



MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

All those lovely colored Easter eggs tasted so good a few days ago. And the ham dinner was delicious. But the thought of one more egg salad or ham sandwich is not too exciting. These microwave-quick recipes will help you out of this yearly after-Easter dilemma.

If you don't have leftover colored eggs, you can hard-cook eggs in your microwave. However, don't expect to cook eggs in their shells in a dish of water. They will explode either during cooking or soon after. While some cookbook authors give innovative directions, it's fastest and safest to follow the easy steps I've outlined below. Or use a microwave egg cooker specially made for micro-cooking eggs in the shell and follow manufacturer's directions.

Both of today's recipes are easy to make. For Egg and Cheese Open-Face Sandwich, toast English muffin halves in a conventional toaster or broiler. Toasting prevents the filling from soaking in and producing soggy results.

Microwave sandwiches on Medium power until cheese just starts to melt. Microwaving too long thins filling and toughens cheese.

Ham and Egg Tetrizzini is a variation of classic tetrizzini. In today's recipe, the rich cream sauce is made less rich by using low-fat milk and light or reduced-calorie (also reduced in fat and cholesterol) mayonnaise. Since the mayonnaise can curdle or separate when cooked, it's added toward the end of cooking time. Stirring ingredients at times indicated in the recipe and not microwaving too long keep the mixture perfectly smooth.

Micro-Hard-Cooked Eggs

Break an egg into a custard cup; mix slightly to combine yolk and white. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power, 325-350 watts) 1 to 1½ minutes or until almost done. Shake dish gently; then let it stand, tightly covered, 2 to 3

minutes or until hard-cooked. If not done after standing time, continue microwaving on Medium.

For more than one egg: Break an egg into each custard cup or into each cup in microwave cupcake pan; mix each egg slightly. (If cupcake pan has holes in cup bottoms, line cups with double layers of paper cupcake liners before adding eggs.) Cover and continue as above, allowing 1 minute more for each additional egg. (For example, for 3 eggs, microwave on Medium for 3 to 4 minutes.)

Egg and Cheese Open-Face Sandwich

3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
2 tablespoons dairy sour half-and-half
2 tablespoons chopped celery
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper

1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
Dash pepper
¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
3 toasted English muffins
3 ounces (¾ cup) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
6 slices firm tomato

Combine eggs, sour half-and-half, celery, green pepper, pickle relish, mustard and pepper in mixing bowl. Season with salt, if desired. Divide mixture between the 6 toasted English muffin halves. Sprinkle each with cheese and top with a tomato slice. Arrange sandwiches in a circle with the center open on a microwave-safe tray. Microwave on Medium (50 percent power,

325-350 watts) 4 to 6 minutes or until cheese barely starts to melt. Serve open-faced. Eat with a fork. Makes 3 to 6 servings.

Variation: substitute ¼ cup chopped cooked ham for each egg. Or place a thin slice of ham atop egg mixture; top with the cheese and tomato. Microwave slightly longer.

For one: Egg mixture keeps two days in refrigerator. Make individual sandwiches as needed. To heat, microwave one open-faced sandwich on Medium about 1 to 1½ minutes or until cheese barely starts to melt.

Each sandwich — 1/6 of recipe: 167 calories, 10g protein, 6g fat, 17g carbohydrate, 318mg sodium, 136mg cholesterol.

Ham and Egg Tetrizzini

1 package (8 ounces) or 1½ cups broken spaghetti
1 cup sliced celery
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms*
½ cup chopped onion
2 tablespoons margarine or butter
¼ cup flour
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 cups low-fat milk
2 tablespoons dry sherry or milk

¾ cup low-calorie mayonnaise
3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
1 cup diced cooked ham
¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Cook spaghetti according to conventional or microwave direc-

tions; drain and keep warm.

Place celery, mushrooms, onion and margarine in a microwave-safe 2-quart casserole. Cover with lid and microwave (High) 4 to 5 minutes or until vegetables are barely tender. Stir in flour and pepper. Gradually stir in milk. Microwave (High) 7 to 8 minutes, stirring twice, or until bubbly. Stir in sherry, mayonnaise, eggs, ham and cooked spaghetti. If desired, season to taste with salt. Cover with lid or waxed paper. Microwave (High) 4 to 5 minutes, stirring twice. Stir well and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Each serving — ¼ of recipe: 315 calories, 15g protein, 17g fat, 30g carbohydrate, 546mg sodium, 114mg cholesterol.

*Or, stir in a 4-ounce can of drained mushrooms along with eggs and ham.

Variation: Substitute 2 cups cubed, cooked turkey or chicken for the eggs and ham, or one cup cubed, cooked turkey or chicken for just the ham.

Hint: Instead of celery and mushrooms (or in addition to them), stir in 1½ cups of cooked drained vegetables with eggs and ham.

Micro-Cooked Spaghetti

Fill a microwave-safe 2-quart casserole half full of water; cover with lid. Microwave (High) 7 to 9 minutes or until boiling. Add 8 ounces of broken spaghetti and stir with fork. Do not cover. Microwave (High) 6 to 7 minutes or until spaghetti is almost done. Let stand 5 minutes. Drain.

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