



MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

Microwaving fudge is faster and takes less stirring than range-top cooking. But some of the same rules apply. Using quality ingredients and proper equipment, measuring accurately and following directions all add up to perfect fudge.

If you've never made fudge before, look up candy-making basics in a conventional cookbook, such as *Joy of Cooking*. Fudge is cooked to the soft-ball stage and the final cooling and beating are the same for microwave as for con-

ventional cooking.

Use quality ingredients and proper equipment.

Start with quality ingredients: like real butter, real chocolate, real vanilla extract and fresh nuts. Measure ingredients accurately and combine them exactly as directed in recipes.

Choose a large microwave-safe and heat-resistant glass, ceramic or plastic container. Anchor Hocking's two-quart glass Batter Bowl (really about 2 1/2 quarts) is ideal

for all but very large recipes of fudge.

Use a microwave candy thermometer for ease and accuracy. A regular candy thermometer can't be left in during microwaving. A temperature probe doesn't register high enough.

Acu-Rite Microwave Candy/Food Thermometer is - as far as I know - the only microwave candy thermometer made. It's often hard to find in stores. Look for it at hardware, discount, microwave, gourmet and kitchen stores. If you can't find one, send a check for \$8.75 for each thermometer (includes shipping and my *Microwave Candies* leaflet of 10 microwave candy recipes and hints) to me at R.R.2, Box 162, Gaylord, MN 55334.

Judge doneness by temperature

Fudge must cook to 235 to 240 F (the soft ball stage) in the microwave- same as it does on the conventional range. Microwave time in each recipe is only a guide. If your microwave wattage output is lower than 650 watts, you may

have to add as much as one-third more cooking time to "Microwave Minutes" and most other newspaper or magazine recipes. Check for final doneness by reading the microwave candy thermometer at eye level.

A slower, much less accurate method of judging doneness is to use the old-fashioned cold water test. Check a conventional cookbook for details.

Make, cool, store fudge correctly

Fudge is one candy that can become sugary or grainy. To help prevent this, you can do several things. Start microwaving fudge covered. When stirring is called for, use the microwave candy thermometer or a clean dry spoon. Both during and after cooking, stir without scraping sides of bowl. Cool fudge at room temperature.

Start microwaving fudge covered with plastic wrap, until boiling. After fudge boils, stir well to dissolve sugar - you can see and hear when it's dissolved. Continue

microwaving, uncovered, until fudge reaches soft-ball stage. If it starts to boil over, use a lower power setting.

Stir during microwaving with microwave candy thermometer. (It has a paddle-shaped bottom). Do not use microwave spoon. For beating, use a wooden spoon.

For easy removal of fudge from the pan, spread fudge in several wax paper-lined loaf pans, rather than one buttered large pan. Cut two sheets of waxed paper, each the length of loaf pan. Place sheets in pan on top of each other, with edges extending above pan on two sides. When fudge is cool, loosen waxed paper and removed fudge.

All fudges become creamier and taste better after "ripening." Wrap tightly and store for at least one day before serving. To prevent drying out, leave fudge uncut until serving. Wrap tightly in freezer foil, sealing out all air and place in a freezer or heavy-duty plastic bag. Keep in a cool place or in refrigerator or freezer. If frozen, thaw in refrigerator for several hours (or overnight) before cutting and serving.

The newer, easier fudges, like *A Small Batch of Chocolate Fudge* (below), made with marshmallows or marshmallow cream needs no cooling or beating.

A Small Batch of Chocolate Fudge

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup real chocolate chips
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

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Lancaster Society 11

Farm Women's Society 11 held their November meeting at the home of Helen A. Schaub in Quarryville. Co-hostesses were Dorothy Boas and Grace Ann Chase.

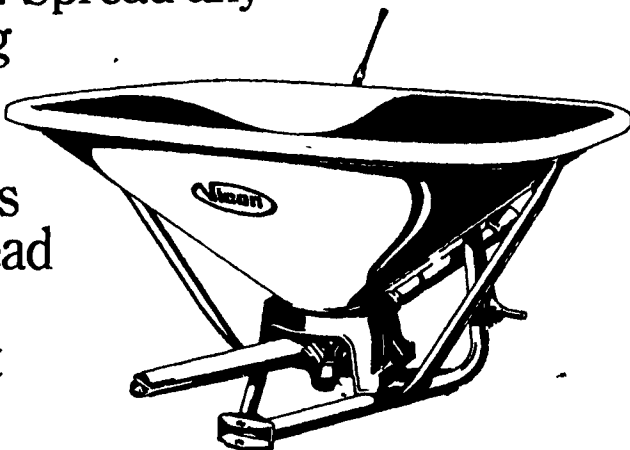
President Helen Wagner opened the meeting with a Thanksgiving Day poem written by Joanne Hershey. Helen Schaub presented a program on antiques, focusing on ceramics, glassware, china, and collectibles.

The December meeting will be held on the 31st at Helen Wagner's home.



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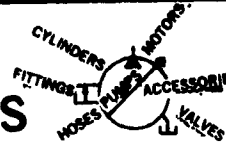
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