



## MICROWAVE MINUTES

By JOYCE BATTCHER

If you'd like a quick main dish for dinner, try microwaving pork chops or pork cut in strips.

I've done a lot of pork microwaving, and I've discovered these are the two easiest and quickest types of pork to microwave. And they are the ones that end up tasting the most tender and flavorful. Try today's recipes and see what you think. But first, here are a few hints on microwaving pork to get you started.

Microwave pork chops on a low power setting. This is about 200 watts. On most microwave ovens, this setting is called Medium-Low and is 30 percent power. On some brands, it may be called Defrost or Setting No. 3. On a 400-watt microwave oven, it will be 50 percent (half of 400, or 200 watts). On a 500-watt microwave with six to 10 powers, it may be Setting No. 4 (40 percent of 500 watts, or 200 watts).

Weigh chops or note the weight listed on the store label. If you have less than the recipe calls for, microwave less time. Figure about 12 minutes per pound of boneless half-inch-thick chops.

Choose plastic wrap for a tight cover to hold in heat and steam. This helps keep chops moist and tender.

To ensure even cooking, turn chops over and rearrange them halfway through cooking. Rotate dish as necessary.

Cook chops to a medium doneness — that means chops can look slightly pink when done. They

will be juicy, tender and safe to eat. According to the Food Safety and Inspection Service, fresh pork can safely be cooked to a medium doneness (160°F). FSIS tests show that trichinae, if present, are killed instantly when pork is cooked to the rare stage (147°F).

Let chops stand, still tightly covered, and check for final doneness after the standing time.

Be careful not to overcook chops. It takes some practice to judge doneness correctly. See Easy Barbecued Pork Chops (below) for specific doneness checks. You may want to save those directions for use in other pork chop recipes.

When pork chops, steaks, or boneless country rib (loin) pieces are thinly sliced into strips, you can speed up microwaving and cook them on High power.

A waxed-paper cover is better for pork strips than plastic wrap. It holds in some heat and helps promote even cooking, while allowing steam to escape and produce a stir-fry taste. Strips stay juicy and tender with a waxed-paper cover, but they tend to toughen if covered tightly with plastic wrap.

The strips cook quickly on High power, but they must be stirred often during the very short cooking time. Otherwise, some strips will overcook and toughen and others will remain undone. Stir strips as indicated in the recipe — usually after each two minutes of cooking for a pound of strips or

after one minute of cooking with smaller amounts.

### Easy Barbecued Pork Chops

- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- Dash black pepper
- 1½ pounds boneless pork loin chops, ½ inch thick (4 butterfly chops or 5 small chops)
- ½ cup chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1-1½ tablespoons low-salt soy sauce

In a small dish, combine paprika, onion powder, garlic powder and black pepper; sprinkle on both sides of pork chops and lightly rub in. Place chops in microwavable baking dish, with thickest parts to outside edge of dish. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Microwave on Medium-Low (180 to 210 watts, 30 percent power) 6 minutes (for 1 pound) to 8 minutes (for 1½ pounds). (Chops will be barely warm.) Turn chops over, rearranging so least-done parts are to outside edge of dish. Re-cover and vent by turning back one small corner of plastic wrap. Continue microwaving on Medium-Low 5 to 7 minutes, rotating dish as necessary for even cooking.

Check for doneness at minimum time. Look at chops and press each with your fingertip through plastic wrap. If you see a large reddish spot in centers and/or chops feel very soft, they're still raw. (With bone-in chops, undone spots are likely to be near bone.) Then continue microwaving on 200 watts until suggested maximum total time is up, or longer if necessary. Check for doneness after each 30 seconds of microwaving. When done, chops should still look pink in center and feel slightly soft. Let stand, tightly covered, 5 minutes.

Check chops for final doneness by cutting a small slit near centers. (With bone-in chops, cut near bones.) When perfectly done, chops should be of medium doneness — juices will be pink, and pork will be tender, slightly pink, and juicy. If rare, re-cover and microwave about 2 minutes longer on Medium-Low. Let stand again.

While chops stand, stir together

chili sauce, brown sugar and soy sauce. If desired, microwave (High) 45 to 60 seconds to heat sauce. To serve, place chops on platter and top each with sauce. For 4 bone-in chops (½ inch thick, total weight 1 to 1½ pounds): Microwave on Medium-Low, 5 minutes (for 1 pound) to 7 minutes (for 1½ pounds). Turn chops over and rotate dish; re-cover. Continue microwaving on Medium-Low 5 to 8 more minutes. Check for doneness and allow standing time, as above.

Each serving: 232 calories, 28g protein, 9g fat, 8g carbohydrate, 470mg sodium, 83mg cholesterol.

### Easy Sweet-Sour Pork

- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ pound boneless pork chops, pork steak, or boneless country (loin) ribs, cut into thin strips
- ½ large green pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple chunks
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- ½ tablespoon cornstarch

In microwavable 1-quart casserole, stir together paprika, onion powder, garlic powder and ginger. Stir in pork strips. Let stand 5 to 10 minutes at room temperature. Refrigerate, if necessary to marinate longer.

Microwave pork mixture, covered with waxed paper, on High 2½ to 4 minutes, stirring well after each minute, or until barely done. Stir in green pepper strips and soy sauce; re-cover. Microwave (High) 1 to 2 minutes, stirring after each minute, or until peppers are barely tender-crisp. Let stand, covered, about 5 minutes, or while making sauce.

Combine undrained pineapple, brown sugar, vinegar and cornstarch in a microwavable 1-quart measure. Microwave (High) 2 to 3 minutes, stirring after each minute, or until bubbly and thick. Stir into pork mixture. Serve over rice. Makes 2 servings.

Each serving — without rice:

331 calories, 28g protein, 9g fat, 35g carbohydrate, 266mg sodium, 83mg 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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## Farmers Elected

SYRACUSE, N.Y.— Three members of the board of directors of the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council (ADADC) have been elected to positions on the national level.

Raymond Johnson, a dairy producer from Schaghticoke, N.Y., was re-elected to the position as secretary of the board of directors of UDIA. Johnson has been involved in milk promotion for over 30 years and serves locally as president of the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council. He also represents local producers as a member of the board of directors of the National Dairy Board.

Ronald Harris, a dairyman from Stanley, N.Y., was re-elected to serve on the executive committee of the UDIA board of directors. Harris has been involved in dairy promotion for over 25 years and serves as ADADC's first vice president.

Also elected was K. Allen Roszel, a dairy producer from Montrose, to the position as treasurer of the National Dairy Council (NDC). NDC is the nutrition education division of UDIA. Roszel has served on ADADC's board for more than seven years.

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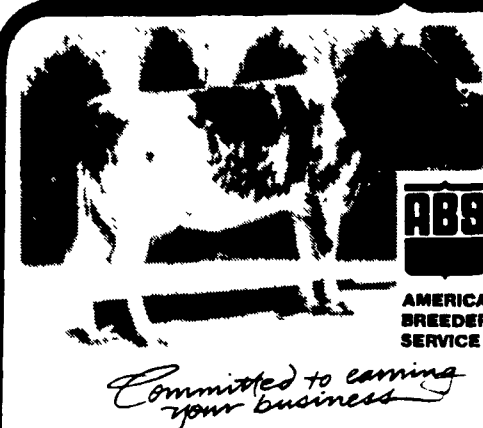
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