

(week 7)

FN1618

# COOKING 101

Quick and Easy Menus, Recipes and Tips for Singles and Couples

## COOKING IN SMALL SPACES USING a MICROWAVE OVEN



**NDSU** EXTENSION  
SERVICE

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When deciding what to make for dinner, people usually consider taste, cost and convenience. Even if you have little time for meal preparation or live in a location with minimal cooking space, you still should consider nutrition.

Proper nutrition provides the nutrients and energy we need to stay healthy, and with just a few tips and suggestions, you can prepare and eat nutritious and satisfying foods in most living situations.



POP  
QUIZ:

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ALREADY?

(The answers are on Page 4.)

- 1 True or False:** You can heat foods in take-out containers, old whipped topping bowls or margarine tubs in a microwave oven.
- 2** When using this cooking method, you should stir the food halfway through and rotate the cooking dish to eliminate uneven cooking temperatures or cold spots:
  - a) Baking
  - b) Grilling
  - c) Microwaving
  - d) Heating on the stovetop
- 3** Which one of these dishes is not microwave safe?
  - a) Glass bowl
  - b) Plastic foam cup
  - c) Ceramic bowl
  - d) Bowl labeled microwave safe





## TIPS FOR SAVING SPACE

- Compare unit prices of different sizes of foods. If the smaller container does not cost considerably more, buying the smaller size may be a good way to save cupboard space.
- Get rid of unnecessary cookware. Some essentials to keep might include a frying pan, sauce pan, slow cooker, measuring cups, spatula and other equipment you use often.
- Plan weekly menus considering what you have on hand and what is on sale at the grocery store. Buy only the groceries you need for the week.
- When planning your menus, consider which foods can be cooked in a limited space with a slow cooker, microwave or single pan.
- Take advantage of leftovers by eating them the next day. Consider taking them to work or school in a small cooler.
- Be creative to maximize the space you have. Can you store your toaster on top of your microwave? Can you store small dishes in your slow cooker when it is not in use? Will your frying pan and sauce pans all nest in one stack?
- If you do not have a lot of refrigerator space, buy canned vegetables and fruits instead of fresh. Canned versions still provide great nutrition, and you can store them at room temperature.
- Wash dishes after each meal. Leaving out dirty dishes will make your kitchen feel more cramped and can create odors that impact your entire living space. If you do not have access to a space to wash dishes with warm, soapy water, consider using disposable paper products.

# WHICH CONTAINERS are microwave safe?

## Safe for microwave use:

- Glass, ceramic cookware and those labeled safe for microwave use
- Microwave-safe plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper and white microwave-safe paper towels

## Not safe for microwave use:

- Margarine tubs, whipped topping bowls, cheese containers and other disposable plastic containers because they melt from increased temperatures, which causes harmful chemicals to get into your food
- Carry-out containers from restaurants or plastic foam (unless they specifically state microwave safe)
- Foam-insulated trays and plastic wraps on fresh meats from grocery stores

**Note:** Discard containers that hold prepared microwavable meals after you use them because they are meant for one-time use.

# “COOK IT SAFE!” WHEN MICROWAVING

- Know what wattage your microwave is and compare that to the wattage stated in the packaged food’s cooking directions. The lower the wattage, the slower the microwave cooks your food, so adjust cooking times accordingly.
- Read and follow package cooking directions.
- Be sure to arrange food items evenly in microwave-safe dishes and add water if needed. You can cover any dish with a lid or plastic wrap before cooking to help keep in moisture.
- Defrost and cook large cuts of meat and other frozen foods on medium power (50 percent) rather than high power (100 percent); this allows heat to reach the center without overcooking outer areas. When defrosting food, use 30 percent power or the defrost setting on the microwave.
- Stir and rotate your food half way through cooking to prevent cold spots or areas where harmful bacteria can survive.
- Prevent burns by removing your food from the microwave carefully. Use potholders and uncover foods away from your face so steam can escape.
- Observe recommended “standing time.” The “stand time” means the food continues to cook to a higher temperature after it’s removed from the microwave.
- Use a food thermometer to be sure your food is cooked to the proper temperature.

\*For more information on safe cooking tips for a microwave, check out [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org).

## KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

tsp. = teaspoon

Tbsp. = tablespoon

c. = cup

oz. = ounces

pkg. = package

g = grams

mg = milligrams

lb. = pound

# RECIPES



## MICROWAVE MEATLOAF

1/3 c. rolled oats

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 clove garlic, minced

1/3 c. finely chopped onion

1 (8-oz.) can tomato sauce, no sodium

1/8 tsp. pepper

1 1/2 lbs. lean ground beef or pork

1/4 c. ketchup

Mix oats, egg, garlic, onion and pepper.

Crumble ground beef into mixture and blend

thoroughly. Press into 9- by 5-inch loaf pan

(microwaveable) and cover loosely with paper

towel. Microwave on high seven minutes, rotate

pan and microwave seven more minutes. Rotate

once more and microwave five more minutes or

until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees.

Spread with ketchup and recover loosely

with paper towel. Microwave at medium (50

percent) until ketchup is heated, two to three

minutes

**Makes eight servings.** Per serving: 140 calories,

4.5 g fat, 18 g protein, 7 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber,

140 mg sodium

### Meal Idea:

Microwave Meatloaf\*, Microwave Baked Potato\*, apple slices, whole-wheat bread, fat-free or low-fat milk

\*Recipe included

# Microwave Sweet Potato or Baked Potato

1 Medium-sized sweet potato or Russet potato

Scrub the outside of the potato with a vegetable brush under cool running water to remove dirt. Puncture a few times with a fork to allow the steam to escape. Place the potato on a paper towel in a microwave-safe dish. Cook on high for six to seven minutes. Turn over and rotate the potato half way through cooking.

## Variations:

- Top baked potato with veggies, cheese, chili or whatever else you would like.
- Top sweet potato with a little cinnamon and sugar or salt and pepper.

**Sweet Potato - Makes one serving.** Per serving: 150 calories, 0 g fat, 2 g protein, 38 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 70 mg sodium

**Potato - Makes one serving.** Per serving: 160 calories, 0 g fat, 4 g protein, 36 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 20 mg sodium



# Microwave Scrambled Eggs

1 egg

1 Tbsp. milk or water

Spray glass bowl or other microwave-safe dish with nonstick spray. Add milk or water and egg, blending lightly with fork. Cover with plastic wrap and cook for 30 to 45 seconds for one egg. Remove from microwave; stir. Cover and let stand two to three minutes. Season to taste.

## Variations:

- Add onions, peppers or other vegetables before microwaving to add color and flavor to your eggs.
- Sprinkle with cheese or top with salsa after taking the eggs out of the microwave.

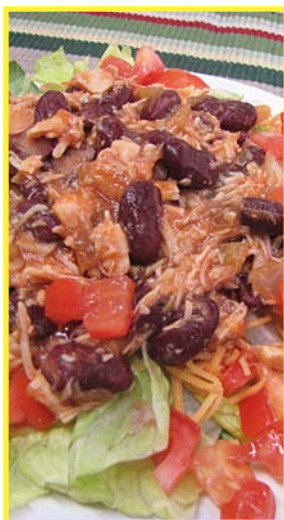
## Makes one serving.

Per serving: 70 calories, 5 g fat, 6 g protein, 70 mg sodium



## Meal Idea:

Microwave Scrambled Eggs, whole-wheat toast, banana, fat-free or low-fat milk



## TEX-MEX CHICKEN AND BEANS SALAD

- 1 (10-oz.) can chunked chicken, drained
- 1 (15- to 19-oz.) can red kidney beans, no salt, drained
- 1 (4-oz.) can green chilies, chopped, drained
- ½ c. hot taco sauce
- 1 c. Monterey Jack and/or Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 large tomato, diced
- 1 bag of chopped romaine lettuce

In 10-inch round baking dish or other microwave-safe dish, combine chicken, beans, chilies and taco sauce. Cook, covered with plastic wrap, on high five to seven minutes until heated through, stirring once. Toss lettuce, tomatoes and cheese, then dish salad and top with the chicken mixture. You also could top with salsa, onions and sour cream if desired.

**Makes six servings.** Per serving: 200 calories, 8 g fat, 18 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 470 mg sodium

### Meal Idea:

Tex-Mex Chicken and Beans Salad,  
whole-wheat bread, orange slices,  
low-fat or fat-free milk



## MICROWAVE CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

- 1 (14-oz.) bag whole-kernel corn, frozen
- 1 (15-oz.) can black beans
- 1 (15-oz.) can kidney or cannellini beans
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes, no sodium
- 1 (4-oz.) can green chilies, chopped, drained
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can chicken broth, low sodium
- 1 (10-oz.) can chunked chicken
- 1 (10-oz.) can cheddar cheese soup (reduced fat and/or sodium)

Optional toppings: Crushed tortilla chips, shredded cheese, diced tomatoes

Open all the cans. Drain and rinse beans in a strainer. Place all ingredients in a large microwave-safe bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Cook on high for 18 minutes, stirring three times or until chicken is heated through. Serve.

Alternate directions: Place in a large pot on the stove and heat thoroughly.

Refrigerate leftovers. Use to top baked potatoes, pasta or rice. Or freeze in meal-sized portions if you will not use the leftovers within three days.

**Makes 10 servings.** Per serving: 170 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 13 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber and 520 milligrams sodium

### Meal Idea:

Microwave Chicken Tortilla Soup, side salad, whole-wheat bread, strawberries, fat-free or low-fat milk

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