



MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

Apple cake can be plain or fancy; likewise, baked apples. Try either or both of today's luscious apple recipes. Each may be served as is. Or each may be topped with sinfully rich Rum-Raisin Sauce.

The fastest of the two to micro-cook is Spicy-Lemon Micro-Baked Apples. Baking-type apples — Rome Beauty is a good kind — are microwaved with a spicy-lemon sauce in about 7 minutes. The cover is plastic wrap to hold in heat and steam. The method used in this recipe is a little different from the way I usually micro-bake apples. This recipe calls for added liquid, so a plastic-wrap cover works best to steam the apples. This method produces a larger amount of sauce or juice than my method. My usual method calls for a sweet filling and no added liquid. It makes a baked apple with just a little sauce. A waxed-paper cover is best for this last method.

Spicy Apple Cake is an old-

fashioned hearty cake. Start microwaving on Medium power and finish on High for best results. For even cooking, rotate the dish about 2 times during cooking. Set the dish on a microwave trivet or an upside-down saucer to help get the center done. Cool the cake on a flat surface to ensure the bottom is fully cooked.

For Rum-Raisin Sauce, raisins are plumped by heating them with rum (or water and rum flavoring) for a minute in a tightly covered container. The rest of the sauce is quickly micro-cooked until ingredients thicken slightly. Start with minimum times and stir when recipe directs to prevent curdling. Sauce is quite thin, but thickens as it cools. When reheating, also be careful not to overheat.

Spicy-Lemon Micro-Baked Apples

6 medium Rome Beauty apples (4-5 ounces each)

- 1/4 cup water or apple juice
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Core and pare top third of apples; place in a microwave-safe baking dish or custard cups. Stir together remaining ingredients and pour over apples. Cover with vented plastic wrap. Microwave (High) 6 to 10 minutes, rotating dish and basting apples after 3 minutes. When done, apples should be barely tender. Let stand 2 minutes before removing cover. Serve warm or cold, spooning juices over each serving. Makes 6 servings.

Each serving: 113 calories, 0 protein, 0 fat, 29g carbohydrate, 1mg sodium, 0 cholesterol.

Spicy-Lemon Micro-Baked Apples With Rum-Raisin Sauce: Prepare apples as above, except omit sugar. Drain and serve warm or cold topped with warm sauce.

Each serving: 185 calories, 0 protein, 6g fat, 31g carbohydrate, 84 mg sodium, 33mg cholesterol.

Rum-Raisin Sauce

- 1/2 cup raisins
- 3 tablespoons light rum*
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 egg beaten
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon peel

Place raisins and rum in a microwave-safe measure; cover with plastic wrap. Microwave (High) 1 minute; set aside. Place butter and sugar in a microwave-safe 1-quart measure. Microwave

(High) 1 to 1 1/2 minutes or until butter melts. Stir in milk; microwave (High) 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until just boiling. Stir small amount of hot sugar mixture into egg; return to sugar mixture. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) 2 to 2 1/2 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring after each 1 minute. Do not overcook or sauce will curdle. Stir in raisin mixture, cinnamon and lemon peel. Keep covered in refrigerator. (Sauce thickens as it cools.) Serve at room temperature or slightly warm. Makes about 2 cups.

Each 2-tablespoon serving: 102 calories, 0 protein, 6g fat, 10g carbohydrate, 83 mg sodium, 33mg cholesterol.

To warm sauce: Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts), allowing 1 1/2 to 2 minutes for each cup of sauce. Do not overheat or sauce will separate.

* Three tablespoons water and 1/4 teaspoon rum extract can be substituted for rum.

Spicy Apple Cake

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 2 cups finely chopped unpeeled apples (about 2 medium apples)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts

Topping (below)

Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt on waxed paper; set aside. With electric mixer or wooden spoon, cream together brown sugar and oil. Beat in egg and milk until smooth. Add flour mixture and mix well. Add apples and nuts; mix until just combined. (Batter

will be thick). Pour into a microwave-safe 9-inch cake dish. Sprinkle with Topping.

Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) 12 minutes, rotating dish once. Then microwave (High) 1 to 4 minutes or until cake no longer looks moist on top. Let cake stand in dish in microwave or on a wooden board at least 10 minutes. Wrap tightly and keep in refrigerator. Makes about 8 servings.

Topping: Combine 1 tablespoon granulated sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon in small bowl. Or, combine 1 tablespoon wheat germ and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon.

Hint: Cake will stay moist if tightly covered while still warm and stored tightly covered.

Each serving: 258 calories, 3g protein, 11g fat, 39g carbohydrate, 98 mg sodium, 31mg cholesterol.

Spicy Apple Cake With Rum-Raisin Sauce: Prepare cake as above. serve warm or cold with warm sauce.

Each serving — 1/4 of cake with 2 tablespoons sauce: 360 calories, 3g protein, 17g fat, 49g carbohydrate, 181mg sodium, 64mg cholesterol.

Questions for Joyce?

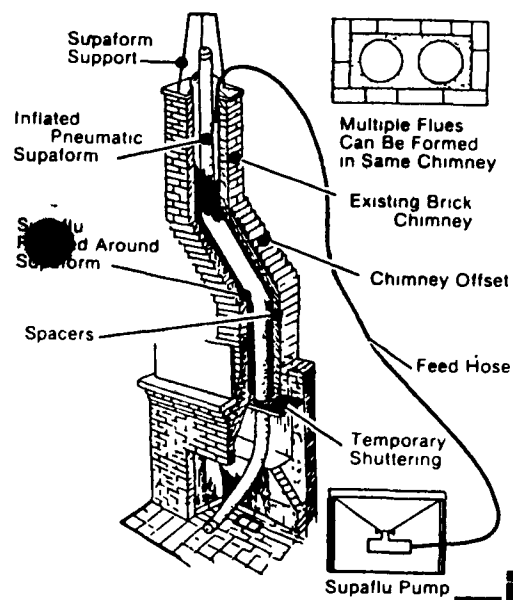
Do you have a question about microwave cooking? Send it to Microwave Minutes, c/o Extra Newspaper Features, P.O. Box 6118, Rochester, MN 55903. Please include a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope.

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.

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