Whole legs of Iberico ham can add theatre to your counter but serving customers might seem daunting. JAVIER de la HORMAZA of Grey’s Fine Foods provides a step-by-step guide to carving this Spanish delicacy.

**Step 1**
Fit the leg on the ham stand and make sure it is fully fastened. Place a damp cloth under the stand to ensure maximum grip and keep your hands clean at all times, as they tend to get greasy and this could lead to an accident when handling knives.

**Step 2**
In order to slice Ibérico ham properly you need the right knives; three of them, in fact. Your ham-slicing knife should have a long, narrow, flexible blade. You will also need a boning knife with a short, rigid blade for peeling and a cook’s knife for the auxiliary cuts, which have to be made at either end of the leg.

**Step 3**
First, you need to remove the skin from the ham. Using the boning knife, make some fine, horizontal peeling cuts. If the ham is going to be consumed fairly quickly, then peel the whole leg. If not, it’s best to peel it as you consume it.

**Step 4**
Next, make a vertical cut, using the cook’s knife, around the leg at the height of the ham shank (See point 5 of leg diagram). Use this as a starting point for your horizontal slicing across the leg.

**Step 5**
Start by removing the outer layers of fat from the centre and both sides, making sure you keep the large slices to cover the ham when not using it.

**Step 6**
Using the slicing knife, slice down the leg. Every slice should be made in the same direction, one after the other.

**Step 7**
For safety reasons, keep your non-slicing hand away from the blade. Use it to hold the slices as they begin to lift up. For a more professional touch, use a pair of tongs to pick the slices up.

**Step 8**
The slices need to be very thin, nearly transparent. They should be as wide as the ham and around 2.5 inches long.

**Step 9**
The slices should be presented on the plate in one layer with each slice slightly overlapping.

**Step 10**
To keep the ham in good condition, cover the exposed slicing area with the fat layers you have saved. Make sure that none of the meat is exposed, to avoid drying out. Try to do this whenever you’re not slicing. At the end of service, wrap the whole leg with muslin cloth ready for next service.

**Grey’s Anatomy**
Before you begin slicing, think about how quickly the ham will be consumed. If it’s going to be eaten or sold fairly swiftly (or if you want the best and juiciest part), then cut from the inside of the leg (section A). For longer timespans, start on the outside of the leg (section B). When slicing from the inside of the leg, we would recommend that in each portion you combine slices from the central part (section A), from the point end (section C) and from the shank (section D). The slicing of this area will require you to make two vertical auxiliary cuts. The first one (at point 5) will ensure you slice in line against the shank. The second (at point 6), which must be made with a boning knife, will loosen up the coxal bone (1). Finally, keep any meat on the bone that you cannot make into slices. Cut it into chunky pieces, which can be used in a number of dishes and stews. Don’t throw away the bone either, as it can be saved into pieces and used as an ingredient in soups and stocks.