



MICROWAVE SAFETY

Microwave ovens play an important role at mealtime, safety tips must be followed to prevent foodborne illness.

HOW DOES A MICROWAVE OVEN COOK?

- Microwave energy penetrates food 1 to 1 ½ inches in depth. Thicker pieces of food can take longer to heat through.
- Microwave cooking can be uneven so many are available with a turn-table.
- Arrange food items in a microwave oven in a covered microwave-safe dish with some water. De-bone meat so the bones do not shield the meat from thorough cooking.
- Cover food with a lid or plastic wrap. Allow enough space between food and the top of the dish.
- Loosen or vent the lid or wrap to allow steam to vent. The moist heat that is created helps destroy harmful bacteria and ensures uniform cooking.
- Stir, rotate, or turn foods upside down midway through the microwaving time to help eliminate cold spots.

ALLOW "STANDING TIME" FOLLOWING MICROWAVE COOKING

- Microwaves cause water, fat and sugar molecules to vibrate which produces heat. After the cooking time is complete, food molecules continue to generate heat so extra time **MUST** be allowed. This is known as "standing time" or "resting time".

USE ONLY APPROVED COOKWARE & CONTAINERS

- Only cookware that is specifically manufactured for use in a microwave oven.
- Glass, ceramic, and plastic containers need to be labeled as safe for use in a microwave.
- Other containers can warp or melt, possibly causing harmful chemicals to migrate into foods.
- Never use thin plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic bags, newspapers, or aluminum foil in a microwave oven.

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DEFROSTING FOODS IN A MICROWAVE OVEN

- Remove food from its packaging before defrosting.
- DO NOT use foam trays or plastic wraps as they are not heat stable.
- Select the "defrost" setting or 30% power.
- Rotate food through the defrosting process.
- When thawing ground meats, scrape the thawed portions off as it softens; remove it from the oven.
- Cook meat, poultry, egg casseroles, and fish immediately after defrosting as some areas of the frozen food may begin to cook during the defrosting time.
- DO NOT hold partially cooked food to use later.

MINIMUM INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURES FOR SAFETY

140° F (60°C)	Fully Cooked Ham packaged in USDA Plant (to reheat)
145° F (62.8°C)	Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb (steaks, chops, roasts), Ham (fresh or smoked uncooked) Allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
160° F (71.1°C)	Ground Meats (beef, pork, veal, lamb) & Eggs
165° F (73.9°C)	All Fully Cooked Hams (to reheat) All Poultry (whole birds, parts, ground poultry and stuffing), Fish and Shellfish, Casseroles (to reheat)

DETERMINING IF COOKWARE IS MICROWAVE SAFE!

If cookware or utensils are not labeled for microwave use, you can test it before using to make sure it is microwave safe.

1. Put one cup of tap water in a glass measuring cup.
2. Place it in the microwave oven along with the cookware or utensil to be tested.
Items should not touch!
3. Microwave on high 1 minute.
4. If the utensil or cookware feel warm or hot, it is not microwave safe.

DO NOT USE cookware or utensils that do not test microwave safe.
They may crack the bottom of the microwave oven.

CLEANING INSIDE A MICROWAVE OVEN

- Consult the manufacturer's use and care manual for best advice.
- Unplug microwave oven before cleaning to minimize the possibility of electric shock.
- Remove spatters and spills as they occur so food residue won't become dried on.
- Wipe with a soft cloth or paper towel dampened with warm water.
- For heavier spills, use baking soda, a mild soap, or dishwashing liquid
- Mix 6 tablespoons of baking soda OR ½ cup lemon juice with one cup of water

Source: USDA, Cooking Safely in the Microwave Oven.
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov>