

MICROWAVE TIPS

Cooking in a microwave oven is unlike any kind of conventional cooking. You must follow a different set of microwave-specific cooking rules. Although you can't microwave every kind of food, your microwave oven can be a useful cooking tool.

Microwaving has some ground rules:

- Don't use metal cookware in your microwave. Microwaves can't pass through metal, so you can't cook with traditional metal cookware. Use glass, ceramic or microwave safe plastic containers
- Don't try recipes that require a lot of water, such as pasta, in a microwave. They don't cook well in a microwave and will probably cook in less time on your stovetop.
- Arrange foods so that they cook evenly. Face the thickest parts, like broccoli stalks, outward toward the oven walls. Arrange foods of the same size and shape, such as potatoes, in a circle or square with space between them and no item in the center.
- Cover dishes. A cover eliminates splattering, and it also cuts down on cooking time.
- Frequently stir, turn, and rotate foods. This ensures an even distribution of heat.
- Don't leave foods unattended. As different foods heat differently, it's important to check your meal while it's cooking.
- Cut foods into small pieces, if possible. Small pieces cook more quickly than large ones.
- Before cooking, use a fork to pierce foods that have skins, such as potatoes, hot dogs, and sausages. Piercing allows steam to escape that could otherwise lead to sudden popping and splattering.
- Be sure to use the defrost power setting (30 to 40 percent of full power) when thawing food. Doing so will ensure that the foods defrosts in a slow and even manner. Turn and rotate the food every so often also helps as you defrost.
- Clean the microwave often.