

## Family Living Focus

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Cooperative Extension

### Microwave Cooking For One Or Two

Cooking for one or two may be a new experience. Most likely you were cooking for a family of three or more but as life goes on for whatever reason you now find yourself cooking for one or two. The following information will help resolve some of the dilemmas associated with cooking in smaller quantities and show you how to make the most of your microwave to do so.

First, it is important to use the proper utensils. A small amount of food on a large plate will not cook properly. You probably already have smaller size dishes such as custard cups, soup bowls, and casseroles. But, you might want to purchase a 15- or 20-ounce casserole, a 7-inch pie plate, a small quiche dish, and a 6½-inch browning dish if you don't already have them. Be sure

all utensils are microwave safe. The depth of a container is as important as capacity. Food in a deeper dish takes longer to microwave. A shallow dish exposes more food surface to microwave energy. Round shapes microwave more evenly than squares or rectangles. Microwaves penetrate from each side of a corner of a square dish, therefore concentrating more energy or heat in a corner which may then overcook.

When microwaving for one or two it is important to remember how much you will need to cook at one time. After making your selection, microwave the foods that take the longest first. In some cases, you can put several things in at one time as long as they are arranged in a ring, leaving the center open so energy can penetrate from all sides.

Tight-skinned vegetables, like

potatoes or squash, are sometimes cooked in their skins. Prick the skins to allow excess steam to escape or they might burst during cooking. Large, whole vegetables, like corn on the cob, should be turned over and rearranged so all will receive equal energy.

Microwaving brings out the natural flavor in meat. It remains juicy because it is not exposed to dry, hot air.

Breakfast for one or two is quick and easy to prepare in a microwave oven and with a lot less clean-up. You can microwave, serve and eat from the same dish. Let's try bacon and eggs. Since bacon varies in thickness the cooking time will be different. Bacon shrinks less and needs less attention when cooked in a microwave. Boiled eggs must be cooked conventionally since the yolk of the egg contains more fat than the white and attracts more energy. If you microwave an egg until the white is set, the yolk will toughen. Never microwave an egg in its shell because steam builds up and the egg will burst.

Microwave-scrambled eggs are fluffier than conventionally scrambled. Remove them from the oven when they still look underdone. Overcooking makes them rubbery.

There are many great cook-

books on the market about Microwave Cooking for One or Two.

The following recipes can stretch your imagination because you can vary all the ingredients to satisfy your own tastebuds as well as someone else's.

#### Pizza on a Bagel

1 bagel  
2 tablespoons pizza sauce  
8 slices pepperoni  
2 tablespoons shredded mozzarella cheese

Cut bagel in half; place cut-side up on microwave-safe serving plate. Spread each half with 1 tablespoon pizza sauce. Top each with 4 slices pepperoni and 1 tablespoon cheese.

Microwave (High), uncovered 1 to 1½ minutes or until cheese begins to melt, rotating plate once.

Makes about 2 servings, 150 calories each.

Tips: If heating only one of the halves, reduce time to 35 to 45 seconds.

Other favorite toppings can be added or substituted, such as: mushrooms, veggies, ham, olives, etc.

#### Quick Breakwich

Toast 2 split English muffins in toaster oven or toaster. Meanwhile, arrange 2 low fat brown "n serve sausage patties on a small microwave-safe meat rack or paper towel-lined plate. Cover

with paper towel.

Microwave (high) 1 to 1½ minutes or until sausage is heated, rotating rack once. Set aside covered.

Spread muffin halves with butter or margarine and place on microwave-safe serving plate. Top 2 halves with sliced process American cheese (2 slices total); set aside. Break 1 egg into each of 2 microwave-safe custard cups (2 eggs total). Beat with fork and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Microwave until done.

Microwave muffins uncovered (high), 15 to 30 seconds or until heated and cheese starts to melt.

Add eggs on top.

Enjoy!

Tips: Sausage can be substituted with bacon, imitation bacon, ham, or other meats. American cheese can be replaced by provolone, swiss, cheddar, or other varieties.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens Microwave Cooking for One or Two.

## Apple Dumplings, Music, Ephrata Cloister Oct. 7-9

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Imagine a comfortable autumn day: the trees ablaze with color, the smell of freshly baked apple dumplings in the air, the sights and sounds of the past alive. This is what awaits visitors to the Ephrata Cloister this weekend, Oct. 7, 8 and 9, when the National Historic Landmark celebrates an autumn gathering. Highlighting the event will be the annual apple dumpling sale on Saturday, Oct. 7, beginning at 10 a.m. Sunday will feature the music of the Ephrata Cloister with performances by the Ephrata Cloister Chorus in the historic Meetinghouse at 2 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4 p.m.

Ephrata Cloister is located in Ephrata Borough, Lancaster County, on Route 322 at the intersection with Route 272. The historic site is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from noon-5 p.m. For more information, call (717) 733-6600.

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