



Microwave Top Tips

The art of microwave cooking is one that so many people have forgotten. A metallic box that sits in the corner of the kitchen only to be used to heat up baked beans or re-heat some leftovers is the extent of so many people's love for the microwave. In reality it is so much more, especially when we are looking to reduce our Cost to Cook.

Importantly, we must have the knowledge to use this equipment safely, with this in mind we have put together some of our top tips.

1. **Metal Free Zone** – Never put anything metal in the microwave. This includes foil, cutlery and metal rimmed bowls. The microwaves are reflected by the metal and can cause sparks or even a fire. Be safe and keep the metal out!
2. **Size Matters** – Larger pieces of food will take longer to cook than smaller pieces. To avoid over cooking always cook large and dense foods first, leaving the small and delicate foods to be added later. Cut up larger items to speed up cooking times.
3. **Level The Plate** – Try to spread the food evenly on a microwave safe plate or bowl. This will help cooking consistency and speed up the cooking time.
4. **Cover Your Food** – Always cover your food with film or a plate. This will help to keep the heat in, speed up the cooking process, and will keep your microwave from getting splattered with food. Take care when removing your film or plate as steam is hot so always lift away from yourself.
5. **Overfilling Is NOT Good** – Remember that liquids bubble and some foods grow when cooked. Never overfill bowls, jugs, or any other container that will go in the microwave; as overfilling can result in overflowing. When your food is cooked all you want to eat, not clean up a huge mess! Try standing bowls on a microwave safe plate during cooking to catch any overflows or spills.
6. **Always Stir** – Ensure that food cooked in a microwave is stirred regularly throughout the cooking process. Microwaves operate by agitating water molecules, cooking from the outside in, and therefore cooking will never be even. Stir regularly to move the hot spots around and to allow for a consistent, thorough cook.
7. **Only Fools Rush In** – Standing time is vital. Microwave cooking will force water molecules around in cooked food and they need to stop moving before we eat. Any food cooked in the microwave should be allowed to stand for a minute or two inside the machine even after it has turned off. This will allow the molecules to relax and stop bouncing, whilst they are bouncing, they are cooking.
8. **Clean As You Go** – Always wipe out your microwave after use, you don't want to leave spills or food pieces in there! Don't forget to clean the roof. Food debris can cause hotspots on the microwave cavity which could burn and damage the microwave.

Some great things to try in the microwave are:

Scrambled Eggs

Bean Chilli

Lentil Dahl

Sponge Puddings

Mug Cakes

Jacket Potato