



## MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

One night last week I sampled some fabulous Mexican foods at a new restaurant. The next day I made the same fabulous foods in my microwave. I'd like to share the recipes with you.

First is Mexican Molletes, an open-faced sandwich on French bread — yes, French bread. A friend of Mexican descent said Molletes are authentically Mexican and are often served for brunch by the upper class. I like it for a quick and easy supper or snack.

Traditionally, the bread is toasted. I tested my recipe without toasting because I didn't (and I thought you wouldn't) want to heat the broiler. My friend said she splits the bread in thirds horizontally so it fits her upright toaster. Works great; so I added that option to my recipe below.

The cooking in Mexican Molletes is really just warming — to heat ingredients and melt the cheese. A Medium power works best here, so bread and cheese heat slower and don't end up tough and rubbery.

There's more cooking involved in Mexican Allambres. Traditionally, allambres is shish kabob. But for microwave cooking, stir-frying strips of beef and vegetables gives better results than cooking beef cubes and vegetables on a skewer.

First, tender thinly sliced beef strips are marinated to take on a spicy flavor. They're micro-stir-fried until barely done. Then green pepper strips and onions are cooked briefly. Cooking is done on High power, but meat must be stirred often so each piece cooks

to a tender doneness. Wrapped in a warm corn tortilla and topped with a creamy Mexican cheese, Chihuahua (a good substitute is Muenster or fresh Mozzarella), Mexican Allambres makes a delightful entree.

To taste "right" (because all the ingredients are bland-tasting), Mexican Molletes must be topped with salsa — whether it be a spicy fresh tomato salsa, or a full-flavored cooked tomato salsa. Salsa enhances Mexican Allambres, but is optional.

Cooked Salsa (below) is easy to make. Squeeze out most of the juice from tomatoes for fastest cooking. Microwaving time is about the same as range-top cooking time, but with microwaving, only a small amount of oil is needed and cleanup of the cooking dish is easy. I prefer fresh salsa, so I'm also sharing an easy non-microwave recipe.

### Mexican Molletes

12-inch loaf of French bread  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
2 garlic cloves, halved  
½ of a 16-ounce can refried beans  
4 ounces Muenster cheese, thickly sliced

### Salsa

Slice bread into 4 equal pieces; then sliced each lengthwise. Place bread, cut side up, on a microwave-safe large tray; set aside. Place oil and garlic in a microwave-safe custard cup. Microwave (High) 45 to 90 seconds or until garlic is soft. Discard garlic or mash it. Drizzle oil over cut sides of bread. Spread evenly with refried beans. Top each with cheese. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts)

4 to 5 minutes or until cheese barely starts to melt. Top each half with a generous helping of salsa, or pass salsa. Makes 4 large servings.

Hint: Keep ingredients on hand for a quick snack. For 1 serving, use ¼ of ingredients. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts), 1½ to 2 minutes or until cheese barely starts to melt.

Note: Make these more authentic by toasting bread first. If you don't want to heat your broiler or toaster oven, slice bread pieces (or use small hoagie breads) into thirds and toast in a toaster. Adjust toppings accordingly.

Each serving: 461 calories, 16g protein, 22g fat, 48g carbohydrate, 796mg sodium, 27mg cholesterol.

### Mexican Allambres

8 ounces boneless beef sirloin or top round steak  
2 teaspoons lime or lemon juice  
1-2 teaspoons chili powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
1 medium green pepper, cut in ¼ -inch-thick slices  
1 small onion, cut in ¼ -inch-thick slices  
4 corn tortillas  
2 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled  
2 ounces Muenster cheese, cut in thin strips

Garnish: salsa (optional)

Remove visible fat from beef. Cut into about ½ x ¼ x 2-inch strips. In 1-quart microwavable casserole, combine lime juice, spices and garlic powder; stir in beef. Marinate 10 minutes. Refrigerate if mixture needs to stand longer.

Cover casserole of beef with waxed paper; microwave (High) 2 to 3 minutes, stirring after each 1 minute of cooking. Beef should be rare to medium. Stir in pepper and onions; re-cover and microwave (High) 1 to 1½ minutes, stirring after each 45 seconds of cooking. Cook until vegetables are barely tender-crisp.

Meanwhile, place tortillas between paper towels. Microwave on Medium (325-350 watts, 50 percent power) 15 to 20 seconds. Spoon beef mixture onto each tortilla. Top with bacon and cheese.

Pass salsa. Makes 2 large servings.

Each serving: 403 calories, 32g protein, 21g fat, 20g carbohydrate, 307mg sodium, 90mg cholesterol.

### Cooked Salsa

3 large tomatoes, peeled if desired  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 can (4 ounces) chopped green (mild or hot) chilies  
1 tablespoon cooking oil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2-3 teaspoons ground cumin

Cut tops off tomatoes; squeeze each tomato to remove most seeds and juice. Discard juice and seeds. Coarsely chop tomatoes; combine with remaining ingredients in a microwave-safe 1-quart measure or bowl. Microwave (High) 8 to 11 minutes, stirring once, until thick. Serve warm or cold with Mexican dishes. Store tightly covered in refrigerator for up to 1 week, or freeze in small containers for up to 9 months. Makes 2 cups.

Each serving — 1 tablespoon: 9 calories, 0 protein, 0 fat, 1g carbohydrate, 33mg sodium, 0 cholesterol.

### Fresh Salsa

Combine 1 clove minced garlic, 1 minced chili, ¼ cup chopped onion, ½ cup chopped green pepper, 1 cup chopped firm tomato, and ¼ cup chopped cilantro or parsley. Store tightly covered in

refrigerator for 2 to 3 days, or freeze up to 9 months. (Texture will be soft after freezing.) Makes 1½ cups.

Hint: For speed, use your food processor fitted with the knife blade. Mince peeled garlic and seeded fresh chili. Add a small quartered onion and a medium quartered green pepper. Process until coarsely chopped. Add about 2 medium quartered firm tomatoes and chop with on-off pulses until coarsely chopped. Do not over-process. Stir in hand-chopped cilantro or parsley. Makes 1½ cups.

### 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 ovens. 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.

## Pennsylvania Juniors Participate In National Angus Show

LOUISVILLE KY — Twelve members of the Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association represented their state at the 1989 National Junior Angus Show.

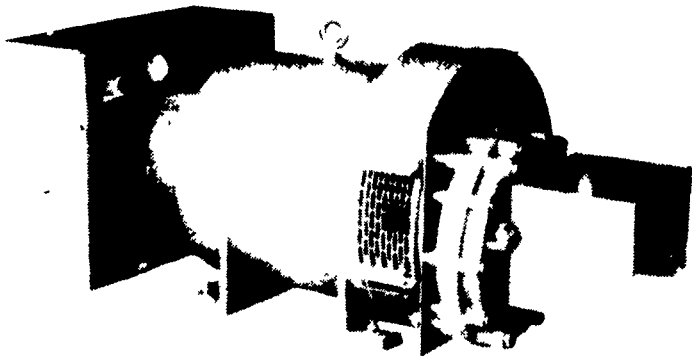
Nicole High and Cathy Shive competed in the 23rd National Junior Angus Showmanship contest. Shive also participated in the first National Junior Angus public speaking contest and placed fifth in the senior division. Her sister, Robin, competed in the junior division.

Lori Cash, president of the state association, won first place in the National Scholarship Contest and received a \$1,200 scholarship.

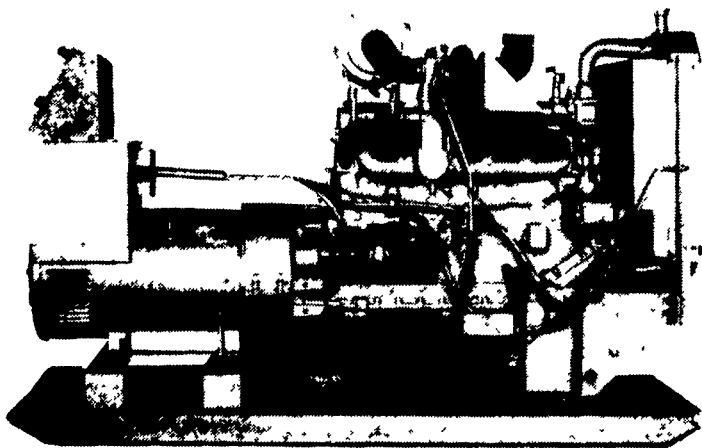
Cash also was elected to the National Junior Angus Association Board of Directors.

In the State Group of Five competition, the Pennsylvania team placed fourth overall. Sandy and Susan Eisenhower showed heifers that were placed first in their classes and Susan's heifer was named intermediate champion. The Shive sisters and fellow York County Jennifer Calderazzo each exhibited heifers that took second place in their respective classes. Calderazzo showed the grand champion cow/calf pair. In the steer show Casey High placed fourth, Mary Godfrey placed eighth, and Kelly Bachman placed ninth.

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