

# MICROWAVE MINUTES

By **JOYCE BATTCHEER**



Before making a special Easter or springtime dessert, decide if your microwave can cook parts of it. Often your microwave can be used with other cooking methods to simplify and speed cooking.

Today's recipes are old favorites of mine. I've changed conventional cooking to microwaving where possible. I save time and effort using my microwave, and you will, too.

Both recipes have a meringue shell base, which must be baked in a conventional oven. The microwave is a moist way of cooking, so a meringue cooked in it would never become dry and crisp as it does when baked in a slow oven.

The filling for Mocha Torte calls for very little microwaving, but what an advantage the microwaving is! To melt chocolate with the coffee would take about 30 minutes in a double boiler over simmering water. Or it would take constant stirring over very low heat with the risk of scorching. The microwave method calls for heating about 45 seconds to a minute on Medium power. The only caution is not to microwave too long or chocolate will overheat and lump. Microwave and stir until completely smooth. This will take more than a quick stir, but it's

better than microwaving too long.

The tart filling for Lemon or Lime Angel Dessert is another natural for microwave cooking. Instead of constant stirring and slow cooking on the range-top, plus having to add the egg yolks at the end, carefree microwaving of the filling can be done. Stir everything together well before cooking. Be sure to stir during cooking at times indicated, so filling doesn't form one big lump and so no specks of cooked eggs are left floating around. Mixture should come to a boil, but not boil over 15 seconds.

## Mocha Torte

2 egg whites  
 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar  
 6 tablespoons granulated sugar  
 1/2 cup chopped pecans  
 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips  
 3 tablespoons strong coffee  
 1 cup whipping cream  
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Make meringue shell and bake in conventional oven: Beat egg whites with cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Beat in sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, until stiff peaks form. Fold in pecans. Spread in a buttered 9-inch pie pan. Bake 1 hour in conventional oven at 275° F. Cool completely.

Place chocolate chips and cof-

fee in a microwave-safe 1-quart casserole or measure. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) 45 seconds; stir until smooth. If necessary, microwave on Medium for 15-second intervals or until chocolate can be stirred smooth. Do not overcook. Cool to lukewarm. Whip cream to stiff peaks and add vanilla. Fold chocolate-coffee mixture into whipped cream; pour into meringue shell. Chill several hours or overnight. Cut into wedges to serve. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Each serving — 1/4 of recipe: 240 calories, 3g protein, 19g fat, 20g carbohydrate, 23mg sodium, 34mg cholesterol.

## Lemon or Lime Angel Dessert

6 egg whites  
 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar  
 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar  
 1/2 cup cornstarch  
 1 1/2 cups cold water  
 1/2 cup lemon or lime juice  
 4 egg yolks  
 2 tablespoons butter  
 2 tablespoons grated lemon or lime peel  
 2 cups whipping cream  
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Make meringue shell and bake in conventional oven: Beat egg whites with cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Beat in 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, until stiff peaks form. Spread in a buttered 13x9-inch pan. Bake 1 hour in conventional oven at 275° F. Cool completely.

Combine 1 1/4 cups sugar and cornstarch in microwave-safe 2-quart measure. Add water, lemon juice and egg yolks, beating until smooth. Microwave (High) 7 to 8 minutes, stirring after each 2 minutes, or until mixture starts to

boil and thicken. Stir in butter and lemon peel. Cool completely.

Whip cream to stiff peaks and add vanilla. Spread half of whipped cream over meringue. Spoon pudding over whipped cream; top with remaining whipped cream. Chill several hours or overnight. Makes 15 servings.

Each serving: 260 calories, 3g protein, 12g fat, 36g carbohydrate, 63mg sodium, 103mg cholesterol.

Hint: To get more juice from a lemon or lime, microwave it for about 15 seconds. Be sure to grate peeling first; otherwise the peeling will be rubbery and almost impossible to grate.

Variation: You may substitute 1 package (4 1/2 ounces) lemon pudding and pie filling (not instant) for filling ingredients above. Prepare pudding as directed on package, but in a 2-quart microwave-safe measure. Microwave on High, uncovered, for 7 to 8 minutes, stirring after each 2 minutes, or until pudding boils about 15 seconds. Continue as above. (For outstanding flavor, stir in 1 teaspoon grated fresh lemon or lime peel.)

Questions and answers —

**Q. Do microwaves change food in any way? Do they stay in the food?**

**A. Microwaves do not alter the molecular structure of food. Microwaves simply produce heat.**

If you could put your hand in an operating microwave oven, your hand would get warm and you would remove it before you would burn it. Microwaves do not stay in the food. Compare microwave cooking to cooking in a gas oven — the gas doesn't contaminate or stay in the baked food.

**Q. Is it harmful to let food stand in the microwave after it has finished cooking? What about the steam and moisture?**

**A. It's not harmful to let food stand in the microwave to finish cooking. The moisture that collects won't harm the oven. It can be wiped out once the door is opened.**

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.*

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Never cook eggs in their shells in the microwave -- they will explode! Also, always use a wooden pick or the tip of a knife

to break the membrane of the egg yolk before cooking fried, poached, baked or any other unbeaten-egg dish in the microwave.

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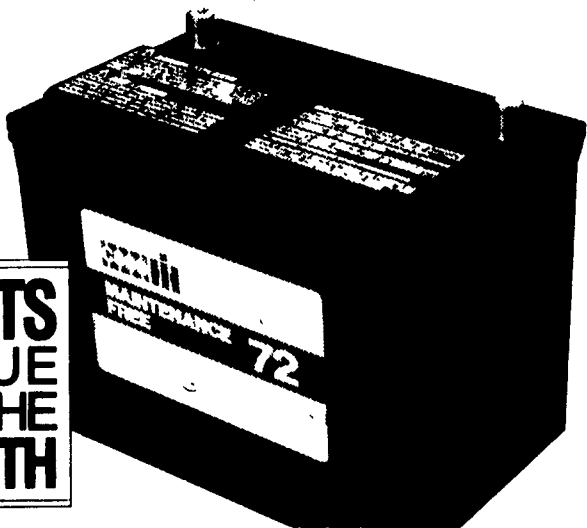
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