



## Quick dinners for busy days

Here are three microwave dinners to help you get the food on the table quickly after a long day (or too short a one!). These main dishes can be made from vegetables and meats stored in your freezer or cupboard. The meat can still be frozen when you start the Stir Crazy Turkey or Broccoli Beef Bake, so don't panic when you realize you forgot to get the meat out of the freezer before you left the house!

These dinners are simple and satisfying, and can be ready to eat in about half an hour. Combining convenience foods with other ingredients gives you delicious home-style meals in nothing flat! Keep the ingredients for these casseroles on hand, and you'll be prepared when you need emergency rations.

### Stir Crazy Turkey

1/2 cup turkey broth or 1/2 cup water  
and 1 chicken bouillon cube  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1 3-1/4 ounce can pineapple chunks,  
drained, reserve 1/2 cup juice

1 10-ounce package frozen Japanese style stir-fry vegetables, such as Birds Eye  
2 tablespoons cooking oil  
2 cups cubed cooked turkey (or chicken)  
Cooked rice

1. Cook rice conventionally while preparing this recipe. If using frozen ready cooked rice, thaw and heat, then left the rice stand while preparing turkey.

2. Combine pineapple juice, turkey broth, soy sauce, cornstarch and seasoning packet from vegetables in a small bowl and set aside.

3. Put vegetables in a 2 quart casserole and sprinkle oil over them, stirring to coat. Cook, covered, on high for 3 minutes, stirring once.

4. Stir in turkey and pineapple chunks. Stir sauce mixture and pour over turkey and vegetables. Cook, covered, on high for 8-9 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes until heated through and the sauce is thickened. Serve immediately, over rice. Serves 3-4.

Hint: Substitute canned poultry if desired, or use 1 whole fresh chicken breast (cut in half and cook covered, for about 7-8 minutes, turning meat over once. Let stand a few minutes, then cut meat from bones and cube.) If turkey cubes are frozen, thaw before cooking vegetables in Step 3.

### Broccoli Beef Bake

1 10-ounce package frozen chopped broccoli  
1/4 cup chopped onion (fresh or frozen)  
1/2 pound hamburger (use 1 pound for 6 servings, increase time in step 2)  
1 5 1/2-ounce package Au Gratin Potatoes, such as Betty Crocker Water  
Butter or margarine  
2/3 cup milk, or as directed on package of potatoes

1. In a 2-quart casserole, put the potatoes, and water and margarine called for on the package. Cook, covered with a lid or plastic wrap, for 10 minutes. Set aside to stand. Do not drain.

2. Cook broccoli (right in carton) for 4 minutes on high until thawed. Set aside. (When cooking vegetables in the carton, set carton on a piece of paper towel or a paper plate so the wax from the carton doesn't get on your oven—it's hard to get off!)

3. Put onion and hamburger in a plastic colander, bowl or plate. If using a colander, set in a bowl or plate to catch the drippings. Cook on high, uncovered for 3-4 minutes stirring once, until the hamburger is cooked and the onion tender.

4. Combine the broccoli, hamburger, cheese sauce packet and the milk called for on the carton with the potatoes, stirring until the cheese is smoothly mixed in. Cook on high for 15-18 minutes, stirring twice, until the potatoes are ten-

der. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serves 4-6.

Hint: If the hamburger is frozen, thaw on high for 2-3 minutes, breaking meat apart with a fork, before combining with the onion in Step 3.

Substitute a different frozen or leftover vegetable, if desired; or even substitute 2 cups of cubed cooked or canned meat, such as beef or ham for the hamburger.

### Italian Chops and Noodles

2 cups uncooked thin egg noodles (do not substitute spaghetti or wide noodles!)  
1 small onion, chopped (1/4-1/2 cup)  
3/4 cup water  
1 8-ounce can tomato sauce  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley, fresh, frozen or dried  
1/4 teaspoon oregano  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
2 pounds pork chops, 5-6 chops, sliced about 1/2 inch thick  
Kitchen Bouquet or Microshake, if

desired.

1. Mix everything except the pork chops in a 2-quart flat casserole (12x8 glass or plastic utility dish).

2. Sprinkle Microshake or brush Kitchen Bouquet on the pork chops if browning is desired. Put chops on top of noodle mixture in a single layer, with the larger or thicker meat pieces in the corners. Cover with plastic wrap. Leave one corner open slightly (vented) so steam won't burst the plastic.

3. Cook on high for 22-25 minutes, turning the chops over halfway through the cooking time, until the noodles and chops are tender. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Serve with grated parmesan cheese if desired. Serves 4-5.

Note: These times are for microwaves with 600-700 watts of power. For 500-600 W, add 10 seconds to each minute; for 400-500 W, add 20 seconds to each minute

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## Decorating with holly is ancient custom

MEDIA — "Decking the halls with holly" is an ancient custom several thousand years old. The ancient Romans, Greeks, and the Druids used holly in decorating their homes, says Delaware extension agent Jeff Jabco.

The Druids of pre-Roman Britain believed that the holly was a sacred tree and that the sun never deserted it. Holly growing in a deciduous forest and remaining green all winter was most conspicuous and indeed, somewhat miraculous. It was a custom to decorate the interiors of dwellings with evergreens in which the woodland spirits could take refuge from the rigors of the winter.

During Roman times, wreaths of holly were sent to newlyweds as tokens of good wishes and congratulations — holly was a symbol of good will. Holly also was used during the festival of Saturn, the Roman God of sowing and husbandry, beginning Dec. 17.

Today, the custom of decorating with holly has been taken up during the Christmas season. Many believe that the word holly is

a corruption of the word holy — some English writers of the mid-1500's called the plant "holly" tree. English holly has been used quite extensively for centuries in England and in Europe at Christmas time. Old writings from 1598 reveal that every man's house, the parish churches, the corners of streets, and market-places in London were decorated with holly during the Christmas season. Along the countryside, even the stables and beehives were decorated with a sprig of holly.

The Chinese used their native holly for decorating temple courts and large halls during their New Year's Festivals in February. In areas where American holly was native, the American Indians dried the berries and used holly for decorations and on their clothing. The tradition continues today.

In fact, commercially, some holly orchards are reported to yield up to 3,000 pounds of holly cuttings per acre for sale to the Christmas trade.

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