

Lesson 6 - Microwave cooking

Purpose: To teach use of a microwave for cooking food.

Instructor's Note: Microwave ovens are particularly good for cooking vegetables, making cream sauces and soups, reheating leftovers and hot beverages. They can also be used for many other foods such as cookies, cakes and meats but the colour, flavour and texture is not the same as when cooked in an oven.

Using a microwave oven shortens the cooking time and saves energy when small quantities of food are being prepared. Often food can be cooked and served in the same dish.

Activity 1

Literacy Stage 1

1. Hand out [Resource Sheet 4.5: Microwave Safety](#). Read it together as a group.
2. Talk about each of the safety points.
3. Hand out [Resource Sheet 4.6: Microwave Cookware](#). Read it together as a group. Discuss each point.
4. Have some examples of microwave cookware to show learners. Show them how to test if a dish is microwave safe.

Activity 2

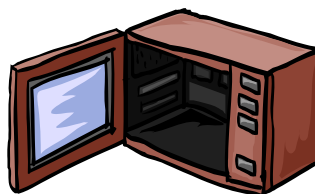
Literacy Stage 2

1. Hand out [Resource Sheet 4.7: Microwave Cooking Techniques](#). Read it together as a group.
2. Go over each of the points and explain how microwave cooking is different from using a regular oven.
3. Ask learners to write down the differences.

Activity 3

Literacy Stage 3

1. Find a simple recipe to use with learners. See [Now You're Cooking!](#) and select either Metric or Imperial recipes from these cookbooks. Examples: **porridge, carrots, baked fish, or vanilla pudding.**
2. Write the ingredients and equipment needed on a flip chart or white board. Tell learners what each word means and then show learners how to prepare the recipe.
3. If possible, let the learners prepare the food and use the microwave to cook it.
4. Ask learners to write down the recipe(s) so that they can try them at home.



You will need:

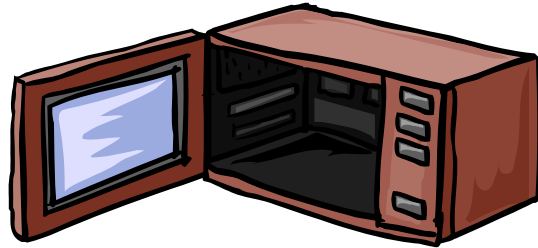
Cooking facilities and equipment
A microwave
Microwave safe dishes
Flip chart or white board

Developed by
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Microwave Safety

- √ Plug the cord into a three prong (grounded) outlet. In some cases a new outlet may be needed.
- √ Use oven mitts when removing dishes from the microwave.
- √ Take care when uncovering a dish after cooking. Lift the cover so that the steam escapes away from you so that you do not get burned.
- √ Wash the inside of the microwave oven with a damp soapy cloth. If food has been cooked on, heat a cup of water in the microwave until it steams to soften the food and make it easier to clean.



- X Never operate a microwave oven if the door or door seal is damaged.
- X Plastic margarine and yogurt containers are **not recommended** for the microwave.
- X **Never heat baby bottles or baby food jars in the microwave.** They heat unevenly and may burn the baby or even explode.
- X **Never microwave food in narrow necked bottles or closed containers.** They may crack or even explode.
- X **Never turn the microwave oven on if there is no food in it.** It could damage the oven. You can keep a cup of water in the microwave to prevent damage if it is turned on by mistake.
- X Never use metal cookware, metal twist ties, or metal trimmed dishes in the microwave.

Microwave Cookware

- Cookware made especially for the microwave can be purchased. Heat resistant glass cookware such as Pyrex and Corning Ware are microwave safe.
- Microwaves pass right through some materials such as glass, porcelain, paper, and some plastics. This makes them good materials for microwave cookware.
- Dishes that have metal trim should **not** be used in the microwave.
- Plastic containers especially designed for the microwave are available.
- Plastic spoons and whisks are available for use in the microwave. They are useful because they can be left in the food during cooking.
- Certain foods such as soups, sauces, and cereals need a deep container to prevent boiling over.
- Round dishes are better for the microwave than square or rectangle. The food in the corners of square or rectangle dishes tends to overcook.

To test if a dish is microwave safe: Put the dish to be tested in the microwave. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) of cold water in an ovenproof one cup glass measure. Place it beside, but not touching, the dish to be tested. Microwave on High one minute. The water should be very warm or even hot. If the container being tested is cool or only slightly warm, it is safe to use in the microwave. If it is hot, **do not** use in the microwave.

Microwave Cooking Techniques

- **Foods overcook quickly** in the microwave. Always start with the shortest time suggested and increase, if necessary.
- **Larger quantities** of food **take a longer time** to cook in the microwave than smaller amounts.
- **Cover food** for faster and more even cooking, and to prevent spatters. If it is covered with **plastic wrap**, it **should be vented**. This means that there must be a space for the air to escape, either a hole in the wrap or a spot at the edge where it is not fastened down. Waxed paper or a microwave-safe plate can also be used as a cover.
- Food may be **wrapped in paper towels** to absorb fat from food as it cooks.
- Potatoes should **be arranged in a circle** with the larger ones closer to the outside and smaller ones closer to the centre of the circle.
- **Pierce the skins** of foods cooked whole such as potatoes, squash or apples. If this is not done, steam may build up and cause the food to burst.
- When cooking unevenly shaped foods such as whole chicken, small strips of aluminum foil may be used as a shield to prevent parts of the food from overcooking. Place foil pieces at least one inch apart from each other and the walls of the microwave.
- **Pierce the yolk of an egg** to prevent it from exploding when cooking in the microwave.
- Tender cuts of meat cook best in the microwave. Marinate less tender cuts of meat overnight in tomato juice or other marinade. Cook at Medium or Medium-High power.

This resource is for educational use and may be duplicated for individual or group learning.
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