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Microwave Muffin Magic

If you've got a microwave muffin pan, muffins can now be a favourite breakfast option even when you're pressed for time. Even if you don't have a pan, you can use ceramic custard cups by lining them with 2 baking cups and then coating them with non-stick spray. Alternatively, three paper liners nested together will be sturdy enough to bake without a pan. The night before your busy day, mix up the dry and liquid ingredients. Then, in the morning blend the two together and scoop into your microwaveable muffin pans, filling the cups 1/2 full (muffins rise higher in the microwave). It's about as easy as pouring a bowl of cereal!

If your microwave contains a turntable, you've got it made. It will rotate the muffins for you. Otherwise, you should turn the pans half-way through cooking for even baking. If using custard cups, place them on a plate that you can spin easily. Remove muffins from the oven when a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out dry. If still moist, mic for 15-20 seconds more. Let them sit for one minute and then remove the muffins from the paper liners to prevent them from absorbing moisture.

Because microwaves vary so much in power levels and features, you may need to make some trial muffin runs before finding the perfect timing for your microwave. Be sure to check your owner's manual for additional information on baking in your microwave. The chart below can be a starting point if can't find your manual.

The Microwave Muffin Chart

How many muffins?	Fresh Batter	Refrigerated Batter
1	20-30 sec	30-45 sec
2	30-45 sec	45-60 sec
3	45-60 sec	75-90 sec
6	60-90 sec	2 to 2-1/2 min

Now keep in mind that foods baked in the microwave don't brown, so your muffins may look a little pale. If this colour isn't appetizing, you can sprinkle on cinnamon sugar or a streusel topping before baking. Whole wheat flour or brown sugar used in your recipe will also help to make the batter and the final muffin darker. Then, of course, you could use a browning element or 2-4 minutes under a grill to make the tops more attractive.

If your muffins seem to be full of air holes, reduce the cooking time by about 30 seconds or reduce the power. If holes continue to plague you, reduce the baking powder in the recipe by 25 percent. Finally to bake a half-dozen muffins from the freezer reduce the power to medium for 4 minutes and then jump to high power for a final 2 minutes.