

THE MICRO WAY LANI BLOOMER



Let The Kids Cook Dinner!
Teaching your children to cook is really terrific for them. Not only does it give them something to do when they can't find anything to do, it helps develop confidence and independence too. It teaches them

to follow directions, to complete tasks, and maybe, to clean up after themselves!

Boys like to cook as much as girls (if they're given a chance!) and need to learn. A newly-divorced man I met recently points out why: he'd never cooked

anything in his life, and at 30, he suddenly has to learn.

So cut out these two recipes, hand them to your children and tell them it's their turn to cook dinner next weekend. If you want to go all the way, have them make out a grocery list and let them do the shopping too!

Both recipes are easy to make, and are kid tested for taste and technique. Younger children may need help chopping the onion (use frozen chopped if necessary).

Once they've tried each recipe "as is" teach them to be creative cooks by substituting other ingredients. One day "make do" with what you have on hand in your cupboard. Another day, plan changes and purchase ingredients if necessary.

Use a can of tuna or spam in the casserole instead of the hot dogs; try different vegetables or a different type of cheese. In the Crunchy Champs, add some miniature marshmallows, or try using butterscotch chips or different cereal.

Serve this casserole with fruit and Crunchy Champ cookies for dessert. You'll have a well balanced meal that's easy to fix. Make the cookies ahead of time, so they can chill and be cut for dinner.

Hot Dog Casserole

(Total cooking time: 15 minutes)

2 large potatoes
1 small onion

1 10-ounce package frozen mixed vegetables (2 cups)
1 10-ounce can cream of celery soup
½ cup milk
1 4-ounce package shredded cheddar cheese (1 cup), divided
½ pound hot dogs (5 to 6)
Utensils Needed:
2-quart microwave safe casserole with a lid
Sharp knife and cutting board
Vegetable peeler
Measuring cup
Small bowl
Large spoon

1. Peel potatoes and cut into ½-inch cubes. Peel and chop onion; you should have about ¼ cup onion. Put potatoes and onion in casserole. Open package of vegetables and dump in casserole too. Stir to mix things up. Put the cover on.

2. Microwave on high power for four minutes: stir. Put cover back on and microwave on high for four minutes longer, until the vegetables are almost tender.

3. While vegetables are cooking, cut the hot dogs into ½-inch slices. Then make the sauce: In the small bowl, mix up the soup, milk, and ½ cup of the cheese. (Save the other ½ cup cheese to sprinkle on top later.)

4. After vegetables are cooked, stir in the hot dogs and the sauce, mixing well. Put the cover on.

5. Microwave on high for three minutes. Stir, then recover. Microwave for three minutes longer, until everything is very hot. Stir again.

6. Sprinkle the ½ cup cheese on top. Leave the cover off and microwave on high for about one minute, until the cheese melts. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Crunchy Champs

1 12-ounce package chocolate chips
1 cup smooth peanut butter

1 cup quick cooking oats
2 cups flake wheat cereal, slightly crushed
1 cup coconut
1 cup raisins OR 1 cup chopped nuts
Utensils needed:
Large glass or plastic bowl
11 x 7-inch or 12 x 8-inch baking pan
Waxed paper
Big spoon
Measuring cup
Large sharp knife and bread board

1. Tear off about 14 inches of waxed paper, and lay it in the baking pan. Let the extra waxed paper hang out over the two long sides of the pan.

2. Put the chips and the peanut butter in the big bowl. Microwave on medium power (50,5) for four minutes.

3. Stir with the spoon for about one minute. If the chips aren't all melted, microwave on medium power (50,5) for one or two minutes longer. Stir again until chips are all melted.

4. Stir in oats and wheat cereal, mixing well. Then stir in coconut and raisins or nuts.

5. When it's all mixed up, dump it in the pan on top of the waxed paper. Use the back of the spoon to spread the mixture in the pan. To flatten out the cookies evenly, fold the extra waxed paper over the top of the dough, and press the cookies flat with your hands. Put in the refrigerator for about an hour to chill.

6. When the chocolate is set, pull the waxed paper up off the top of the cookies and use it to pull the cookies out of the pan. Peel off all the paper then cut into squares or bars. Store at room temperature or in the refrigerator.

Tip: These cookies make good trail bars for quick energy on hikes. Wrap each bar separately so they don't glue your pockets together!

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