



# MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

'Tis the season for preserving fruits and vegetables. your microwave has always been a help to cook foods, such as applesauce, relishes, and jams, before canning or freezing.

Now there's another possibility — this one for canning in your microwave. "Micro-Dome" lets you can one jar at a time, using a wide-mouth pint or any half-pint canning jar. It's not something you'd use to help put up a bushel of tomatoes or a crate of peaches, but it is helpful for the person with a small garden or to preserve the leftovers from volume canning.

It also has some other practical uses, especially for a small family with little extra freezer space. Preparing a double recipe and preserving leftovers for later saves

time in the kitchen. Making and preserving "special" diet foods for a single family member, or preparing your favorite recipes to take on your next RV trip, again saves both time and freezer space. You can make and preserve holiday or hostess gifts, such as chocolate sauce, jams, jellies and chutneys; or send your away-from-home college student home-cooked dishes without the need for refrigerator space.

Made from a space-age, FDA-approved plastic, the Micro-Dome is 7½ inches tall and completely safe for home use. It works in all but the smallest microwave oven. (The Micro-Dome must fit upright with an inch or so of clearance on top.) It's available in some department or kitchen stores. Price is

about \$50.

I found the Micro-Dome easy to use. Following directions is really important, so the first few times I was often flipping pages in the use-and-care booklet. But following directions pays off with food that is safe to eat and a jar with a tight seal. After using the Micro-Dome several times, the whole process becomes easy.

To use the Micro-Dome, you simply place the food in a round, wide-mouth pint canning jar (or any style half-pint canning jar) and screw on the two-piece lid. Place the jar into the Micro-Dome and lock the lid. Place the Micro-Dome in the microwave, set the timer for 10 minutes, and process on High power. In 6 to 8 minutes you'll hear a "chirping" sound from the Micro-Dome. Remove the Micro-Dome and cool it in tap water.

I was a little leery about canning low-acid foods (vegetables, meat, poultry and fish) in this little canner. But I found out that the Micro-Dome — according to the manufacturer, Micro-Dome Corporation of San Ramon, Calif. — has been tested repeatedly by independent food-testing laboratories for food safety. Findings are that the Micro-Dome meets the standards for commercial sterility

(which are higher standards than would be possible in a home kitchen). The company concludes from these studies that the Micro-Dome does safely can food — reaching high enough and even enough heat to kill any bacteria that may be present in food. The company wisely recommends using only their tested up-to-date recipes and following directions *exactly*.

### Other New Food

#### Preservation Helpers

The 32nd edition of the famous "Ball Blue Book" is now in stores. At \$3.75, it's a bargain because it gives up-to-date and safe canning methods and times. Besides basic how-to's, the new edition contains recipes for freezing and dehydrating. The 112-page book features a new look, many altered processing times, and two special sections — one on diet canning and one on smaller quantity canning.

Some of the "Blue Book's" new recommendations are: 1. Increase cooking and processing times for foods, such as tomatoes, to ensure proper preservation and to avoid

spoilage. 2. Process jelly for 5 minutes in a boiling-water bath. (Processing for jam, other preserved relishes, and pickles has been recommended for several years.) 3. Use only two-piece vacuum lids for the best and safest results. (Don't use old-fashioned covers — such as zinc caps, glass lids or jar rubbers.) 4. Use two-piece vacuum lids for jelly. (Don't use paraffin. If you have jelly glasses with covers, use them for freezer or refrigerator jams and jellies.)

Another new publication is a 22-page booklet, "Preserving the Bounty, Conserving the Calories." It offers a good variety of low-calorie recipes to preserve. The 21 recipes are for preserves, relishes, and fruits for small-batch canning plus several vegetable recipes for freezing. All use Sweet 'N Low diet sweetener to replace most of the sugar and reduce calories. They recommend water-bath canning and other safe methods. All recipes have been tested by the

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