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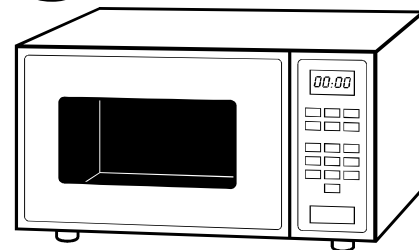
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Full Speed Cooking with Microwave Ovens



Microwave ovens have become common in kitchens throughout the United States. Many improvements have been made in microwave ovens over the years, and they have become much less expensive and smaller.

Microwave ovens were originally believed to change the way we would cook entire meals. Microwave ovens, however, are most commonly used to reheat leftover foods. In the summertime, they allow quick food preparation that doesn't heat up the kitchen.

What are the general rules for microwave cooking?

- Never run a microwave oven without anything in it.
- Always use potholders and remove covers away from your face to avoid burns.
- Make sure food is arranged evenly in the oven for even cooking.
- Stir and rotate food to avoid cold spots in your food.
- Allow standing time after the cooking cycle is completed to allow food to finish heating.
- Use a thermometer to check doneness. Leftovers should be reheated to 165° F.



How can you tell if your dishes are microwave-safe?

Most microwave-safe dishes will state that fact on the bottom. Do not reheat foods in plastic margarine containers or Styrofoam boxes.

Here's a simple test to help determine if your dishes can be used in a microwave oven. Do not try this test on dishes that have gold or silver trim — or on dishes that have special meaning or cannot be replaced if they break or are damaged.

- Place the dish to be tested in the microwave oven.
- Measure ½ cup water into a 1-cup glass measuring cup.
- Place the filled measuring cup inside the dish to be tested.
- Microwave for one minute on 100 percent power.
- If the dish is cool and the water warm, the dish is microwave safe.

Should you cover foods in a microwave oven?

Cover foods when the recipe directions tell you to do so or to prevent splattering of foods being reheated. Microwave-safe covers and most glass covers are options for covering foods in a microwave oven.

Plastic wrap can be used, but do not allow it to touch foods in the microwave oven. The wrap may release chemicals into the food during the cooking process. Paper towels and wax paper are other options.

Is “sun tea” safe?

Making tea in the warm summer sun is popular, but the practice has been linked with cases of foodborne illness. Bacteria can easily grow in sun tea. Experts suggest the following:

- Be sure all tea-making equipment is thoroughly clean.
- Brew tea bags in 195°F (or hotter) water for three to five minutes.
- Never leave brewed tea at room temperature for more than eight hours.
- Best bet: Instead of making “sun tea,” brew tea overnight in the refrigerator.

How much fluid do people need on warm summer days?

Our bodies are made up of as much as 75 percent water, so staying well-hydrated is very important! Many people think thirst is a good guide for water needs. When you're thirsty, you're already partly dehydrated. People differ in their need for water depending on climate, age, size, activity level and other factors.

Most health experts recommend that we aim for at least six to eight cups of fluids daily through beverages or solid foods like fruits and vegetables. Carrying a water bottle and sipping throughout the day is a good idea, too!

Baked Potatoes Topper Ideas



Wash potatoes thoroughly and bake at 400°F for 1 to 1½ hours (until soft) or follow the directions that came with your microwave oven. The following chart shows a time range for “microwaving” potatoes based on potato size. For even cooking, arrange potatoes in a circular pattern in microwave oven.

- **One:** 3 to 5 minutes
- **Two:** 5 to 7 minutes
- **Three:** 7 to 10 minutes
- **Four:** 10 to 12 minutes

Chili Topper: Brown ½ lb. ground beef, ¼ c. chopped celery and 2 Tbsp. chopped onion. Add 1 Tbsp. chili powder (or to taste) and 1 can stewed tomatoes. Simmer and serve. Top with shredded cheese if desired. Makes 4 servings. Each serving of topping contains 191 calories, 11 grams fat and 9 grams carbohydrate.

Pizza Topper: Brown ½ lb. ground beef and ¼ c. chopped onion. Add salt, pepper, 1 chopped tomato, 2 Tbsp. catsup, ¼ tsp. oregano and ¼ tsp. basil. Simmer and serve. Makes 4 servings. Top with shredded cheese if desired. Each serving of topping contains 171 calories, 10.6 grams fat and 4.5 grams carbohydrate.