

# Let microwave help with parties

AP — Next to a kitchen full of busy assistants, a microwave oven is your best winter party helper. Check your owner's manual for specific directions, then put your microwave to work at these tasks:

## APPETIZERS

— Soften cream cheese and butter for spreads (cookies and desserts, too).  
— Warm shredded cheese before beating when making cheese balls.  
— Heat warm appetizers and fondue during parties. Heat made-ahead appetizers.

— Partially cook bacon for wrapped appetizers. Cook bacon to crisp in salads or casseroles.

## BAKING AND CANDIES

— Blanch almonds: Bring water to boiling in microwave. Add almonds

and cook 1½ minutes on high.

— Place yeast dough six times faster (if your oven has a 10 percent power setting).

— Melt chocolate and caramels for candies; confectioners' sugar coating for dipping pretzels and crackers.  
— Rehydrate the dried fruit that goes into your favorite fruitcake.

## MEALTIME

— Cook chicken breasts or thighs to use in salads, casseroles and appetizers.

— Melt butter and toast crumbs for casseroles and vegetable toppings.  
— Melt jam or jelly for an easy glaze for ham.

— Warm breads, rolls, coffee cakes and muffins.  
— Bake potatoes for twice-baked potatoes or potato-skin appetizers.

Bake squash for glazing.

— Use your microwave as a "fifth burner" to cook vegetables and make sauces and gravy when the top of your cooking range is full.

— Hard-cook eggs for appetizers, salads, casseroles or garnishes. Break the uncooked egg into a custard cup and prick yolk and white with a toothpick. Do not cook an egg in the shell.

— Keep a casserole hot for late-comers at lowest power setting.

## DESSERTS

— Warm dessert sauces and ice-cream toppings.

— Thaw frozen cookies and frozen whipped dessert topping.

— Soften solidly frozen ice cream, allowing about 15 seconds on high power for one pint.  
— Steam pudding conventionally

a day ahead; warm whole or by the piece in the microwave at dessert time.

## QUICK TRICKS

— Pop popcorn for snacks or cereal corn.

— Store mulled beverages in a covered container in the refrigerator. Heat a cup at a time.

— Juice lemons: Halve or quarter a lemon. Heat on high for 30 to 45 seconds; then squeeze out juice. You'll get more juice with less work.

— Toast nuts and coconut for candies and cookies; bread cubes for salad crostons and turkey stuffings, cereal snack mixes.

— Warm finger towels: Soak four washcloths in water. Squeeze out excess water and roll up. Heat on high for two or three minutes or until hot. Use tongs to serve.

## Lemon-currant glaze tops low-sodium ham

AP — Sodium-reduced ham, available now in most supermarkets, is a great convenience food. These hams are already cooked. They are boneless for easy slicing, closely trimmed and 25 percent lower in sodium for healthful eating.

**LEMON-CURRENT GLAZED HAM**  
One 2- to 2½-pound sodium-reduced, fully-cooked boneless ham  
¼ cup red currant jelly  
¼ cup dry red wine  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
¼ cup chicken broth  
2 teaspoons cornstarch

Use a sharp knife to make diagonal cuts about ¼ inch deep and 1 inch apart in the top of the ham. Place on a rack in a shallow baking pan. Insert a meat thermometer in the center of the ham. Bake, uncovered, in 325-degree oven 1½ to 2 hours or until thermometer registers 140 degrees F.

Meanwhile, for glaze, in a small saucepan combine jelly, 2 tablespoons of the wine and lemon juice. Cook and stir until jelly is melted. After ham has baked about 1½ hours, brush with half the glaze.

For sauce, in a small bowl stir together remaining wine, chicken broth and cornstarch. Stir into remaining glaze in saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Transfer ham to a platter. Garnish top with steamed green onion tops and thin slices of orange peel. Pass sauce. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 193 cal., 22 g pro., 17 g carbo., 5 g fat, 53 mg chol., 930 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 70 percent thiamine, 15 percent riboflavin, 25 percent niacin, 25 percent phosphorus.

## Turkey breast half suits small dinner

AP — For a small, special dinner, choose a turkey breast half rather than a whole bird and cook it in your microwave oven. Cooking time is

less than 40 minutes. You won't have to pass up stuffing, either. An herb bread-and-mushroom mixture goes under the skin.

## MUSHROOM-CAPPED TURKEY BREAST

1 cup chopped fresh mushrooms  
¼ cup sliced green onion  
¼ cup dry sherry  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon dried basil, crushed  
¼ cup soft bread crumbs (1 slice)  
One 2½-to-3-pound turkey breast half with bone

2 teaspoons cooking oil  
¼ teaspoon paprika  
¼ cup sliced fresh mushrooms  
1 tablespoon margarine or butter  
1 tablespoon cornstarch

½ cup chicken broth  
½ cup skim milk

In a microwave-safe four-cup measure cook one cup mushrooms, ¼ cup green onion, sherry, salt and basil, uncovered, on 100 percent power (high) eight minutes or until liquid has evaporated. Stir in bread crumbs; set aside.

To remove turkey bone, use a sharp knife to cut along bone. Rinse turkey; pat dry. Pull skin away, leaving it attached along one edge. Spread mushroom mixture over meat. Replace skin; secure with wooden toothpicks. Combine oil and paprika; brush over skin. Place turkey, skin side up, on rack in 12-by-7½-inch-by-2-inch microwave-safe dish. Cover with wax paper. Cook on

high 25 to 35 minutes or until a thermometer registers 165 degrees, rotating dish three times. If necessary, shield with foil. Let stand, covered, 10 minutes or until thermometer registers 170 degrees.

In the four-cup measure cook ¼ cup mushrooms, one tablespoon green onion and margarine, uncovered, on high 1½ to 2 minutes. Stir in cornstarch. Add broth and milk. Cook, uncovered, on high 2 to 3 minutes or until bubbly. Pass with turkey. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 250 cal., 29 g pro., 8 g carbo., 5 g fat, 103 mg chol., 260 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 17 percent riboflavin, 52 percent niacin, 14 percent iron, 33 percent phosphorus.

## Chicken dish cooks in 10 minutes in skillet

AP — Who would believe chicken this good could be this fast to cook and serve? Count on 5 minutes to prepare, then 10 minutes in the skillet to brown and cook this chicken dish.

## THYME-MUSTARD CHICKEN

½ cup toasted wheat germ  
¼ cup fine dry bread crumbs  
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed  
½ teaspoon salt  
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about ½ pound total)  
¼ cup mustard-mayonnaise sandwich and salad sauce

2 tablespoons cooking oil  
In a pie plate or shallow bowl combine wheat germ, bread crumbs, thyme and salt. Rinse chicken and pat dry with paper towels. Brush chicken with mustard-mayonnaise sauce; roll in crumb mixture to coat.

In a 12-inch skillet cook chicken in hot oil over medium-high heat for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender enough to be pierced easily with a fork and no pink remains, turning to brown evenly. Serve with additional mustard-mayonnaise sauce. Makes 4 servings.

You won't have to pass up stuffing, either. An herb bread-and-mushroom mixture goes under the skin.

## Dress up salad

Whole cranberry sauce makes an easy dressing for a fresh fruit salad. To order a free booklet with 75 more quick ways to use whole and jellied cranberry sauces, send a stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope to: "75 Ways," Dept. BH, Box 887, Radio City Station, New York 10101. The booklet marks the 75th anniversary of processed cranberries.

**CRANBERRY-PEAR SALAD**  
1 medium orange, peeled  
2 medium pears, cored and coarsely chopped  
½ cup seedless green grapes, halved  
½ of an 8-ounce can (½ cup) whole cranberry sauce

Section orange over a small bowl, reserving juice in bowl. In a medium bowl combine orange sections, pears and grapes. Stir cranberry sauce into reserved orange juice; pour over fruit mixture. Toss to coat. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 123 cal., 1 g pro., 31 g carbo., 1 g fat, 3 mg sodium.

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