

Microwave ovens lose bun-warmer image

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SHE FORMERLY worked for the Oakland County Extension Service, and also was a consumer services representative for the Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. Deter, who graduated from Eastern Michigan University, was a consultant to a major manufacturer of microwave ovens, and has prepared foods with the local chef Douglas Grech (Chef Douglass) and Yvonne Gill.

Deter recommends that microwave owners take a class to learn how to operate the appliance, then build confidence and success with easy recipes.

"Unless people got classes, they made mistakes and they were discouraged, and (the microwave) ended up being a glorified bun-warmer," Deter said.

Microwaves are renowned for cooking quickly. What are their other advantages?

BECAUSE MICROWAVES cook so rapidly, there is little evaporation, Deter said. Meats and fish are moist and tender. Vegetables retain crunch, color and vitamins. A special browning dish is required to brown or crisp some foods which require a short cooking time.

Because the dish is prepared more quickly, there is less cleanup, Deter said. Often the entire dish can be prepared in the same container. Speedy cooking results in less energy expense. When used properly, the microwave is safe.

"I like to see small microwaves used by seniors," Deter said. "If (the person) has a fainting spell, the microwave would shut off

(unlike a conventional stove). I think it has an advantage to people with limited mobility, because all you have to do is push buttons. They can prepare the food themselves, or reheating what somebody else brings."

Deter received her first microwave oven several years ago from her husband John, a financial planner. Now, their home has a standard microwave oven and a micro-convection oven, which combines microwave energy and dry heat.

SHE ENJOYS preparing and serving tasty, nutritious food that has eye-appeal. She likes to delve into new techniques for preparing and marketing food, and getting information to the public.

"I like to be creative," Deter said. "I enjoy photographing (food). I'm interested in new

technology, on how people can help themselves, such as using videos as an option for classes."

Deter emphasizes that cooks should refer to the cookbook and instruction booklets which accompany their microwave. Charts are provided showing the amount of liquid needed and proper cooking times.

A few more hints are as follows:

- Rotate, stir or move the food during the cooking time to allow for even heating.
- Cook dense, heavy food first. Allow these foods to stand while preparing other dishes which need less time.
- To convert recipes from conventional cookery to microwave, find a recipe that uses comparable ingredients, then reduce moisture or volume.

- Cook fresh vegetables on high power for seven minutes per pound. Cover vegetables, allowing a vent for steam to escape. Tight-skinned vegetables, such as potatoes and squash, should be microwaved, uncovered, piercing first with a fork to allow steam to escape.
- Always take care to avoid being scalded when removing covers.
- If a recipe calls for cooking 5-7 minutes, cook to the lesser time to avoid overcooking.

A lot of people have problems in realizing that the molecules still cook after turning off the microwave," Deter said. "Remove the food when it looks moist, or slightly undercooked. So often we have the tendency to cook things to the 'done' look."

"You can always add more time, but you can't take it away."

Recipes show the microwave's versatility

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Wash and separate vegetables. Slice carrots. Place on round tray and cover. Cook vegetables on high 4-5 minutes. Allow to stand. Pour cheese sauce over and serve.

CHEESE SAUCE
2 tbsp. butter or margarine
2 tbsp. flour
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup milk
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Melt butter in 2-cup measure, about 45 seconds. Blend in flour until smooth, then add milk and microwave on high 2 minutes. Whisk well and microwave 1 minute more on high. Stir in cheese until melted and pour over vegetables. (Recipe courtesy of J.C. Penney microwave class.)

RENEE DETER'S FISH STUFFED WITH CRAB
1 lb. sole or monkfish (2 fillets)

1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped green pepper
1 tbsp. chopped red pepper
1 1/2-oz. can crabmeat, drained
2 tsp. bread crumbs
1/4 tsp. salt (optional)
1/4 tsp. lemon pepper
Sauce (Optional)
1/4 cup tomato juice
1/4 tsp. oregano
1/4 tsp. basil
3 lemon slices

Combine onion and pepper, microwave in microwave-safe bowl on high for 3 minutes. Stir in crabmeat, bread crumbs, salt and lemon pepper. Take one fillet and lay it on microwave rack. Spoon on crumb mixture and cover with second fillet. Mix tomato juice, oregano and basil to make sauce. Microwave on high for 1-2 minutes. Pour 1/4 of the sauce over fillet and top with lemon slices. Cover with wax paper. Microwave on full power for 6-8 minutes, or until bottom is flaky. Rotate dish half-

way through. Serve with remaining sauce.

MEAT LOAF

Combine in mixing bowl:
1 lb. ground beef
1/2 lb. ground pork
1 envelope onion soup mix
1 slice bread, crumbled
1 egg
1/4 cup tomato juice or milk

Pat into baking ring. Sprinkle with brown powder or reserved onion soup mix. Cover with waxed paper. Microwave on high for 6-8 minutes or to 150 degrees. (Recipe courtesy of "The Microwave Cookbook and Primer" by Maryann Zepp, 1987, Good Books)

QUICK CHERRY CRUNCH

Spread evenly in 8-inch square baking dish:

1 can cherry pie filling
Combine in bowl and sprinkle over pie filling:
1 pkg. single-layer yellow cake mix
1/4 cup nuts, chopped
2 tsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. cinnamon
Melt and pour over top:
1/4 cup butter, melted

Cover with waxed paper and microwave on high for 12-14 minutes or until topping is no longer doughy. (Recipe courtesy of "The Microwave Cookbook and Primer")

ALMOND BUTTER CRUNCH

Combine in 2-quart glass measure and microwave on high for 12 minutes or to 300 degrees:

1 cup butter
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1 tbsp. corn syrup
3 tsp. water
Stir in: 1 cup almonds, chopped

Pour onto buttered cookie sheet. Cool and break into pieces. (Recipe courtesy of "The Microwave Cookbook and Primer")

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