

Adapting A Recipe For The Microwave.

- The technique differs slightly from conventional cooking methods. Continue testing a recipe until it succeeds
- Use an existing microwave recipe as a guide in adapting a conventional recipe
- Conventional time can be reduced roughly to a quarter of the time for oven roasts and to half the time for stews
- Tough cuts such as neck or brisket take approximately 1 hour at 30% power. Less tough cuts such as beef olives or strips take 30 to 45 minutes at 50% power
- Reduce the liquid by approximately half for moist-heat cooking methods; not more than approximately 200 ml liquid is required for 1,5 kg meat
- Add less salt and more herbs
- Add salt preferably towards the end of the cooking time

Conversion Table			
1 ml	1/4 teaspoon	62,5 ml	1/4 cup
2,5 ml	1/2 teaspoon	83 ml	1/3 cup
5 ml	1 teaspoon	125 ml	1/2 cup
12,5 ml	1 tablespoon	187 ml	3/4 cup
25 ml	2 tablespoons	250 ml	1 cup

Variable Cooking Control Settings			
HIGH	= FULL POWER	= 100%	
MED-HIGH	= ROAST	= 70%	
MEDIUM	= SIMMER	= 50%	
MED-LOW	= DEFROST	= 30%	
LOW	= WARM	= 10%	

- Microwave cooking times are directly related to the amount of food in the oven. As food volume increases, the cooking, heating or defrosting time increases.

Easy formula to determine how long 3 medium potatoes will take to cook:

amount x time, less 1/3

eg. a potato takes ± 4 minutes

to cook 3 potatoes 3 x 4 minutes = 12 min

less 1/3 4 min

3 potatoes 8 min

- Small pieces of food cook faster than larger ones. For even cooking, make all the pieces the same size.
- The colder the food, the longer it will take to reheat, cook or defrost.
- The more dense the food, the longer it will take to reheat, cook or defrost, eg. A roast will take longer to defrost than minced meat.
- The food normally cooks in a 1/4 of the normal time.
- Cakes cook in ± 1/6 of normal time.
 - a. add 1/4 cup liquid
 - b. 2,5 ml less baking powder
 - c. 1/6 less margarine for butter cakes-
- When using the mixed settings on the convection oven the food will cook in ± 1/2 of the normal time, at the same temperature or 10°C higher.
- When using the manual convection and a recipe calls for a mixed setting, use the same time and temperature but add on 3 minutes on med-high for cakes and 5 minutes on med- high for breads, meat and poultry.
- The principal difference between a plain microwave oven (M/O) and a convection-micro-wave oven is that the M/O uses microwave energy to cook the food (the oven stays cool during the cooking process) and the convection oven uses hot air to cook the food. The oven as well as the container become hot during the cooking process.

- Armadillo top, is used to protect the turntable, when using a browning skillet. It can also be used in convection ovens to prevent arcing when using metal baking trays etc.

Take Note

1. Do not boil eggs in the microwave oven.
2. Do not heat oil for deep fat frying.
3. Pierce foods with membranes eg. Baked potato.
4. Rules for using foil in the microwave oven:
 - a. Never cover the food completely in foil.
 - b. Food mass must be more than the foil.
 - c. Foil should never touch the sides of the oven.
5. Microwaves cook from the outside of the food to the inside. Microwaves penetrate food from outside to a depth of 2-4 cm. (See cooking techniques no. 3.)

Microwave cooking techniques

1. **RING** shapes. Cooking is most successful when the food is arranged in a ring shape. Eg. A cake mixture cooked in a ring mould or meatballs arranged in a circle, if this is not possible...
2. **RE-ARRANGE** the meatballs during the cooking period, moving those in the centre towards the outside of the dish. This is done because the microwaves cook the outer section of the food first.
3. **DEPTH** of food in the dish affects both speed and evenness of cooking. Food in a shallow container will cook faster than food in a deep container (microwaves penetrate 2-4 cm).
4. **ARRANGE** food with thicker or denser part towards the outside of the dish.
5. **COVERING** the dish retains the heat and steam which speeds up the cooking process. Use a casserole lid or plastic wrap. (Pierce a few holes in the plastic to allow steam to escape.) Cover with plastic or lid to retain water, eg. the cooking of vegetables.
6. **STANDING TIME** Heat is in the food, not the oven, and many foods build up enough internal heat to continue cooking by themselves after being removed from the oven.
7. **BROWNING** agents such as gravy browning (liquid), soya sauce, paprika, chicken or barbecue spice, Worcestershire sauce or a mixture of Bisto and flour can be used. Browning agents do not affect the quality of microwaved foods but can add colour and flavour.

A browning dish or skillet can also be used to brown roasts, sausages, chops, hamburger patties and to fry eggs. The skillet is made of glass ceramic and is coated on the bottom with a special metal which absorbs microwave energy. After the empty dish is preheated in the microwave oven it is used as a frying pan to sear, brown and crisp foods.

A roasting bag will also help the browning process.

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