

CRITICAL MICROWAVE COOKING TECHNIQUE TIPS (CULINARY TECHNIQUE TIPS)

1. As in any type of cooking, top quality ingredients will always produce superior results. The microwave works best with foods that have **high** moisture contents, like fish, poultry, fruits, and vegetables.
2. When cooking foods that have a skin or some type of shell or coating, pierce the outer layer. This will help to keep food from exploding as a result of steam that can build up from the inside.
3. Salt on the surface of food tends to attract microwaves, which can dry out the outer layer. If salt is desired, stir it well before cooking or sprinkle it on the food after removal from the microwave.
4. Butters and oil normally needed to sauté foods conventionally are not needed when foods are cooked in the microwave. Instead, if butter flavor is desired, add a small amount after cooking and the flavor will be absorbed during the standing time.
5. Using containers that are round or oval in shape can help to heat food more evenly. With square or rectangular shaped containers, the corners tend to receive more energy, which can cause the food to overcook in these areas. Do not use metal or aluminum foil in the microwave which will cause arcing and could possibly damage the microwave.
6. When deciding whether a lid is necessary, remember this rule: if it is covered in the oven, it should be covered in the microwave.
In addition, covering food with lids or plastic wrap can help food retain moisture and cook more evenly. Remember to allow a small gap between the food and the lid of the wrap, and leave one corner open to allow steam to escape.
7. To maximize flavor, add fresh herbs during standing time, after food has been cooked or heated in the microwave.
Standing time is – At the end of the set cooking time, the food continues cooking and distributes the heat evenly throughout your food.
8. Use microwave safe containers when cooking and reheating food. The container's manufacturer will indicate if it is safe for microwave use. Generally, glass, ceramic, and plastic containers are safe. They must be heat resistant otherwise they could melt in the microwave and cause spills or burns. For more information visit http://www.fda.gov/FDAC/features/2002/602_plastic.html

9. A light browning and crispy skin effect with poultry (turkey breast, chicken breast) can be achieved by spreading butter in a pocket between the skin and the breast meat. Adding herbs to the butter is a great way to enhance the flavor.
10. If low heat or “slow” cooking is the goal, as when cooking custards or poaching fish, reduce the power setting of the microwave for ideal results.
11. For more even cooking, stir food half way through the cooking or reheating time. This will eliminate cold spots.
12. Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers, whipped topping bowls, and other one-time use containers should not be used in microwave ovens. These containers can warp or melt.