



Browning Grills

Is your browning grill gathering dust in the back cupboard? Dust it off and heat it up. It's great for snacks and getting a quick meal for your teenager when he finally gets home from basketball practice!

A microwave browning grill is a frying pan for a microwave oven. It is used for frying things that you would fry in a skillet or pan on top of the stove. A few foods, such as an open faced grilled cheese sandwich or frozen french fries, that would be cooked under a broiler or in a hot oven can also be cooked on one of these grills.

People ask me all the time, "Could I brown a turkey on a browning grill?" No. Would you brown a turkey in a frying pan on top of your stove? (Besides, the fat in the turkey skin does brown a little in the microwave all by itself!)

Fried eggs, grilled cheese sandwiches, crispy fish sticks, toasted appetizers, frozen french fries, grilled fruits, and browned chops, steaks and hamburgers are foods that you can cook on a browning grill. Most of these foods could not be cooked very well in the microwave without a browning grill. Reheat pizza on a browning grill for a brown, crispy crust.

There are disadvantages to the browning grills, though. They are best for small quantities of food. With large amounts, you have to cook in batches, reheating the grill in between. If you crowd the food

together on the grill, it won't brown as well.

I didn't care for steaks and chops cooked on a browning grill because they don't get as brown or crispy as when grilled under a broiler. Pork chops sometimes get dried out. However, other people have reported excellent results with these meats on their grills.

Other disadvantages are that foods splatter when cooked on a grill, so you have to wipe the oven out. (This can be a problem with micro/convection ovens, but isn't with a regular microwave.) Also, frying foods usually produces some smoke. Is your microwave near an exhaust fan?

Browning grills are best, I think, for cooking meals for one of two people. If your family has split meal hours, a browning grill can whip up a couple of hamburgers and some frozen french fries in about 10 minutes.

If you are thinking about buying a grill, get the largest one that will fit in your microwave. The grills are expensive, and the larger ones can do much more than the smaller ones, even for a single person. Not only do the larger ones hold more, they seem to do a better job of browning the food.

Some grills come with a cookbook with timing suggestions for meal combinations. This makes learning to use the grill easier. And some grills come with a plastic cover to contain the splatters.

Here are some tips for getting the most out of your browning

-Always use high power for browning grills. When preheating the empty grill, a special coating on the grill absorbs the microwave power, and heats up. This makes the grill hot, just like a frying pan preheated on a burner.

-Preheat the grill according to the directions that came with your grill. My grill is preheated for four to five minutes for eggs, hamburgers and sandwiches; and for eight to nine minutes for larger items like steaks. If the food burns on the first side, it's been preheating too long. If it doesn't brown enough, you may need to preheat longer.

-The first side of the food placed on the grill will get the brownest. Cook the food for a short time on the first side, then a longer time on the second for even browning.

-Usually foods need some sort of fat to brown well. Butter bread products to get them toasty brown. Grease the grill when cooking foods that don't contain much fat. Spraying a vegetable oil on a hot grill produces a lot of smoke; liquid or solid shortening is better.

-To grease a hot grill lightly, take a little of the wrapper off one end of a stick of margarine or butter. Holding the wrapped end, run the unwrapped end over the grill. The hot surface melts off as much as you want!

-When the grill is hot, you will probably need potholders to handle it. Be careful where you set it to cool. A man once told me he's melted his countertop and scorched a breadboard setting the hot grill down! Leave the grill in the microwave, set it on a cake rack, or on your stove top to cool.

-Some grills get black and terribly dirty looking when they are used, especially if they are

reheated between batches of food. In spite of their looks, they aren't too hard to clean. Cleanser and a dish cloth will remove blackened drippings. If your directions say not to use cleanser, baking soda does just as well.

-A browning grill should always be used on the bottom of your oven.

Do not put the grill on a metal rack. Whole meal cooking with the grill on the bottom and other foods on the rack is very difficult, since the grill doesn't get full power.

Watch for The Micro Way next week for browning grill recipes and meal combinations.

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4-H babysitting course set for January

CREAMERY - Youth ages eleven to fourteen years old are invited to attend a 4-H babysitting course, offered for five consecutive Monday evenings starting Jan. 13, in the Mainland area. The course will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at a building on the corner of Sumneytown Pike and Upper Mainland Road.

The following topics will be covered: babysitters responsibilities, child development and appropriate games, feeding, diapering, infant and child care, first aid and sitter safety. Those

who successfully complete the course will receive a 4-H Achievement certificate and ribbon. All participants will automatically become 4-H members.

The course will be taught by Marci Yoder, who is a 4-H leader and a former Penn View Christian School teacher. There is a fee of \$5 for registration and materials. Class size is limited and registration is required. For more information contact Helaine Brown, 4-H Agent, at 489-4315, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.



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