



# MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

Fish and your microwave are a perfect pair. Besides cooking fish quickly, your microwave seals in juices and keeps any kind of fish tasting moist and fresh.

A pound of thin fish fillets can be done in as little as four minutes on High. For thicker fillets, allow five to six minutes per pound. Fish is a super-quick entree when you're cooking for one. If you microwave the standard four-ounce serving of fish, cooking time takes less than two minutes! Thick fish steaks take a little longer. They microwave best on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) and take 10 to 13 minutes per pound.

Use a shallow microwave-safe casserole or baking dish that can be used for serving too. Arrange fish with thickest, meaty parts to the outside edges of cooking dish. Tuck skinny tail parts under, or roll up thin fillets to avoid overcooking. For even cooking, rotate dish halfway through cooking; or rearrange and turn over large pieces.

For color and extra flavor, coat fish with a mixture of melted butter or lemon juice and paprika. Or sprinkle with Micro Shake® For Fish, a product introduced last year that adds attractive color and a subtle herb flavor and also helps seal in juices.

Cover fish with waxed paper, unless you're cooking fish to add to other ingredients. Then use a tight lid or plastic wrap to steam fish. Waxed paper allows even cooking without holding in all the steam. Fish will have a "baked," rather than "boiled," taste, and seasonings won't be diluted by excess moisture.

Slightly undercook fish. When done, it should be barely changing from translucent to opaque (solid white). Let it rest, still covered, for two or three minutes before tasting for final doneness. It should be completely opaque, and when tested with a fork it should flake easily. If overcooked, fish is dry

and rubbery.

Frozen fish should be completely thawed before microwaving. As a general guide, thaw fish on Medium Low (30 percent power, about 200 watts, sometimes called Defrost). Allow three to five minutes per pound of boneless fish. Rotate and turn over package during defrosting. Separate pieces as soon as possible, removing thawed pieces when pliable, but still slightly icy. Finish defrosting under cold running water.

For crispy fish, coat fish with crumbs. Preheat your microwave browning dish according to manufacturer's directions for fish, add butter or oil, add fish and microwave, uncovered, according to browning dish directions. For most browning dishes, preheat time for fish is the minimum time -- about 5 to 7 minutes -- and cooking time (on High) is about 1 minute per side. This is just approximate -- each browning dish/skillet/grill is different. Follow the directions that come with your browning dish.

Another way to get crispy fish is to pick up some of the new microwave fish sticks and fillets in the freezer section of your supermarket. At least three brands are available and all give excellent results -- fish that is crisp on the outside and tender and moist in the inside.

Today's recipes add a little variety to fish and make quick and easy main dishes. Cubes of salmon combine with tender-crisp brightly-colored vegetables in *Salmon Vegetable Toss*. Serve with rice for a light supper or lunch. In the second recipe, simple bread stuffing cooked between thin fish fillets turns plain fish into a hearty entree. All you need for a full meal is vegetables or salad.

### Salmon Vegetable Toss

- 1/2 small onion, cut in 1/2 -inch cubes
- 1/2 small green pepper, cut in 1/2 -inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves  
1/2 pound salmon steaks, thawed, bones and skin removed and cut in 1-inch cubes

6 medium mushrooms, quartered

1 small tomato, seeds removed and cut in 1/2 -inch cubes

Freshly ground black pepper

Put onion, green pepper, butter and thyme in a microwave-safe 1-quart casserole. Cover with waxed paper. Microwave (High) 1 minute or until barely tender-crisp. Stir in salmon and mushrooms. Re-cover. Microwave (High) 2 to 2 1/2 minutes, stirring once or until salmon is done. Stir in tomato and pepper. Re-cover. Microwave (High) 30 to 45 seconds more or until tomato is warm. Serve on rice or noodles. Makes 2 servings.

Each serving: 252 calories, 28g protein, 13g fat, 5g carbohydrate, 191mg sodium, 63mg cholesterol

### Stuffed Fish Fillets

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup herbed stuffing crumbs
- 1/4 cup water

1 teaspoon grated lemon peel  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1 pound thick frozen fish fillets\*, thawed

Melt butter in microwave-safe custard cup by microwaving (High) 30 to 45 seconds. Pour about half of butter into microwave-safe 8x8-inch dish, turning dish to coat bottom with butter; set aside. Stir paprika into remaining butter; set aside.

Place celery and onion in medium microwave-safe dish, cover with plastic wrap. Microwave (High) 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in stuffing crumbs, water, lemon peel and parsley.

Cut fish fillets into 8 pieces so meaty parts are about equal size. (Cut thin tail ends longer, so thin ends can be tucked under in dish.) Place 4 pieces in buttered dish, putting them in dish corners with thickest parts to the outside edges and thin tail ends tucked under. With a spoon or hands, lightly press stuffing mixture together and place on the 4 fillets. Top each with another fillet. Brush with butter-paprika mixture. Cover with waxed paper. Microwave (High) 6 to 7 minutes, rotating dish once, or until fish looks opaque

(solid white) and flakes when tested with a fork. Let stand 3 to 5 minutes and test center bottom for final doneness. Makes 4 servings.

\* Use any kind of lean fish fillets such as torsk (cod), haddock, halibut, pollack, ocean perch, red snapper, flounder, sole, walleye and northern.

Each serving: 274 calories, 28g

protein, 11g fat, 12g carbohydrate, 414mg sodium, 17mg cholesterol

### Questions for Joyce?

Do you have a question about microwave cooking? Send it to Microwave Minutes, % Extra Newspaper Features, P.O. Box 6118, Rochester, MN 55903. Please include a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope.

## Ida's Notebook



Ida Risser

The calendar tells me that it is March and spring is fast approaching. Everyone that I talk to seems to be happy to see warmer weather coming. I guess I'm the oddball but I would gladly postpone it another few weeks. There are still some unfinished jobs here in the house.

Winter brings a change of pace in jobs. They are much less physical than working in the garden and mowing our hilly lawn.

The other Saturday I found out how much out of condition I am. Allen and I joined a group who hiked a few miles through Muddy Run Recreation Park in southern Lancaster County. I huffed and puffed up the hills.

We saw lots of white-tailed deer. Some of them were not very wild and only moved out of sight slowly. One little fellow was alone and he stood and watched us for a while. We saw the usual winter

birds. However, one that I don't see here at home is the bluebird. As there were many bluebird houses on posts, they seemed to be attracted to the area.

The Nature Center building was quite interesting with specimens of snakes, gulls and wild geese. We could hear the hammering of folks who were building more bluebird houses.

After the hike Allen and I had a winter picnic near a lake. There were many wild ducks nearby who waddled to our table and begged to be fed bread crusts. Many boats were there that could be rented by the hour. We went on the hike hoping to find a new place to fish in the summertime.

But as far as I'm concerned, the weather can wait a while longer to become warm and balmy. I am contented to braid rugs and watch the Winter Olympics at Calgary, Canada on TV.

## Rabbit Club

CHAMBERSBURG -- The Franklin County 4-H Rabbit Club is seeking new members who want to learn how to raise rabbits in their backyard. The club invites young people between 8 and 19 years of age who are interested in raising rabbits to its next club meeting Monday evening, March 7, at 7:00 in the County Administrative Building, Franklin Farms Lane in Chambersburg.

The 4-H club helps 4-H'ers learn how to raise rabbits, teaching them the proper care, nutrition and health practices. They also study information related to the raising of rabbits. The club is led by 4-H volunteers from the community interested in helping young people learn more about the rabbit project. For more information call 263-9226.

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