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## Microwave Cooking + Use

Often, life gets busy and cooking a meal can feel like a chore. On those kinds of days, have you considered microwave cooking, rather than heading to a drive through? This can save money and often results in a more nutritious meal than going out to eat. This article includes some helpful tips on microwave cooking.

### Microwave Safety

A microwave will kill bacteria when food is cooked to the proper temperature. Keeping this in mind, be sure to use a food thermometer, especially when cooking meat. The main concern is uneven cooking, so test a few different areas of the food when checking the temperature.

### Proper cooking temperatures:

Food Type	Cooking Temperature
Poultry*	165°F
Eggs, Casseroles	160°F
Ground Meats	160°F
Beef, Pork, Lamb, Veal	145°F

\*Cooking whole, stuffed poultry in a microwave is not recommended.

Additionally, never partially cook food and store for later, as there may still be bacteria present.

### Microwave Usage Tips:

1. Follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
2. Use microwave safe containers – do not use metal; some plastics may melt.
3. Look out for “super-heated” water – it is possible to heat water above boiling without it showing signs (bubbling). Extremely hot water can

explode when opening the door or removing the container.

4. Check for leakage – ensure all microwave seals are working, including the door.
5. Watch for “hot spots” – depending on the thickness or quantity of food, the microwave may not be able to cook food evenly.

### Thawing Frozen Food in a Microwave

When using a microwave to defrost/thaw food, remove the food from the packaging and transfer to a microwave safe plate/dish. (Chemicals from plastic wraps and foam trays may leach into the food.)

Using the “defrost” mode is recommended, or reduce the wattage of the microwave to about 30% power.

For larger amounts of food, rotate throughout the process so it defrosts evenly. Keep an eye on food when defrosting in the microwave as it may start to cook on the outer edges.

Be sure to prepare defrosted food immediately after thawing in the microwave.

### Reheating Food

If reheating previously cooked food, reheat food back to 165°F.

Written by Christy Curran, Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans



### Sources:

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/>  
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/>  
<https://www.cancer.org>

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## Recipe of the Month

Source: MyPlate Kitchen  
[www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

### Microwave Denver Scramble Slider

Servings: 1

#### Ingredients

- 2 Tablespoons chopped bell peppers
- 1 Tablespoon chopped onion
- 1 egg
- 1 slice deli ham
- 1 Tablespoon water
- 1 whole wheat bun or English muffin



Photo Source: unsplash.com

#### Directions

1. Place peppers and onion in an 8 oz. ramekin, custard cup or small bowl.
2. Microwave for 30 seconds, then stir.
3. Add ham, egg, and water – beat until the egg is blended.
4. Microwave 30 seconds, then stir.
5. Microwave another 30 seconds, or until the egg is set. \*
6. Season, if desired.
7. Serve on a bun, English muffin, or bread.

**Nutrients Per Serving:** 240 calories, 6 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 16 g protein, 29 g carbohydrates, 4 g dietary fiber, 9 g total sugars, 4 g added sugar, and 550 mg sodium

**Total Cost per serving:** \$\$\$\$

*\*Microwave ovens vary, cook time may need to be adjusted.*

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