

# Save Time Microwave It!

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Need a quick meal? Most kitchens have a microwave oven, but often the microwave is not used to its potential. In this lesson you will explore how to use your microwave oven to prepare quick, easy, and *safe* meals.

How does a microwave oven heat your food? Microwaves cook food by using a magnetron, a device that converts electric power to very short radio waves of about 2,450 megahertz. At this frequency, water, fats, and sugars absorb the waves and vibrate very fast to create high temperatures that cook the food.

## Know the Wattage

Watts are a measure of power. Microwave ovens with different wattages are available. Knowing the wattage of your microwave will help you determine how long to cook foods. High wattage (1,000 watts or more) microwave ovens take less time to cook items than low wattage (300 to 500 watts) microwave ovens.

Do you know the wattage of your microwave? If not, here are three easy ways to determine the wattage.

1. On older microwave ovens, the wattage is shown on the back of the microwave or listed in the owner's manual.
2. Newer models provide the wattage on the inside of the door.
3. Conduct the "Water Test for Wattage," explained here, if the wattage is not shown anywhere on the microwave or in the owner's manual.

## Water Test for Wattage

Measure 1 cup of water into a 2-cup glass measuring cup. Make sure the water is cold; add ice if needed. Set the microwave on high for 4 minutes and watch the water through the window to see when it boils.

- If water boils in less than 2 minutes, it is a very high wattage oven — 1,000 watts or more.
- If water boils in 2 ½ minutes, it is a high wattage oven — about 800 watts or more.
- If water boils in 3 minutes, it is an average wattage oven — 650 to 700 watts or more.
- If water boils in more than 3 minutes, it is a slow oven — 300 to 500 watts.

## Power Level

Microwaves also have several power levels. When you are heating foods on high power, the microwave is producing the highest amount of energy from the magnetron. For less power, the magnetron cycles on and off. For example, on medium power (50%), the microwave oven produces microwaves only 50 percent of the time.

Foods such as ground beef, poultry, vegetables, and fruits are tender and have a high moisture content, so they cook best on a high power setting. A lower power setting is recommended for eggs, cheese, and solid meats since they can become tough when cooked on a high power setting.

## Uneven Heating

One problem with cooking using a microwave oven is they do not heat evenly. Many microwave ovens have turntables inside to help cook the food more evenly. If your microwave does not have one, a turntable accessory can be purchased to help prevent hot spots.

You can determine where the hot spots are in your microwave by conducting a marshmallow test.

To conduct this test:

- Use a microwavable, flat plate, or turn the turntable upside down so it won't rotate, and place marshmallows on it. **Tip:** Line the plate with parchment or wax paper to make cleanup a breeze.
- Line the plate with miniature marshmallows, and place the plate in the microwave oven.
- Set the timer for 1 minute, but **watch carefully and stop microwaving if the marshmallows begin to burn.**
- Watch through the glass window for the marshmallows to heat and expand.

The marshmallows that expand first reveal the hot spots. If your microwave oven has hot spots, you know that food will cook unevenly. Uneven cooking can sometimes result in undercooked food that may be unsafe to eat.

There are things you can do to ensure your food cooks evenly.

- Rotate food in the microwave oven as it is cooking.
- Interrupt the cooking and stir or turn food halfway through the heating time. Even if your microwave oven has a turntable, it is helpful to stir and turn food.
- Arrange food items evenly in a covered dish and add some liquid if needed.
- Large cuts of meat should **not** be cooked on high power (100%). Cook large cuts of meat on medium power (50%) for longer periods of time. This helps the heat reach the center of the food without overcooking the outer areas.
- Remove the bone from large pieces of meat because it can shield meat from thorough cooking.
- Avoid cooking a whole, stuffed chicken or turkey in a microwave oven because the stuffing might not reach the temperature required to kill harmful bacteria.
- Cover the dish with a lid or plastic wrap to help evenly distribute the heat inside the container.

Allow enough space between the food and the top of the dish so that plastic wrap does not touch the food. Loosen or vent the lid or plastic wrap to allow steam to escape. The moist heat created will help destroy harmful bacteria and help achieve even heating. Cooking bags also provide safe, even heating.

- To thaw foods in a microwave oven, remove the food from the packaging before placing it in the microwave oven. Foam trays and plastic wraps may not be safe for use in a microwave oven. If you are thawing or partially cooking a meat or poultry product in a microwave oven, continue cooking immediately in an oven, grill, or on top of the stove.
- Thawing food in a microwave oven causes partial heating, which causes the bacteria present to start growing. Continuing to heat the food immediately to the proper temperature will kill bacteria and prevent foodborne illness.
- Leftover foods can be reheated in a microwave oven by placing the food in a microwave-safe container and covering with a microwave-safe plastic wrap to keep the moisture in and to provide even heating. Remember to turn back a corner to allow steam to escape during heating.

## Follow Package Instructions

Today there are many food products made specifically for use in microwave ovens. Some non-microwavable food packages look similar to microwavable products; check labels carefully.

Follow the cooking instructions on the product label or in the recipe instructions. These instructions are developed to destroy the harmful bacteria.

The label may include different cooking times depending on the wattage of the microwave oven being used. If you don't know the wattage of your microwave, use the Water Test for Wattage to determine it.

If a range of time is given, start with the fewest minutes recommended. Add cooking time if necessary so the food reaches a safe internal temperature.

Many people think they can pop food in the microwave oven for however long it takes to warm it up or for the food to "look done." Unfortunately, it is not that simple. To prevent bacteria from growing, use a food thermometer to ensure food has reached the correct internal temperature. The package label or recipe instructions may provide the internal temperature that the product needs to reach to kill harmful bacteria.

Insert the thermometer into the center of the food after removing it from the microwave oven. Measure the temperature in different spots, especially if the item is large. Different foods need to reach different temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. Here is a list of temperatures for common foods cooked in a microwave oven.

- Ground meats — 160°F
- All raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts — 145°F  
(For personal preference, you may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.)
- All poultry — 165°F
- Eggs and casseroles containing eggs — 160°F
- Fish — 145°F

After removing meat, poultry, and egg dishes from the microwave, allow “standing time” of at least three minutes to complete the cooking process.

After food is removed from the microwave, food temperatures can increase. This is called the standing time. Consider standing time as part of the cooking time. Many package directions will say how long to allow for standing time. If a standing time is not provided, allow two minutes. Following the standing time, check the internal temperature with a food thermometer to ensure the food has reached the temperature needed to destroy harmful bacteria.

Some food items need to be “poked” to prevent them from exploding in your microwave oven. One example is baked potatoes.

A microwave should not be used to heat breast milk or baby formula. The nutrients in the milk may be destroyed, and the milk may become too hot and burn your baby’s mouth.

## Safe Containers

Only use containers and wraps that are safe to use in a microwave oven. Glass, ceramic, and all plastic containers and wraps are usually labeled for microwave oven use. If a container is not labeled, use this list to determine if it is microwave-safe.

### Safe to Use

- Any utensil or container labeled for microwave use
- Heat-resistant glass (such as Pyrex®, Anchor Hocking)
- Glass-ceramic material (such as CorningWare®)
- Oven cooking bags

- Baskets (straw and wood) for quick warm-up of rolls or bread (line basket with napkins to absorb moisture from food)
- Most paper plates, towels, napkins, and bags (for optimal safety use white, unprinted materials)
- Wax paper, parchment paper, heavy plastic wrap (do not allow plastic wrap to touch food; vent to allow steam to escape)
- Heat-susceptor packaging — some commercial packages have a silver liner to help conduct heat.

Foods cooked in microwave-safe containers may cause the container to become hot. Use hot pads or oven mitts to remove food from the microwave oven to prevent burns, especially from steam.

### Not Safe to Use

- Cold-storage containers such as margarine tubs, cottage cheese and yogurt cartons, etc. (These are not approved for cooking, and chemicals from the container can migrate into food.)
- Brown paper bags and newspapers
- Metal pans
- Foam-insulated cups, bowls, plates, or trays
- China with metallic paint or trim
- Chinese take-out containers with metal handles
- Metal twist ties on package wrapping
- Food completely wrapped in aluminum foil
- Food cooked in any container or packaging that has warped or melted during heating
- Containers that microwavable food comes in are designed for one-time use

Foam trays, some plastic wraps, plastic containers, including containers that microwavable food comes in, may not be safe to use in a microwave oven. The container may melt during heating and cause the package material or harmful chemicals to migrate into the food.

To test if a container is safe to use in a microwave oven, put 1 cup of water in a glass measuring cup. Place this cup and the container side by side in the microwave oven. Heat for 1 minute. If the empty container feels warm or hot, do not use it. The container contains metal or a glaze that is not microwave-safe.

Many microwave accessories are made to help you cook specific foods in a microwave. Common items include:

- 1- and 2-cup glass measuring cups
- 2-quart glass mixing pitcher

- Individual glass oval dishes
- 1- and 2-quart casseroles
- Oval 9 x 13-inch glass pan
- Glass-ring pan (for meatloaves, cakes, casseroles)
- Microwaveable 1-quart saucepan with lid that can be used as a strainer
- Bacon rack
- 2-cup egg poacher

It is not safe to use a microwave oven for canning. Instead, use a water-bath or a pressure canner and approved canning jars, lids, and methods. At one time, a microwave canner was developed but proved unsafe.

### Cleaning Your Microwave Oven

Check your microwave owner's manual for recommended cleaning methods. If you cannot find your manual, here are some general cleaning tips:

- Remove spatters and spills as they occur so food residue won't become baked-on.
- Wipe with a soft cloth or clean paper towel dampened with warm water.
- For heavier spills, use baking soda, a mild soap, or dishwashing liquid with a damp cloth.
- Do not use steel wool, scouring pads, abrasive cleaners, or oven cleaners.
- To remove food odors or loosen baked-on food residue, mix 6 tablespoons of baking soda OR ½ cup lemon juice with 1 cup of water in a microwave-safe glass measure. Microwave the mixture until it boils, then leave the mixture in the microwave without opening the door until the mixture cools. The steam will help loosen food residue and remove odors. Wipe the surfaces with a soft cloth or paper towel.

### Recipes

Microwave ovens are most often used to reheat leftovers or cook a few favorite packaged food items. Many foods can be cooked in microwaves, however, and will look and taste as good as if they were prepared on a stove.

Foods may not brown in your microwave oven as they do when cooked on a stove or in an oven. Here are some ingredients to add or techniques you can use to help microwaved food look like food cooked the conventional way.

- Glazes — ketchup, barbeque, teriyaki, brown sugar, apricot or peach jam
- Sauces — brown bouquet sauce, steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce
- Dry onion soup mix
- Marinade mixes
- Cream soups
- Cheese slices melted on top
- Sear meat or poultry in a skillet or microwave brown-and-sear pan, or put meat under an oven broiler for a couple of minutes before cooking in the microwave.

### Resources

Bite When the Temperature is Right, HEF587, [www.extension.unl.edu/communityprograms/](http://www.extension.unl.edu/communityprograms/)

Cook It Safe, [fightbac.org/cookitsafe](http://fightbac.org/cookitsafe)

Cooking 101: Cooking in Small Spaces Using a Microwave Oven, [www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1618b.pdf](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1618b.pdf)

Microwave Ovens and Food Safety, [www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/appliances-and-thermometers/microwave-ovens-and-food-safety/ct\\_index](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/appliances-and-thermometers/microwave-ovens-and-food-safety/ct_index)

Use Your Microwave Safely, [www.fda.gov/downloads/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm143607.pdf](http://www.fda.gov/downloads/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm143607.pdf)

Your microwave owner's manual

### Disclaimer

Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended of those not mentioned and no endorsement by University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension is implied for those mentioned.

# Microwave Oven Recipes

Try preparing the following recipes using your microwave oven. Remember, due to differences in microwave ovens, cooking times are approximate. Microwave for the shortest amount of time and watch carefully. If needed, increase the amount of time until the food reaches a proper temperature.

## Microwave Oatmeal

### Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats\*
- 4 cups water or low-fat milk
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Mix together oats, water or milk, and salt in a large microwave-safe bowl.
2. Microwave on HIGH for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes, until oats are soft and most of the liquid has been absorbed.
3. Spoon into bowls and serve while hot. Top with white or brown sugar and additional milk, if desired.

\*Quick oats make a creamier oatmeal. Old-fashioned oats make a slightly chewy oatmeal.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 206 calories; 4 grams fat; 11 grams protein; 32 grams carbohydrate; 3 grams fiber; 151 milligrams sodium

### Variations

**Cherry Almond Oatmeal** — Add 1/2 cup dried cherries, chopped; 1/2 teaspoon vanilla flavoring; and 1/2 teaspoon almond flavoring with the oats, water or milk; and salt. Cook according to directions. Stir in 1/2 cup toasted sliced almonds, and serve.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

**Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal** — Add 2 unpeeled apples, chopped; 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring; and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon with the oats, water or milk, and salt. Cook according to directions.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

**Pumpkin Spice Oatmeal** — Add 1/2 cup pumpkin puree, 1/4 cup raisins, 3 tablespoons brown sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice with the oats, 3 1/2 cups water or milk, and salt. Cook according to directions.



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Makes 4 to 6 servings

**Banana Walnut Oatmeal** — Add 1 large banana, mashed; 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring; and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon with the oats, water or milk, and salt. Cook according to directions. Stir in ½ cup toasted chopped walnuts, and serve.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

**Pear Pecan Oatmeal** — Add 2 pears, peeled and diced; 3 tablespoons brown sugar; 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring; 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon; and dash of ground cloves with the oats, water or milk, and salt. Cook according to directions. Stir in ½ cup toasted chopped pecans, and serve.

Makes 6 to 8 servings



## Microwave White Rice

### Ingredients

- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 2 cups hot water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon oil

### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a microwave-safe, 3-quart casserole dish.
2. Cover and heat on HIGH for 5 to 8 minutes or until rice boils. Continue cooking, covered, on MEDIUM-LOW for 12 to 15 minutes or until rice is tender. **Do not stir the rice during the cooking process.**
3. Allow a 5-minute standing time, if necessary, after the rice finishes cooking. Fluff with fork and serve.

Makes 3 cups

**Nutrition information per serving:** 246 calories; 2 grams fat; 5 grams protein; 50 grams carbohydrate; 1 gram fiber; 783 milligrams sodium

### Variations

Add one or more of the following to the above ingredients:

- Saute ½ cup diced onion in 1 tablespoon oil until tender, about 5 minutes. Add sautéed onions to the uncooked rice. Cook rice according to directions. When fluffing rice with a fork, add ¼ cup minced fresh parsley.
- Saute 1 cup sliced baby portobello mushrooms in 1 tablespoon oil until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the sautéed mushrooms to the uncooked rice. Cook rice according to directions.
- Substitute chicken or beef broth for the water. Cook according to directions.
- Add 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning and ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese when fluffing rice with a fork.
- Add ½ cup cooked frozen peas when fluffing rice.



## Béchamel or White Sauce

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Ground white pepper, to taste
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- Sprinkle of freshly grated nutmeg (optional)

### Directions

1. Put butter or margarine in a microwave-safe, 1-quart casserole dish.
2. Heat on HIGH for 30 to 45 seconds or until melted.
3. Stir in flour and salt. Blend to a smooth paste (roux).
4. Heat on HIGH for 30 seconds or until roux bubbles.
5. Whisk in milk gradually, stirring or beating constantly, until smooth.
6. Cook on HIGH for 2 to 3 minutes, or until thickened. Stir every 30 seconds during cooking to prevent lumps.
7. Add white pepper and nutmeg to taste.

Makes 1 cup

**Nutrition information per serving:** 84 calories; 6 grams fat; 2 grams protein; 5 grams carbohydrate; 0 grams fiber; 384 grams sodium

#### Variations

**Mornay Sauce** — After the sauce has thickened, add ¼ cup grated Gruyere cheese and ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese. Stir to melt the cheeses. If sauce is too thick, add a small amount of milk.

**Cheddar Cheese Sauce** — After sauce has thickened, add ½ cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese. Stir to melt the cheese. If sauce is too thick, add a small amount of milk.

**Herb Sauce** — After sauce has thickened, add 1 teaspoon minced fresh herbs or ½ teaspoon dried herbs. Cook for 30 seconds longer.



### Microwave Sweet Potato or Baked Potato

#### Ingredients

1 medium sized sweet or russet potato

#### Directions

1. Scrub the outside of the potato with a vegetable brush under cool running water to remove dirt.
2. Puncture a few times with a fork to allow the steam to escape.
3. Place the potato on a paper towel in a microwave-safe dish.
4. Cook on HIGH for 6 to 7 minutes. Turn over and rotate the potato halfway through cooking.

#### Variations:

- Top baked potato with vegetables, cheese, chili, or whatever else you would like.
- Top sweet potato with a little cinnamon sugar or salt and pepper.

Makes 1 serving

#### *Sweet Potato*

**Nutrition information per serving:** 150 calories; 0 grams fat; 2 grams protein; 38 grams carbohydrate; 4 grams fiber; 70 milligrams sodium

#### *Potato*

**Nutrition information per serving:** 160 calories; 0 grams fat; 4 grams protein; 36 grams carbohydrate; 4 grams fiber; 20 milligrams sodium



## Microwave Scrambled Eggs

### Ingredients

- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon milk or water

### Directions

1. Spray glass bowl or other microwave-safe dish with nonstick spray.
2. Add milk or water and egg, blending lightly with a fork.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and cook on HIGH for 30 to 45 seconds for 1 egg. Remove from microwave and stir.
4. Cover and let stand 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Season to taste

### Variations

- Add onions, peppers, or other vegetables before microwaving to add color and flavor to the eggs.
- Sprinkle with cheese or top with salsa after taking the eggs out of the microwave.

Makes 1 serving

**Nutrition information per serving:** 70 calories; 5 grams fat; 6 grams protein; 70 milligrams sodium



## Microwave Chicken Tortilla Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 14-ounce bag whole-kernel corn, frozen
- 1 15-ounce can black beans
- 1 15-ounce can kidney or cannellini beans
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, no sodium
- 1 4-ounce can green chilies, chopped and drained
- 1 14.5-ounce can chicken broth, low sodium
- 1 10-ounce can chunked chicken
- 1 10-ounce can Cheddar cheese soup (reduced fat and/or sodium)
- Optional toppings: crushed tortilla chips, shredded cheese, diced tomatoes

### Directions

1. Open all the cans.
2. Drain and rinse beans in a strainer.
3. Place all ingredients in a large microwave-safe bowl and cover with plastic wrap.
4. Cook on high for 18 minutes, stirring 3 times or until chicken is heated through.
5. Serve.

Makes 10 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 170 calories; 4 grams fat; 13 grams protein; 22 grams carbohydrate; 5 grams fiber; 520 milligrams sodium



## Breakfast Banana Bread

### Ingredients

- ½ cup ripe banana, mashed
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda

### Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine banana, brown sugar, oil, milk, vanilla, and egg.
2. In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda.
3. Add flour mixture to banana mixture. Stir just until moistened.
4. Pour into a wax paper-lined, 9-inch round microwave-safe baking dish.
5. Microwave on MEDIUM for 5 to 6 minutes.

### Topping

#### Ingredients

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine

#### Directions

1. While bread is cooking, combine brown sugar, flour and cinnamon in a small bowl.
2. Cut in margarine until mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle on baked bread.
3. Microwave on HIGH for 2 to 3 minutes until center springs back when lightly touched.
4. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Makes 9 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 220 calories; 8 grams fat; 3 grams protein; 35 grams carbohydrate; 1 gram fiber; 231 milligrams sodium



## Glazed Microwave Meatloaf

### Ingredients

- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ¼ cup fine bread or cracker crumbs
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ pounds lean ground meat
- ½ cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

### Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together eggs, bread or cracker crumbs, onion, salt and pepper.
2. Add ground meat and mix completely.
3. In a microwave-safe dish, form meat mixture into a donut shape (to allow for more even cooking).
4. In a small bowl, combine ketchup, brown sugar, and mustard. Spread mixture evenly over top of meatloaf.
5. Microwave on HIGH for 6 minutes. Turn dish and microwave on HIGH for 6 to 8 minutes.
6. Let stand 5 minutes. Meatloaf is done with meat thermometer reads 160°F.

Makes 6 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 260 calories; 11 grams fat; 25 grams protein; 15 grams carbohydrate; 1 gram fiber; 740 milligrams sodium



## Baked Caramel Apples

### Ingredients

- 3 medium apples
- ½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons margarine, melted
- ½ cup miniature marshmallows
- ⅓ cup chopped nuts (optional)

### Directions

1. Wash, core, and slice apples but do not peel.
2. Place apples in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap.
3. Place bowl in microwave, cook on HIGH power for 2 minutes or until apples are almost tender.
4. Combine brown sugar and flour in a small bowl. Slowly blend in milk and margarine. Spoon mixture over apples.
5. Sprinkle marshmallows and nuts over apples.
6. Cover apples with plastic wrap, microwave on HIGH power for 2 to 4 minutes or until apples are tender and sauce is bubbling. Serve warm.

Makes 6 servings

**Nutrition information per serving (½ apple):** 210 calories; 4.5 grams fat; 1 gram protein; 45 grams carbohydrate; 4 grams fiber; 65 milligrams sodium



## Microwave Chili

### Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 2 14.5-ounce cans stewed tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons mustard
- 1 16-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, mix together beef and onion.
2. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 2 ½ minutes and stir.
3. Cover and microwave an additional 3 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Drain grease.
4. Add tomatoes, chili powder, and mustard; stir well.
5. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes.
6. Add kidney beans and mix well. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 3 minutes.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Makes 4 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 510 calories; 20 grams fat; 41 grams protein; 40 grams carbohydrate; 11 grams fiber; 660 milligram sodium



## Italian Microwave Risotto

### Ingredients

- ½ cup finely chopped white onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup uncooked arborio rice (short grain)
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup shredded Italian cheese
- ¼ – ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 4 cups baby spinach, lightly chopped
- 1 8-ounce package baby portobello or button mushrooms, sliced
- 8 ounces ground Italian sausage
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Mix together onion, butter, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and garlic powder in a large microwave safe pitcher or bowl.
2. Microwave on HIGH 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Stir in rice and microwave on HIGH 2 minutes.
4. Stir in 3 cups chicken broth. Cover tightly with plastic wrap (do not vent). Microwave on HIGH 9 to 11 minutes. Carefully swirl bowl without uncovering and microwave 8 minutes more.
5. Meanwhile, crumble and brown Italian sausage in a large nonstick skillet over MEDIUM-HIGH heat until cooked thoroughly. Remove from skillet and drain off grease.
6. In the same skillet, sauté baby portobello mushrooms in 1 tablespoon olive oil over MEDIUM-HIGH heat 5 to 6 minutes or until tender.
7. Stir in spinach, cook 1 minute or until wilted.
8. Carefully remove and discard the plastic wrap from rice. Add Italian cheese and ¼ cup chicken broth, stirring 30

- seconds to 1 minute or until creamy.
9. Stir in Italian sausage and mushroom-spinach mixture.
  10. Add ¼ cup additional broth, 1 tablespoon at a time, if necessary, for desired consistency.
  11. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 322 calories; 16 grams fat; 14 grams protein; 31 grams carbohydrate; 2 grams fiber; 511 milligrams sodium



## Microwave Cheesy Green Beans and Carrots

### Ingredients

- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1½ teaspoon butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon flour
- ⅔ cup low-fat milk
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced
- ¼ teaspoon ground paprika
- ½ teaspoon instant chicken bouillon granules
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ cup grated mild Cheddar cheese
- 2 cups whole green beans, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup carrots, fresh or frozen
- 2 tablespoons water

### Directions

1. Combine green beans, carrots, and water in a 1-quart casserole dish. Cover.
2. Microwave on HIGH 6 to 8 minutes, or until fork tender, stirring after half the time.
3. Let stand, covered.
4. Place onion and butter/margarine in 2-cup measure.
5. Microwave on HIGH 1 to 1 ½ minutes or until onion is tender; stir in flour.
6. Microwave a few seconds until flour mixture starts to bubble.
7. Add remaining ingredients, except cheddar cheese, stirring until melted.
8. Drain vegetables.
9. Pour cheese sauce over vegetables and stir to coat.

Makes 6 servings

**Nutrition information per serving:** 70 calories; 3 grams fat; 3 grams protein; 8 grams carbohydrate; 2 grams fiber; 210 milligrams sodium

**HEF611  
Handout 2**

# Examples of Food Labels on Microwavable Products

**Nutrition Facts**  
Serving Size 1 Package (258 g)  
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 270	Calories from Fat 60
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 7g	<b>11%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g	<b>15%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 610mg	<b>25%</b>
<b>Potassium</b> 450mg	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 35g	<b>12%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>8%</b>
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 17g	<b>22%</b>
Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 8% • Iron 10%	

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium	Less than 3,500mg	3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g
*protein	50g	65g

0 13800 18807 6

**FOR FOOD SAFETY & QUALITY, FOLLOW THESE**

## Cooking Instructions

**MICROWAVE OVEN (1100 WATTS):**  
Directions developed using 1100 watt microwave oven. Ovens vary; cooking time may need adjusting.

prep	cook	stir	cook again
	<b>3</b> MINUTES		<b>1 1/2</b> MINUTES
Cut film to vent.	on high.	and re-cover.	on high. Let stand 1 minute to complete cooking. <b>Enjoy!</b>

**conventional oven:** preheat 350° f • cut film to vent • place tray on baking sheet, center rack • cook 30 minutes • let stand 1 minute

**Will be hot!** Ensure product reaches an internal temperature of 160°F.  
Do not prepare in toaster oven. Do not reheat tray.

**GOOD TO REMEMBER**

Need some edible inspiration? Go to [meals.com/balance](http://meals.com/balance) for simple tips on ways to complement your entrée with fruits, vegetables and dairy.



**Nestlé.**

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Dishes you can accessorize. This delicious dish is 270 calories, so you can add some extras and maintain your healthy lifestyle.

**GOOD QUESTION**

How does LEAN CUISINE® make delicious so nutritious?

**GOOD TO TALK**

[LeanCuisine.com](http://LeanCuisine.com) or [Nestleusa.com](http://Nestleusa.com)  
1-800-993-8625



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS CARTON

# PAGODA<sup>®</sup> Express

**Authentic Asian Style Taste in Minutes<sup>®</sup>**  
 Discover the authentic taste Pagoda Express™ products offer. Try all of our crispy egg rolls, savory potstickers and wonton varieties – ready for you in minutes!

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 pieces (77g)  
 Servings Per Container about 3

Amount Per Serving	Potstickers with Sauce	Potstickers
<b>Calories</b>	190	190
Calories from Fat	90	90

	% Daily Value**	
<b>Total Fat</b> 10g*	15%	15%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%	15%
Trans Fat 0g		
<b>Cholesterol</b> 15mg	5%	5%
<b>Sodium</b> 260mg	22%	11%
<b>Potassium</b> 180mg	5%	5%
<b>Total Carb.</b> 18g	6%	6%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%	4%
Sugars 2g		

Protein 6g		
Vitamin A	0%	0%
Vitamin C	4%	4%
Calcium	2%	2%
Iron	2%	2%

\*Amount in Potstickers. Potstickers with Sauce contribute an additional 270mg Sodium.  
 \*\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium	3,500 mg	3,500 mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
 Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

## COOKING INSTRUCTIONS: PREPARE FROM FROZEN STATE.



**MICROWAVE (850 WATTS):** Based on one bag of potstickers. 1. Remove frozen product from package and place unopened bag into microwave oven. 2. Microwave on high for 1-1/2 minutes. 3. Let stand 1 minute before opening bag.

**PAN FRY (FOR TRADITIONAL COOKING METHOD):** 1. Add 1 tablespoon of oil, and 1/4 cup of water to a non-stick skillet. 2. Remove potstickers from bag and place flat side down in skillet. 3. Cover and cook on med-high heat for 9 to 10 minutes or until bottoms of potstickers are brown. 4. Let cool for 2 minutes before serving.

**KEEP FROZEN - DO NOT RE-FREEZE IF THAWED. COOK BEFORE EATING.**  
 Due to oven variances, cooking times may require adjustment.  
 Refrigerate or discard any unused portion.



Questions or Comments?  
 Please call: 1.866.724.6322  
[www.pagodaexpress.com](http://www.pagodaexpress.com)

## Authentic Asian Style Taste in Minutes®

Discover the authentic taste Pagoda Express™ products offer. Try all of our crispy egg rolls, savory potstickers and wonton varieties – ready for you in minutes!

### COOKING INSTRUCTIONS



**CONVENTIONAL OVEN:** FOR BEST RESULTS. Preheat oven to 425°F. Remove egg roll(s) from carton and inner wrapper. Place egg roll(s) on baking tray and place on top oven rack. **COOKING TIME:** Cook for 18 - 20 minutes. (CAUTION: Tray and product will be hot.)

**MICROWAVE (850 watts):** Based on one egg roll. Remove egg roll from carton and inner wrapper. Wrap egg roll in a paper towel and place on microwave-safe plate inside oven. Cooking time 1 minute 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Let stand 1 minute before serving.

WeightWatchers®  
**Smart Ones**

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sign-up for savings  
eatyourbest.com - or -  
facebook.com/eatyourbest



# Food with Principles...

Smart Ones is committed to providing smart food choices to support you while managing your weight. That's why we follow a set of six smart eating principles when creating food for you. We promise to be there throughout the day with smart breakfasts, snacks, meals and desserts inspired by these principles:

*Eat Your Best™!*

- 1 Portion control so you can eat the foods you love
- 2 Breakfast is crucial, because it starts your day right & helps control hunger
- 3 Smart eating includes a variety of foods with protein
- 4 Whole grains, fruit and vegetables can keep you fuller, longer
- 5 Smart desserts and snacks can help you stay on track
- 6 Support and knowledge are critical to making smart food choices

## MICROWAVE OVEN ONLY (developed using a 1200 watt model on HIGH)

- 1 Remove tray from outer carton; pull back corner of film to vent.
- 2 Cook on HIGH for 2 minutes and 30 seconds.
- 3 Pull back film and stir. Replace film.
- 4 Cook on HIGH for 1 minute. Let stand in microwave 1 minute.
- 5 When removing from microwave, hold onto the tray's side handles. Remove film. Stir and enjoy!

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Package (255g)  
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving  
**Calories 260** Calories from Fat 60

	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b> 7g	11%
Saturated Fat 1g	6%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 3.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 2g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 20mg	6%
<b>Sodium</b> 490mg	21%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 36g	12%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 10g	
<b>Protein</b> 13g	

Vitamin A 8% • Vitamin C 40%  
Calcium 4% • Iron 8%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.  
Calories: 2,000 2,500

Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

FOR FOOD SAFETY AND BEST QUALITY, FOLLOW THESE COOKING INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY:

- KEEP FROZEN UNTIL READY TO USE.
- COOK THOROUGHLY BEFORE EATING.
- ADJUSTMENT TO COOKING TIMES MAY BE REQUIRED DUE TO VARIATIONS IN ALL MICROWAVE OVENS.
- USE CAUTION AS PRODUCT AND PACKAGING WILL BE HOT.
- DO NOT REUSE TRAY.
- DO NOT PREPARE IN CONVENTIONAL OR TOASTER OVEN.

**165°F** CHECK THAT PRODUCT IS COOKED THOROUGHLY. INTERNAL TEMPERATURE NEEDS TO REACH 165°F AS MEASURED BY A FOOD THERMOMETER.

**IMPORTANT: KEEP FROZEN DO NOT REFREEZE**

**DIRECTIONS**

**MIX SOUP + 1 CAN WATER**

**MICROWAVE:** HEAT, COVERED, IN MICROWAVABLE BOWL ON HIGH 2 1/2 TO 3 MINUTES. CAREFUL, LEAVE IN MICROWAVE 1 MINUTE, THEN STIR.

**STOVE:** HEAT, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY.

**CREAMIER SOUP:** USE 1 CAN MILK.

**CAUTION:** METAL EDGES ARE SHARP. RECOMMEND USE BY DATE ON CAN END. PROMPTLY REFRIGERATE UNUSED SOUP IN SEPARATE CONTAINER.

**INSTRUCCIONES**

**MEZCLE LA SOPA + 1 LATA DE AGUA**

**MICROONDAS:** CALIENTE, TAPADA, EN UN TAZÓN APTO PARA MICROONDAS EN POSICIÓN HIGH DURANTE 2 1/2 A 3 MINUTOS. CON CUIDADO, DEJE EN EL MICROONDAS DURANTE UN MINUTO, LUEGO REVUELVA.

**COCINA:** CALIENTE, REVOLVIENDO OCASIONALMENTE.

**PARA UNA SOPA MÁS CREMOSA:** UTILICE UNA LATA DE LECHE.

**PRECAUCIÓN:** LOS BORDES METÁLICOS SON FILOSOS. SE RECOMIENDA USAR ANTES DE LA FECHA INDICADA EN LA BASE DE LA LATA. REFRIGERE INMEDIATAMENTE EN UN RECIPIENTE SEPARADO LA SOPA QUE NO HA CONSUMIDO.

**Nutrition Facts**

Serv. Size 1/2 cup (120mL)  
condensed soup  
Servings about 2.5

**Calories** 90  
Fat Cal. 0

\*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Amount/serving	%DV*	Amount/serving	%DV*
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>	<b>Sodium</b> 480mg	<b>20%</b>
Sat. Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>	<b>Potassium</b> 690mg	<b>20%</b>
Trans Fat 0g		<b>Total Carb.</b> 20g	<b>7%</b>
Polyunsat. Fat 0g		Fiber 1g	<b>4%</b>
Monounsat. Fat 0g		Sugars 12g	
<b>Cholest.</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>	<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 8% • Vitamin C 10% • Calcium 0% • Iron 4%			



## MY GUARANTEE

These products are dedicated to my mother, Michelina, who used only the finest ingredients when preparing her homemade sauces, pasta, and rice dishes. Don't let the low price fool you. I guarantee you'll like this product as much as or more than any similar product at even double our price. I wouldn't sell a product with my mother's name on it unless it was good and the best value. - *Luigino Paulucci*

## Cooking Guidelines

For food safety and quality, follow these cooking instructions. Cook thoroughly to at least 160°F before eating. Do not leave microwave unattended. Promptly refrigerate unused portions. Ovens vary. Cooking times and oven temperatures may need adjustment.

### MICROWAVE OVEN (1100 Watt)

- 1 BEFORE COOKING**, lift corner of lid to vent. Do not fully remove lid.
- 2 MICROWAVE** on HIGH for 3½ minutes.
- 3 OPEN LID**, stir pasta and sauce separately, re-cover, then continue to cook on HIGH for an additional 1 to 1½ minutes.
- 4 LET STAND** in microwave for 1 to 2 minutes.
- 5 REMOVE LID. (CAREFUL, IT'S HOT!)** Mix contents together and serve.

### CONVENTIONAL OVEN (REMOVE FOOD FROM PAPER TRAY)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. **REMOVE food from tray.** Place in similar size oven-safe dish. Cover.
3. Cook product 25 minutes; stir and cook an additional 20 minutes.
4. Remove from oven. Let stand 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Carefully remove cover, **IT'S HOT!** Mix contents together and serve.

**CAUTION: DO NOT USE PACKAGE IN CONVENTIONAL OR TOASTER OVENS.**



**FOR FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY, FOLLOW BAKING DIRECTIONS; DO NOT MICROWAVE. COOK THOROUGHLY TO AT LEAST 160°F.** Keep frozen until ready to use. Remove pizza from box and wrapper before baking. Refrigerate leftovers.

**PARA CALIDAD Y CONSUMO SEGURO DEL PRODUCTO, SIGA LAS INSTRUCCIONES PARA HORNEAR; NO UTILICE HORNO DE MICROONDAS. COCINE POR COMPLETO HASTA ALCANZAR 160°F.** Mantenga congelado hasta antes de hornear. Saque la pizza de la caja y de la envoltura. Refrigere la comida sobrante.

## BAKING DIRECTIONS / INSTRUCCIONES PARA HORNEAR



**HEAT** oven to 450°F.  
(Do not microwave.)

**CALIENTE** el horno a 450°F.  
(No utilice horno de microondas.)



**PLACE** pizza on middle oven rack.  
**COLOQUE** la pizza en la parilla intermedia del horno.



**BAKE** 14 to 16 minutes or until cheese in center is melted.

**HORNEE** de 14 a 16 minutos o hasta que se derrita el queso del centro.

### Tip:

For a slightly softer crust, make as directed - except place pizza on cookie sheet; bake 17 to 19 minutes.

Para una masa más suave: Siga las instrucciones pero coloque la pizza en una bandeja para hornear galletas. De 17 a 19 minutos.



Here is Amy's Original Pot Pie filling baked in a "handy to hold" non-dairy pocket sandwich. It's made from organic vegetables and tofu simmered in the same delicately flavored sauce that makes Amy's Vegetable Pot Pie so popular. It's dairy free, a good source of fiber and contains no cholesterol.

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Remove and discard overwrap.
- Place on cookie sheet or foil.
- **Conventional Oven:** Preheat, bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes.
- **Toaster Oven:** Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes.
- Let stand 1-2 minutes.

**Microwave Oven**

- Remove and discard overwrap.
- Place on paper towel.
- Heat on high 2-2½ minutes or until hot. Rotate once during heating.
- Let stand 1-2 minutes before serving.

For crispier crust, place microwaved pocket sandwich in toaster oven for 2-3 minutes at 375°.

Ovens vary so please use these instructions as a guide to the best preparation for your oven.

**COOK THOROUGHLY BEFORE EATING**



**MICROWAVE INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Place** corn in microwave safe dish. ADD  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water (2 tablespoons for half package).
- 2) Cover and microwave** on HIGH for 6-7 minutes\* (4-5 minutes\* for half package); stir halfway through cooking.
- 3) Drain.**



(Cook time based on 1200 watt microwave; cook time may need to be adjusted for your microwave.)



**STOVETOP INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Place** corn in saucepan. ADD  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup for half package). Bring water to a full boil over HIGH heat.
- 2) Reduce** heat to MEDIUM-HIGH and cover. Cook 4-5 minutes\* (3-4 minutes\* for half package), stirring occasionally.
- 3) Drain.**



\* For food safety and best quality, cook to a temperature of 160°F.

**MICROWAVE**

1. Place contents of package and 1 tbsp. water in a microwave-safe dish.
2. Cover and cook on HIGH for 4 minutes.
3. Stir and cook an additional 4 minutes or until heated thoroughly.
4. Season to taste and serve.

**NOTE:** Microwave cooking times may vary depending on microwave used.

Front of package



# RAW-DO NOT MICROWAVE

TO HELP PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS CAUSED BY EATING RAW POULTRY.

## Cooking Instructions:\*

### Conventional Oven

1. Preheat oven to **400°F**.
2. Remove Frozen raw breast(s) From pouch and place on Foil lined baking sheet to capture escaping butter.
3. Bake in preheated oven For a minimum of **28 minutes**.

For Food Safety, cook to a minimum internal temperature of **165°F** measured by a meat thermometer.

**Meat Thermometer Instructions:** Insert meat thermometer 2 inches into the stuffing in the center of the entrée. See Diagram.

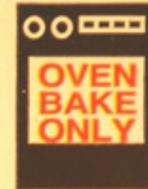
CAUTION: Filling will be hot and may splatter; let stand approximately 2 minutes to cool before serving.

*\*Due to variations in ovens, cooking times may vary.*



**DO NOT MICROWAVE**

**400°F**



**28 min.**

### Meat Thermometer INSTRUCTIONS



## SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

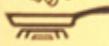
THIS PRODUCT WAS PREPARED FROM INSPECTED AND PASSED MEAT AND/OR POULTRY. SOME FOOD PRODUCTS MAY CONTAIN BACTERIA THAT COULD CAUSE ILLNESS IF THE PRODUCT IS MISHANDLED OR COOKED IMPROPERLY. FOR YOUR PROTECTION, FOLLOW THESE SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS.



KEEP REFRIGERATED OR FROZEN. THAW IN REFRIGERATOR OR MICROWAVE.



KEEP RAW MEAT AND POULTRY SEPARATE FROM OTHER FOODS. WASH WORKING SURFACES (INCLUDING CUTTING BOARDS), UTENSILS, AND HANDS AFTER TOUCHING RAW MEAT OR POULTRY.



COOK THOROUGHLY.



KEEP HOT FOODS HOT. REFRIGERATE LEFTOVERS IMMEDIATELY OR DISCARD.

Prepared with care by:  
AdvancePierre Foods | Barber Foods  
Portland, ME 04112 U.S.A.  
1-800-577-2595



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Take our product survey at  
[www.barberfoods.com/feedback.htm](http://www.barberfoods.com/feedback.htm)

### Proof of Purchase



# Evaluation

## Which activities were done at your meeting?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Know the Wattage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find Your Microwave's Hot Spots
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow Package Instructions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Which Container is Safe?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean that Oven!
- \_\_\_\_\_ View the videos in the ZMAG
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare one of the recipes in the Microwave Oven Recipes handout. Which one? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

I have a microwave oven. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

As a result of this lesson, I know the wattage of the microwave oven. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, what is the wattage? \_\_\_\_\_

## Check the box that best applies to you:

<b>When I microwave foods</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Most of the time</b>	<b>About half the time</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
I follow all the cooking instructions					
I rotate or stir foods during the microwave cooking process					
I check the package label for microwave cooking instructions when I buy foods					
I let the food stand for the "standing time" after the food is heated in the microwave oven					
I increase or decrease cooking times based on my microwave oven					
I use a food thermometer to make sure the food reaches the right temperature					



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Please share a microwave oven tip: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please share a microwave oven recipe that is a favorite with you, your friends or family:  
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Please tell us your age.     19-29     30-39     40-49     50-59     60-69     over 70

**THANK YOU!!!**

Please send the evaluation forms to:

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