



Roast stuffed chicken, bundt cakes, and sauces are easy foods to cook in a microwave. Watch for "The Micro Way" each week and learn how to cook in your microwave!

The Micro Way: your microwave class at home



EDITOR'S NOTE - This new column, designed to help you use your microwave ovens more effectively, will appear in B section each week. The author, Lani Bloomer, has been teaching microwave cooking classes and conducting microwave demonstrations for a number of years.

Lani developed her own classes in beginning, advanced and gourmet microwave cooking, which she has been teaching at Sears for the last three years. She develops and tests all her own recipes for this column.

The mother of two, Lani holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in family economics and home management.

Microwave ovens are just great for cooking! You can roast a chicken in about 20 minutes and a meatloaf takes less than 15 minutes! Four or five baked potatoes are cooked in less than 10 minutes. A bundt cake takes only 19 minutes to bake and turns out tender and moist. Meat cooked properly in a microwave is tender, juicy and moist. Desserts like cheesecake, apple crisp and pumpkin pie are fast, easy and delicious. Sauces and puddings that you would have to cook in a double boiler or stir constantly are easier to make in a microwave.

Maybe you are saying to yourself right now, "That's great, but I can't cook in my microwave. I just use it for reheating and defrosting." I hear this comment all the time from friends and students in my microwave classes. If you feel this way about your microwave, or if you have just gotten a microwave, then I'm writing this column for you! Welcome to "The Micro Way", your personal microwave class at home. Join me here each week and learn to use your microwave for cooking.

Almost all of my cooking and baking is done in a countertop microwave. I put my food in the microwave and cook it until it's

done, just like I used to do on my range. I don't have to look up everything in a cookbook, and you won't either, once you learn a few basic facts about microwave cooking. These "basics" are similar to conventional cooking - you won't have to learn to cook all over again!

I'm not going to tell you to cook everything in your microwave, because not everything cooks well that way. Also, your family may decide that they don't care for the differences in a particular food when it's cooked in a microwave. Foods are generally softer and juicier in texture when properly cooked in a microwave.

Did you know that you don't have to use special microwave recipes? Whether you use convenience mixes or cook from scratch, most of your family's favorite meals and recipes can be adapted to the microwave. I cook the same foods I always did, I just cook them in the microwave now.

Why should you bother to learn to cook in your microwave? After all, it will mean some adjustments in your cooking habits. You already know that microwaves save time. Another advantage is that you can cook and serve foods in the same dishes, so there's less dishwashing. There are two other less well known advantages to microwave cooking which I feel are important.

The first is that you can save up to 75% of the energy you would use to cook items in your range oven. Things like baked potatoes, meatloaf, roast chicken and cakes use one fourth of the electricity if cooked in a microwave instead of an electric range. One meal-in-one recipe I have for barbecued spareribs, baked potatoes and a vegetable costs less than ten cents to cook in the microwave. The same meal would cost almost eighty cents in my electric range oven.

Another advantage is that microwave cooked food is more

nutritious, since it is cooked in a shorter time with less water. You won't lose as many of the B and C vitamins which are destroyed by heat and dissolved in water. You can use your microwave for almost 90 percent of your cooking jobs, and use your range as an accessory! If you do, you will have healthier meals at a lower cost.

Try this recipe for hot fudge sauce, and see how easy it is to cook in your microwave! A 4 or 8 cup measuring cup is a super "pot" for your microwave. The handle stays cool and makes it easy to remove for stirring. A wooden spoon can be left in the sauce during cooking if you like.

Hot Fudge Sauce

1 cup sugar
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
4 tablespoons butter or margarine

1 small (5.3-ounce) can evaporated milk, about 7/8 cup
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Put sugar and cocoa in a 4 cup measure (or 1-or-2-quart bowl) and put the butter or margarine on top. Cook on high for 1-2 minutes until the margarine melts.

Stir in the milk. Cook on high for 2-3 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, until the sauce is boiling.

Stir again and cook on high for one minute with the sauce boiling.

Stir in vanilla. Serve warm. This keeps well refrigerated; reheat on high for 2-3 minutes, stirring every minute. Makes 1 1/2 cups.

In future columns of "The Micro Way" I will give you simple, specific directions and recipes for the things that cook well in a microwave oven. I will tell you about the utensils you really need, the ovens, and their equipment, like temperature probes and power levels. And I'll give you directions for adapting your family's favorite recipes to microwave cooking.

You can learn to be a microwave cook! Join me next week and we'll start with some of the "basics" of cooking the micro way.

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