

rare recipes

by

Reena Malhotra

Microwave Cooking Tips

- Cooking in the microwave oven can help preserve food's natural nutrients better than most traditional cooking methods. Microwave cooking can drain more fat, create less mess and thoroughly cook meals faster than an oven or stove.
- Always keep the heating/ cooking chamber of your microwave oven clean. A microwave oven with a dirty heating/ cooking chamber, will cook unevenly and slowly.
- Do not cover the cooling vents of your microwave oven, these are used to exhaust heat. A microwave oven converts only a part of its electrical input into microwave energy. A typical microwave oven consumes 1100W of electricity to produce 700W of microwave power. The other 400W are dissipated as wasted heat. The wasted heat, along with heat from the product being micro-waved is exhausted as warm air through the cooling vents.
- Using containers in a microwave oven that are round or oval in shape can help to heat food more evenly. With square or rectangular shaped containers, the corners tend to receive more energy, which can cause food to overcook in these areas.
- While cooking or heating food in a microwave oven, covering food with lids or plastic wrap can help foods retain moisture and cook or heat more evenly. Remember to allow a small gap between the food and the lid or wrap, and leave one corner open to allow steam to escape.
- When cooking foods in a microwave oven that have a skin or some other type of shell or coating, pierce the outer layer of the food. This will help to keep food from exploding as a result of steam that can build up from the inside.
- Arrange evenly sized pieces of food in a circle for more even microwave cooking. If food happens to be different sizes, place thicker pieces toward the outer edges and smaller pieces toward the center.

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- When using the microwave to partially cook or defrost your food, transfer food directly from the microwave to your oven, stove or grill. Do not keep partially cooked foods in storage for later use.
- When baking a potato in the microwave, be sure to pierce the skin to release steam.
- Microwave a Lemon for 15 seconds and get double the juice on squeezing.
- To remove the skin of garlic cloves easily, microwave the garlic cloves for 15 seconds before removing the skin.
- To maximize flavor of herbs, try adding herbs after the food has been cooked or heated in a microwave oven.
- Salt on the surface of food tends to attract microwaves, which can dry out its outer layer. If salt is desired, sprinkle it on the food after removal from the microwave.
- Crisp stale chips, cookies or crackers by micro-waving them at full power for approximately 10 seconds.
- Soften rock-hard ice cream in a microwave oven by heating it for approximately 20 seconds after reducing power to 30%.
- You can soften a chilled or frozen stick of butter in a microwave oven by heating for approximately 40 seconds after reducing power to 50%.
- Vegetables can be steamed in the microwave in just a few minutes with no added fat. Simply chop vegetables as desired, place in a microwaveable container with 1 to 2 Tablespoons of water and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Cook on high until soft.

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- To keep your meal hot and tasty for a longer time, before serving, warm the plates slightly in an Oven/ Microwave Oven/ Dishwasher. This is appreciated by the diners, especially during winter.
- Dry herbs in the microwave by spreading into a single layer between paper towels and heating at full power for approximately 2-3 minutes. After the first minute, begin checking herbs at 30-second intervals. When herbs are dry, crumble and store in airtight containers. Heating times will vary for different herbs.
- Don't deep fry foods in a microwave oven. A microwave oven's temperature cannot be regulated properly, as such deep frying foods in a microwave oven may cause injury to the user and pose a burn/ fire/ safety hazard.
- Warm cookies taste better than the cold ones. Heat releases the flavor of chocolate and nuts and improves the taste. Warm cookies in your microwave oven for a few seconds or in an oven for 3-5 minutes before serving.
- Heating lemon juice in the microwave can help get rid of tough odors. Mix ½ cup lemon juice with 1 to 2 cups of water, cover and heat on high for approximately 5 minutes. Allow the mixture to cool before removing. For really stubborn odors, repeat as necessary.
- To clean stuck-on foods and grease from inside your microwave oven, heat two tablespoons of lemon juice in one cup of water on high for 2-3 minutes until boiling. Do not open the door for five minutes after heating as the vapors from the liquid will help lift tough grit and grime from microwave surfaces. Switch off the power supply to the microwave oven and clean it easily.
- While cooking non-vegetarian dishes, for safety, ensure that the internal temperature of the food item is at least 65 degrees C for Lamb, 75 degrees C for chicken-minced/ ground, 77 degrees C for chicken breasts and 82 degrees for whole Chicken/ thigh/ leg pieces.

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