



## Microwave fish for Lenten meals

Fish is a popular meal during Lent's meatless days, and it is one of the easiest foods to cook in your microwave. Fish cooked in a microwave has a delicate flavor and is very moist and juicy (unless it is overcooked!). In fact, if you are used to dry fish, you (like a man in one of my classes) might think the microwaved fish isn't done because it is so juicy!

Here are the different ways you can cook fish in your microwave. Adapt your own favorite recipes for the microwave, using the techniques and times here to cook them. Then enjoy moist, wonderfully flavored fish.

All fish should be defrosted before cooking. The only exception would be precooked, frozen fish sticks or patties that just need reheating. If you cook fish while it's still frozen, the outside will be overcooked before the center thaws and cooks.

Do not defrost fish completely in the microwave, or the edges will start cooking. Partially defrost on

low (defrost, 30) for 5 minutes per pound and let stand for about 5 minutes. Separate pieces, and finish defrosting on the counter or under cold running water.

Leave fish uncovered, or cover it loosely with a piece of wax paper. Cook it 4-5 minutes a pound on high for fillets. If you are baking a whole or stuffed fish, it would be better to cook it on medium power (50) for 8-10 minutes per pound. This gives heat time to reach the center evenly. Cover whole fish with wax paper. Let fillets stand for 2-3 minutes; let a whole fish stand for about 5 minutes.

Don't use liquids in the pan, unless you are putting a tablespoon or two of lemon juice, wine, etc. on the fish for added flavor. Cover the pan with vented plastic wrap (leave a little corner open) or a lid. If you are steaming the fish on top of chopped vegetables, cook the vegetables first for 5-6 minutes per pound before putting the fish on top. Steam the fish for 4-5 minutes

per pound for fillets. Let stand 2-3 minutes.

**Poaching:** Much less water is used for poaching fish in the microwave than on the range. Use only 1/4 to 1/2 cup liquids to mix with the spices. If you need more liquid to make a sauce after poaching, use the amount needed for the sauce.

In a flat dish just large enough to hold the fish, heat the liquids, spices, and vegetables (if used), until boiling. Add the fish and cover with a lid or vented plastic wrap. Cook on high for 5-6 minutes per pound for fillets, or 8-9 minutes per pound for a whole fish. Let stand 2-5 minutes depending on size of fish pieces.

**Fried:** Melt 1-2 tablespoons butter or margarine on a preheated browning grill and fry fish uncovered (or cover with a paper towel to prevent splatters) on high. Turn fish over when juices start to appear on top. Your browning grill directions will give you times for preheating and cooking.

**Reheating:** Breaded fish should be heated, uncovered, on a rack or "bacon cooker" type pan to prevent sogginess. Breaded coverings will not be crispy when heated in the microwave. One pound of frozen fish sticks will take 10-12 minutes on medium (50,5) to thaw and heat. Using the lower power gives the center time to heat evenly. If you have only high power, heat for 5-6 minutes per pound, but let the fish stand for a few minutes halfway through the cooking. Most packages have microwave directions on the boxes. If your favorite brand doesn't, write to the manufacturer and ask for them (the address is usually on the box). Unbreaded fish will reheat more evenly if you cover it while reheating.

Here are a few miscellaneous tips for cooking fish in the microwave and an easy sauce recipe you might want to try for variety.

-For cooking, arrange the fish in a single layer, with the thicker portions to the outside. Overlap or shield very thin areas. Halfway through the cooking time, rearrange the pieces, if necessary, for even cooking. Turn large whole or stuffed fish over once during the cooking time. Fish should flake easily after a standing time of 2-5 minutes. It is easily overcooked, so time it carefully.

- Sprinkle a little white wine, vermouth or lemon juice over the fish before cooking. This gives fish a delicate flavor without such a fishy odor or taste.

- Fish cools quickly, so cook it just before serving. If you have other foods (potatoes, vegetables, etc.) to cook in the microwave, cook them first, and cook the fish last, while the other foods stand.

- To remove strong odors from your microwave, combine 1/2 cup water, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 2-3 whole cloves in a one cup measure. Boil for 2-3 minutes. Wipe moisture from inside oven and let door stand open for a short time.

The following recipe for Lemon Dill Sauce is similar to tartar sauce, but has a different flavor. It can be served cold, hot, or spread on top of fish fillets before baking.

### Lemon Dill Sauce

2 tablespoons butter or margarine  
1 teaspoon dried dill weed (not seed)

Juice and grated rind from one lemon

1 cup mayonnaise  
Melt butter in a 2-cup measure, stir in dill and lemon, then mayonnaise, stirring until smooth. Make the sauce ahead of time to let the full flavor develop. Chill, or heat before serving as desired. Makes 1 1/4 cups. Note: The cooking times above are for microwaves with 600-700 watts of power. For 500-600 W ovens, add 10 second to each minute; for 400-500 W, add 20 seconds to each minute.

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## Low blood sugar doesn't always mean hypoglycemia

**SOUTHAMPTON** —ave you complained lately of weakness, headache, anxiety, fast heart action, hunger sensations, sweating? And has someone told you that these are the symptoms of hypoglycemia?

'Tain't necessarily so! Hypoglycemic reactions, says Dairy Council Inc., Southampton, do not necessarily indicate the presence of this chronic illness.

Hypoglycemia means abnormally low blood sugar. Lots of conditions are diagnosed as hypoglycemic, but may be temporary rather than persistent low blood sugar.

Just what is hypoglycemia? It is a persistent, chronic low blood sugar condition that results from a serious dysfunction of the pancreas or liver—organs which are involved in the use and control of our body fuel. The condition occurs when the body becomes unable to process carbohydrates properly. It cannot regulate insulin release and thus maintain adequate blood glucose levels.

One type of temporary hypoglycemia reaction is caused by fasting. It can occur at night or just before breakfast. The low blood sugar symptoms are identical to the true chronic illness, but are a result of inadequate energy intake—a temporary condition that clears up as soon as food is taken.

A temporary low blood sugar level after a meal has been seen among certain types of people—especially thin, nervous women. Even some healthy people do not consume enough calories at lunch, and often find themselves out of energy and lightheaded by three o'clock.

Skipping meals can bring about these symptoms, too. Generally a

balanced diet from the four food groups—milk, meats, fruits and vegetables, and grains—in the recommended servings for adults of, respectively, 2-2-4-4, will eliminate temporary bouts of low blood sugar reaction.

A Mayo Clinic research project has found that chromium intake may help some people who complain of hypoglycemic symptoms. The average human being needs to absorb only 1 mcg. each day of chromium; this mineral is needed by the body in minute amounts. It is found in meats, poultry, fish, whole grain breads, cereals, cheese, nuts, dried fruits, and some vegetables.

These studies showed that ingesting chromium raised glucose levels in people, and seemed to alleviate hypoglycemic signs. However, this research remains at a very preliminary level of investigation.

In the meantime, says Dairy Council, a balanced diet of regularly-spaced meals three times a day should help reduce any symptomatic reactions. If symptoms persist, however, it is wise to consult a physician.



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