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BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

ROAST FRESH HAM WITH APRICOT STUFFING

Have the butcher skin a fresh ham weighing about 12 pounds, and remove the bones. Wipe the meat with a damp cloth. Lay the boned ham fat side down and cut gashes in the parts where the meat is thickest so that it will hold more stuffing, but be careful not to cut through the outer covering. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread some of the hot stuffing over the meat. Begin at the hock end of the ham to sew the cut edges of the meat together to form a pocket, and gradually work in as much stuffing as the cavity will hold. After the ham has been stuffed and sewed up, rub the outside with salt, pepper, and flour. Place the meat, fat surface up, on a rack in an open pan without water, and sear in a hot oven (480°F.) for 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Then reduce the oven temperature rapidly to very moderate heat (325°F.) and continue roasting at this temperature until the meat is tender. A 12-pound ham will require about 5 hours to cook when these oven temperatures are used. Do not cover and do not add water. It is usually not necessary to baste the meat.

Serve the ham hot with savory brown gravy, or chill it and serve it in thin slices. The boned ham is easy to carve in slices across the grain of the meat.

Apricot Stuffing

4 cups fine dry bread crumbs	1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1 pound dried apricots	4 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup finely chopped celery	1-1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup finely chopped parsley	

Select large plump apricots, wash, and drain, but do not cook them. Cut them into narrow strips with a pair of scissors. Melt the butter in a skillet, add the celery, parsley, and onion, and cook for a few minutes. Add the bread crumbs, and the salt, and then the apricots, and stir until well mixed and hot.

The bread crumbs should be stale, but not dry enough to grate or grind. The stuffing will then be sufficiently moist to hold together when the roast is carved in slices.

This stuffing is equally good in boned pork shoulder. For a medium-sized pork shoulder make one-half of the above recipe.

