

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MICROWAVE OVEN

TIPS FOR MICROWAVE COOKING

BROWNING

Meat and poultry with high fat content that are cooked for 10 or 15 minutes or longer will brown lightly. Foods cooked a shorter time can be brushed with a browning agent, such as Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, or barbecue sauce.

COVERING

A cover traps heat and steam and causes the food to cook more quickly. Use a lid or microwave-safe plastic wrap with one corner folded back to vent the excess steam. Lids on glass casseroles can become hot during cooking. Handle carefully. Waxed paper will prevent the food from splattering in the oven and help retain heat. When warming bread items, use waxed paper, napkins, or paper towels. To absorb extra moisture, wrap sandwiches and fatty foods in paper towels.

SPACING

Arrange individual foods, such as baked potatoes, cupcakes, and hors d'oeuvres in a circle and at least 1 inch apart. This will help the food cook more evenly.

Stirring

Stirring blends flavors and redistributes the heat in foods.

Always stir from the outside toward the center of the dish. Food at the outside of the dish heats first.

TURNING

Large foods, such as roasts and whole poultry, should be turned so that the top and bottom cook evenly. Also turn over chicken pieces and chops.

ARRANGEMENT

Do not stack food. Arrange in a single layer in the dish for more even cooking. Because dense foods cook more slowly, place thicker portions of meat, poultry, fish, and vegetables toward the outside of the dish.

TESTING FOR DONENESS

Because food cooks quickly in a microwave oven, you need to test frequently for doneness.

STANDING TIME

Food often needs to stand from 2 to 15 minutes after you remove it from the oven. Usually, you need to cover food during standing time to retain heat. Remove most foods when they are slightly undercooked and they will finish cooking during standing time. The internal temperature of food will rise about 10°F during standing time.

SHIELDING

To prevent some portions of rectangular or square dishes from overcooking, you may need to shield them with small strips of aluminum foil to block the microwaves. You can also cover poultry legs and wing tips with foil to keep them from overcooking. Always keep foil at least 1 inch from oven walls to prevent arcing.

PIERCING

Pierce the shell, skin, or membrane of foods before cooking to prevent them from bursting. Foods that require piercing include yolks and whites of eggs, hot dogs, clams, oysters, and whole vegetables, such as potatoes and squash.