

MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

"Microcooking is simple," according to Carol Trench, home economics teacher and author of "Microwave Mastery." "If you can read, you can do it," she says in the beginning of her new cookbook.

Microwaving is made easy in this unique cookbook. Easy-to-read print, Reminder Symbols, and step-by-step directions aid the new or experienced microwaver. Clues to doneness in all individual recipes also would have been helpful for beginning cooks.

A complete and easy-to-understand introduction to microwave cooking starts this book. A "How to Microcook" section also shows the book's Reminder Symbols for cooking procedures. These helpful symbols are used in each recipe to make microcooking easier. For example, if you could read the Spinach Ring recipe (below) from the pages of "Microwave Mastery," you'd see three different symbols: a microwave oven surrounding the words "100%," to show you that cooking is done on High power; a stirring spoon, to show you when to stir; and a curved arrow, to remind you to rotate the dish.

Carol, a Home Economics teacher in Richfield, Minnesota, for the last 18 years, has taught a popular class, "Let's Mic It," which teaches students to cook fast and healthy, so her cookbook also includes the healthy.

"Microwave Mastery" is not a diet cookbook, but," according to the author, "if at all possible, the recipes in the cookbook have been modified to get rid of unhealthy amounts of fat and sugar ... with-

out changing the taste."

In the beginning pages, healthy diet guidelines give pointers on food shopping and label reading. Appendixes at the end, such as "Foods High in Dietary Fat, Sodium and Sugar" and "Instead Try to Include These," list health information.

Nutritional analysis is given for each recipe, although cholesterol amounts are not given. Cooking time is also given for each recipe. When necessary for success, use of special equipment is noted at the top of a recipe. (For example, a 12-inch browning skillet with cover is needed for most of the pizza recipes.)

"Microwave Mastery" contains at least 316 recipes. There are sections on appetizers; breads and breakfast; soups and salads; vegetable (plus basic cooking directions for 21 kinds); entrees; sauces; pasta and rice; and desserts. A section called, "For Kids of all Ages," including nine different pizza recipes and fun foods like giant cookies, lollipops and popcorn.

I tried many recipes from "Microwave Mastery" and wanted to share a variety of them with you. Since space is limited, I could only choose three: two main dishes, for light summertime eating, and a small cake, ideal for a family picnic. I think you'll like the results. All cook fast, are easy-to-make, and taste good. I used much less time than the cookbook directions called for, so I adjusted timings below. Start by using minimum times.

If you'd like to order "Microwave Mastery," send \$14.95

(includes \$2 postage and handling) per book to Mic It Publishing, Inc., Cookbook Order, Dept. 1111, P.O. Box 23148, Minneapolis, MN 55423. Minnesota residents, add 6 percent sales tax.

Chicken Royal

- 2 cups cooked rice
- 1 whole chicken breast, cooked and cubed
- 1 can (10 1/4 ounces) low-sodium cream of chicken soup
- 1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 1 jar (4 ounces) whole mushrooms, drained
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1/2 cup frozen peas
- 1 jar (2 ounces) pimiento, drained
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- Dash pepper

Combine all ingredients in microwave-safe 3-quart casserole. Cover with vented plastic wrap. Microwave (High) 10 to 14 minutes, stirring once, or until vegetables are done. Let stand 5 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

Each serving: 249 calories, 15g protein, 7g fat, 32g carbohydrate, 536 mg sodium.

Spinach Ring

- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 8 fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 package (10 ounces) chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 can (10 1/4 ounces) low-sodium cream of celery soup
- 1/2 cup seasoned croutons
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- Dash pepper

Place butter and mushrooms in a microwave-safe 4-cup measure. Microwave (High) 2 minutes. Stir in spinach, cream of celery soup, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese and pepper. Place in a greased microwave-safe 9-inch ring mold. Microwave (High) 6 minutes, rotating dish twice during cooking. Stir. Continue microwaving (High) 2 to 6 minutes, or until knife inserted comes out clean. Let stand for 5 minutes. Invert on serving plate or spoon into serving bowl. Makes 4 servings.

Each serving: 182 calories, 9g protein, 11g fat, 12g carbohydrate, 388mg sodium.

Snacking Cake

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 package (6 ounces) (1/2 cup) butterscotch chips
- 1/2 package (6 ounces) (1/2 cup) chocolate chips

Cream together butter, granulated sugar and brown sugar in a mixing bowl. Add the flour, baking powder, egg and vanilla. Stir until well combined, then stir in the chocolate chips and butterscotch chips. Spread into a microwave-safe 8-inch round cake pan. Place on an inverted microwave-safe saucer. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) 6 minutes. Microwave (High) 1 to 4 minutes. Cool on counter. Makes 8 servings.

Each serving: 320 calories, 3g

protein, 15g fat, 44g carbohydrate, 190mg sodium.

Note: Cook until top still looks slightly moist. Do not overcook. If desired, before cooking, sprinkle top lightly with a sugar-cinnamon mixture.

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.

Recipes in this column are tested in 600- and 650-watt microwave oven. With an oven of different wattage output, timings may need slight adjustment.

Joyce Battcher is an independent home economist microwave specialist. She is author of "Microwave Family Favorites" and editor of "A Batch of Ideas" newsletter.

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Dairy Leaflet Offers Good News For The Lactose Intolerant

TOWSON, MD — Good news! Being lactose intolerant doesn't mean the end of enjoying the taste, variety, convenience and nutritional attributes of dairy products. A new recipe leaflet published by the American Dairy Association gives lactose intolerant individuals tips on how to enjoy dairy products.

Current research indicates most individuals diagnosed as lactose intolerant can consume dairy foods without discomfort if they follow a few practical tips:

- * Eat dairy foods in small, frequent servings.
- * Pick dairy foods that are slowly digested and therefore better tolerated. Whole or chocolate milk may be better tolerated than reduced fat milk. Aged or ripened cheeses contain very little lactose. Ice cream and ice milk also are good choices.
- * Choose yogurt and frozen yogurt with active cultures.

* Look for lactose-reduced products, available in many parts of the country. These include milk, ice cream, cottage cheese and American process cheese food slices.

* Eat and drink dairy foods along with other foods, not by themselves.

* Try gradually increasing the amount of lactose-containing foods in the diet over time. Tolerance can and often does improve.

* Relax and don't anticipate problems. Stress never helps!

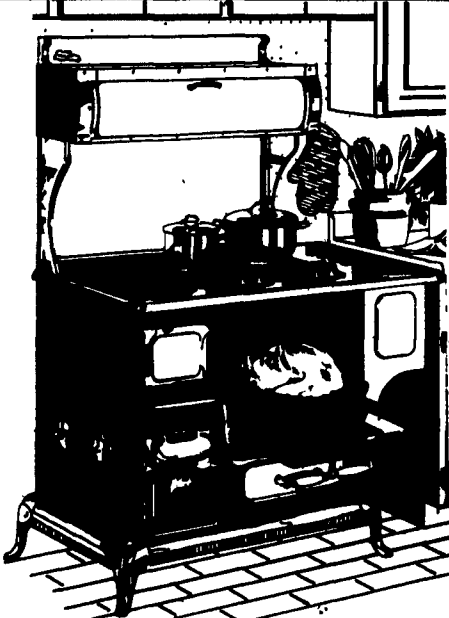
And when it comes time for cooking, ADA's new leaflet, "Dairy Recipes for the Lactose Intolerant," is an excellent source of recipe ideas. To receive a free copy of the brochure, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Dairy Recipes for the Lactose Intolerant, Middle Atlantic Milk Marketing Association, 216 Carroll Building, 8600 LaSalle Road, Towson, MD 21204.

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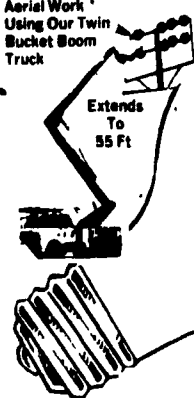
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