ham roasts like any pork roast, and fresh side pork cooks like unsmoked bacon. Smoking and curing take extra time in the shop, and cured and smoked cuts weigh a bit less when they come back.

We smoke and cure hams and bacon for $1.00 per pound. See smoking and curing.

Sausage

We season sausage in Breakfast, Mild Italian, Country, and Brats Style flavors: $1.00 per pound, or $2.00 for Brats Style. One pig may only make enough sausage trim for one or two flavors, so pick your favorites.

Ready to Order?

Decide on smoked or fresh, chop style, and roasts or sausage, then call us. The kill fee for a hog is $100, plus $1.05 per pound of hanging weight; the cost calculator works for hogs too.

Questions? Call Howard & Mia.

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Read it online, with calculators:
handmcustommeat.com/guide/ordering-a-hog/

Sources

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https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/pork-processing-options-for-consumers_MF3396

Buying animals for meat processing, University of Minnesota Extension
https://extension.umn.edu/food/preparing/cooking-at-home/buying-animals-for-meat-processing

Pork carcass fabrication: primal and retail cuts, SDSU Extension
https://extension.sdstate.edu/pork-carcass-fabrication-primal-and-retail-cuts

Pork cut sheet samples (MeatSuite), NC State Center for Environmental Farming Systems
https://cefs.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/CFBM-Pork-Cut-Sheet-Samples_3.28.23-3.pdf

Buying an animal and having it butchered for home use, WSU Extension
https://wpcdn.web.wsu.edu/extension/uploads/sites/39/2020/07/ConsumersWanttoBuyanAnimalandHaveitButcheredforHomeUse07.13.2020.pdf

Processing Percentage (custom meat yield chart), Washington State Department of Agriculture
https://agr.wa.gov/departments/food-safety/food-safety/custom-meats/processing-percentage

Figures are typical ranges from these sources; every animal is different. Prices are subject to change.