



A Guide to Microwave Cooking Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Apples and Pears

When cooking whole, arrange in a circle in a microwave-safe dish. Before cooking, remove core and pierce skin, add a small amount of water and cover. Check halfway through calculated cooking time and, if necessary, rotate fruit for even cooking.

Artichokes

Brush with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. After minimum cooking time, test leaves. If they pull off easily, the artichoke is cooked.

Asparagus, Broccoli and Cauliflower

Arrange with stems near the edge of dish and heads in the center.

Avocados

If under-ripe, microwave on HIGH 1 min. Let cool, completely before using. The avocado will be easy to slice or mash but it will not have the rich flavour of a naturally ripened avocado.

Bananas

Freeze overripe bananas, defrost in the microwave, then use in baking or milkshakes.

Beets

Leave root ends and 2 to 5 cm (1 to 2 in) of tops intact to prevent bleeding.

Blueberries, Strawberries, Peaches and Raspberries

Cook bite size pieces with a small amount of water and sweetener (if needed) in a glass measuring cup for a quick and delicious sauce for ice cream sundaes, cheesecake or toast.

Brussels sprouts

Cut a cross in the stem end to speed cooking.

Cabbage

Use a dish large enough for the cabbage to fit loosely, remove core and cook in 50 mL (1/4 cup) water. To preserve the color of red cabbage, cut with a stainless steel knife and add lemon juice or vinegar.

Corn-on-cob

No preparation is needed when cooking corn in the husk. Pull back husks just enough to remove visible silk, then place the completely closed husks on a paper towel leaving a space between each husk. Rotate when cooking and cover tightly during standing time. When ready to eat, pull leaves back carefully to avoid the steam. If husks are removed, individually wrap corn in microwave-safe plastic wrap or place in a tightly covered dish.

Fresh fruit pies

Bake in half the time with microwave oven help. Microwave a 2-crust fruit pie in a glass pie plate on HIGH for 15 min, or until the filling is hot and bubbling. Transfer to a preheated 230oC (450oF) oven and bake for 15 min, or until pastry is golden brown.

Garlic

To loosen skin on a garlic clove, microwave on HIGH for 5 seconds.

Kohlrabi

Trim ends off and cut into 0.5 cm (1/4 in) slices.

Leeks

Trim ends off then slit them length-wise down to where white part joins green.

Mushrooms

Mushrooms cook quickly. To avoid overcooking, as soon as the color begins to darken, remove from the oven and let stand for a few minutes.

Onions

Chopped onions cooked plain in the microwave oven may arc during cooking. Avoid this problem by adding a small amount of water, oil or butter. To reduce odors when cooking chopped onions, microwave uncovered. When cooked, cover and let stand for 5 min. When cooking whole onions don't add water. Simply peel and place in a covered dish. Remember to rotate while cooking.

Oranges, Grapefruits, Lemons and Limes

Increase the juice yield from these fruits by micro waving on HIGH for 20 - 40 seconds before cutting. (The fruit will be slightly warm to the touch). Refresh your microwave oven by micro waving until boiling 1 cup (250 mL) water with citrus peel.

Peaches, Nectarines and Tomatoes

Make peeling easy. Place 250 mL (1 cup) water in a large microwave-safe dish and bring to a boil. Place one piece of fruit in water and let stand 2 min. Transfer fruit to a bowl of cold water and drain. Skin will slip off easily.

Potatoes, baked

Prick skin before cooking. Cook on HIGH 3 to 4 min for one potato. After micro waving, wrap in tinfoil or tea towel or place in a covered casserole for 5 - 10 min. For crispier skin, place baked potatoes in a 100°C (200°F) oven for 10 min while you prepare the rest of the meal.

Rhubarb

Cut rhubarb into 1 cm (1/2 in) pieces. Place in casserole with a small amount of water and sugar. Cover and stir once during cooking.

Squash and Pumpkin

Cook small ones whole. Pierce several times with a sharp knife before cooking to allow steam to escape. When cooked, cool slightly, cut in half and scoop out seeds. For larger squash, cut in half, scoop out seeds and cook, cut-side down until tender.

RULES OF THUMB:

How much water to add?

Less is Best! Use 30 to 50 mL of water (2 to 4 Tbsp) per 500 g (1 lb) of vegetables as your cooking guideline. Use the larger amount of water for dense vegetables such as carrots, parsnips and rutabagas.

For leafy vegetables, cook with only the water that clings to the vegetable after washing.

For best flavour, texture and nutrition, cook vegetables only until tender-crisp.

Cooking time required?

4 to 6 min/500 g (1 lb) for leafy vegetables and those high in water such as mushrooms

8 to 10 min/500 g (1 lb) for dense vegetables

Halfway through cooking time, check vegetables to see how much more time is required

General Guidelines:

Cook on HIGH (100% power) to allow for quick cooking and maximum nutrient retention.

- Cover the cooking container with microwave-safe plastic wrap or casserole lid. When uncovering a dish, always start at the edge farthest from you so that you won't be burned by released steam.
- Small sizes and small amounts cook faster than larger ones. Thin or diagonal slices have more surface area, so they cook faster. Same size pieces cook more evenly.
- Because food continues to cook for a short time after microwaving, allow vegetables to stand for 3 to 5 min before serving.
- Don't salt vegetables during cooking as it may cause toughening and darkened, dry spots on your vegetables.
- Pierce the skins of whole vegetables such as potatoes or squash to allow the steam to escape. Failure to do so may result in "exploding" produce.
- Halfway through the cooking time check the vegetables to see if they need to be stirred, rearranged or turned over to enable them to cook evenly. If needed, move vegetables from the center to the outer edge of the dish.
- Tender young vegetables contain more moisture than more mature ones and will cook faster with less water.
- If you cook several vegetables separately for a meal, cook the largest and most dense ones first (e.g. carrots). They will hold the heat the longest. Keep the cooked vegetables warm in a 100C (200F) oven while you cook the others.