

# THE MICRO WAY

## LANI BLOOMER



### Microwaving Gravy

There are so many ways to make gravy that are "the best," that I hesitate to tackle this subject. But don't worry, I'm not going to tell you that your favorite way of making gravy is wrong! I just want to show you how to do it in the microwave, if you want to try it this way.

Why should you bother? Well, for one thing, it will never, never burn on the bottom in the microwave! For a second reason, it's easier to make since you don't have to stir as often. For a third reason, it's easier to rinse out a glass measuring cup than to scour a gravy pot.

I get a lot of questions in my

microwave classes about microwaving gravy. I've been surprised at the number of questions that reveal that people don't have the vaguest notion of how to make gravy from scratch — even on a range! So, I thought I'd start at the beginning for those who have never made it before.

1. There are three things you need to make a good, rich gravy: Fat — either meat fats or margarine or butter. A well flavored liquid — meat juices, broth, wine, milk or water and bouillon powder or cubes. And the last thing you need is a thickener — the two most common being flour or cornstarch.

2. I use fat and flour in equal amounts. And I usually use 2 tablespoons of each to one cup of liquid. This gives a gravy of medium thickness. If you like your gravy really thick, use 3 tablespoons to one cup; or for thin gravy use 1 tablespoon per cup.

3. If you want a dark brown gravy, there are several ways to get this color: Use well browned meat drippings from a roast; brown the flour in the fat before you add the liquid to it; or "cheat" — add dark colored stuff like microwave browning sauce to the gravy!

4. For microwave utensils, I use a glass measuring cup; a four-cup measure for two cups of gravy, or an eight-cup measure for a large amount for a crowd. A wire whisk is the best thing for stirring, since it eliminates lumps easily. A glass mixing bowl or casserole can be used instead of a measure, and a spoon will do to stir if necessary.

5. To cook the gravy, the ingredients must be brought to a boil so the thickener thickens the gravy. How long this takes in a microwave depends on how much liquid you have and the temperature of the liquid when you start.

With room temperature liquids and a 600 to 700 watt microwave, it takes about 3 minutes per cup of liquid to bring it to a boil. For 2 cups of gravy, it would take 6 minutes, or for 3 cups, about 9 minutes. Obviously, if you're using meat juices hot from a roast, it won't take as long.

Here are two easy gravy recipes that will give you the general techniques to use in microwaving gravy. If you have your own favorite ingredients for gravy, go right ahead and substitute them, using these techniques.

With a few pantry staples, you can make this quick gravy, even without any meat drippings. It isn't as good as that made with the juices from a roast, but it's better than canned gravy.

### Quick Pantry Gravy

- 4 tablespoons margarine
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 2 teaspoons bouillon granules or 2 cubes
- 2 cups milk for "cream" gravy, or 2 cups water

Pepper, herbs to taste  
1. In a 4-cup glass measure or bowl, melt margarine: Microwave on high for 45 seconds. Stir in flour until you have a smooth thick paste. (This is called a roux!)

2. For a dark brown gravy, microwave the roux until it becomes a dark brown color:

Microwave on high for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. If you want a pale cream gravy, skip this step.

3. Stir in bouillon, then milk or water. Add liquid very slowly at first, while you stir quickly. If you add the liquid to the roux too fast, you'll get lumps. Once the mixture is runny, you can add the remaining liquid quickly, stirring as you pour it in.

4. Microwave on high for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring well every two minutes, until the gravy boils and thickens. Make sure any flour that settles to the bottom is stirred up. Makes 2 cups.

### Mushroom or Onion Gravy

- 4 tablespoons margarine
- 2 cups fresh sliced mushrooms or 2 onions sliced or chopped
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 cups broth, meat juices or 2 bouillon cubes and 2 cups water

Salt, pepper to taste  
1. Put margarine and mushrooms or onions in a 2-quart measure or casserole. Saute until tender: Microwave on high for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring twice.

2. Mix cornstarch with ¼ cup cold broth until smooth. Stir dissolved cornstarch into remaining broth, then stir into mushrooms or onions. Microwave on high for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes, until gravy boils and thickens. Makes 2½ cups.

Note: The times above 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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## 68th ANNUAL EPHRATA FAIR

**SEPT. 23-24-25-26-27**  
All agriculture Activities and Exhibits including farm machinery, livestock, and crops will be in "Tent City" at the Ephrata Community Park.

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## Labeling Requirements Revised

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will change its labeling requirements for pork and beef products packed in barbecue sauce beginning Oct. 9. The new requirements will be consistent with those for labeling poultry and non-meat products packed in barbecue sauce.

"This action supports the agency's efforts to keep regulations for meat and poultry consistent," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "In addition, it makes USDA's labeling policy consistent with U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations, which govern non-meat and poultry products."

### FARM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Tuesday, September 23**  
Place Farm Machinery Exhibits 11:30-3:30 P.M.  
Farm Machinery Exhibits Open 4:00 P.M.  
Pork Chop Barbeque (YF Food Tent) 5:00 P.M.  
Adult Tractor Driving Contest 5:00 P.M.  
Jr Market Hog Judging (UBD) 5:00 P.M.  
Pig Chase (UBD) 8:00 P.M.

**Wednesday, September 24**  
Dairy Cattle Judging 10:00 A.M.  
Cloister FFA Tractor Driving Contest (LBD) 1:00 P.M.  
Jr Market LAMB Judging (UBD) 4:00 P.M.  
Street Fair Parade 7:00 P.M.

**Thursday, September 25**  
Hog Sale (UBD) 6:00 P.M.  
Garden Tractor Pulling Contest (LBD) 7:00 P.M.  
4 H & FFA Baby Beef Judging (UBD) 7:30 P.M.

**Friday, September 26**  
Cow Milking Contest (UBD) 7:00 P.M.  
Family Fun Contests (Immediately following Milking Contest (UBD))  
Carcass Lamb Auction (UBD) 7:30 P.M.

**Saturday, September 27**  
Exhibits Close (Ephrata Community Park) 10:00 A.M.  
Remove Exhibits 10:00-11:00 A.M.  
Clean up Park 11:00-1:00 P.M.

Visit the EAYFA and FFA refreshment and food stands. Crop, Livestock, and farm machinery on display all day with special emphasis 4-9 P.M. at the Ephrata Community Park. This schedule applies only to the Tent City portion of the Ephrata Fair.

Note: + UBD - Upper ball diamond  
+ LBD - Lower ball diamond

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