



MICROWAVES FEATURE CASUAL DINING OCTOBER 2015

Please attribute any comments to Ray Hall, Managing Director, R H Hall

Can you share any tips or tricks that operators can use microwaves for to improve certain dishes?

Today's microwave ovens are sophisticated, yet easy to use and produce excellent cooking results in a fraction of the time it takes to cook foods conventionally and their versatility is underestimated. Many foods and dishes can be cooked very, very well in a microwave oven: cakes, sauces, meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, pasta, rice, eggs and jams can all be cooked with great results – you can even roast a chicken in one, but you won't get a crispy, brown skin! However, a duck will cook well because of the amount of fat naturally found under the skin of the meat.

There is a great diversity of dishes that can be prepared quickly and easily from fresh ingredients. Not only that, but more nutrients are retained in microwave cooked food than by any other cooking method. In fact, correctly cooked vegetables contain 85% of their original vitamin content, when boiled they often contain none! A great benefit especially for growing children where they would only need to eat a little to get more of the vitamins they need.

In terms of providing a faster service and perhaps expanding your menu pre portioning of certain foods can be stored ready for a quick efficient reheat then served up with fresh cooked food to plate

Meat and pastry products are often better cooked conventionally then re-heated in a microwave oven, but with the versatile combination microwave ovens available, these types of foods can be cooked with microwave technology with excellent results. It is likely that most caterers have a need for reheat, defrost and cooking tasks and in this case, it is recommended that both a combination microwave oven and a microwave oven be both purchased. A combination microwave oven will not replace the need for microwave oven and vice versa. These two types of oven work extremely well in tandem together. For example, whilst reheating /cooking pastry products using the combination model the ordinary microwave is available for all your straightforward reheat/defrost requirements. The features available today allow a choice of manual and programmable models and some even allow the chef to enter the detailed names of individual dishes and daily/weekly specials (as with the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7). As the name suggests, the Combi Chef 7 is able to operate in a variety and combination of modes making it the most flexible, efficient and easy to use oven yet! If the chef wants to bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm this is the oven that can do it all. There is a video showing all the features and benefits of the versatile Combi Chef 7 – visit www.rhall.com to view.

What are the main benefits that operators gain from using microwaves in their kitchens?

The most obvious advantage of a microwave is speed of reheating and cooking, they are essential for speed of service – considerably faster than conventional ovens and they also allow an operator to offer a wider choice of menu. Their versatility also provides advantages and the leading brands are developing models with new features and functionality in response to customers looking for product innovation, so they can be easily operated from a de-skilled base. Microwaves are very energy efficient too. In fact, when cooking vegetables they use three times less energy than that of a gas hob. Most operate from a single 13 amp supply. Their footprint is also smaller than conventional ovens, great where space is at a premium.

How can kitchen teams best maintain and look after microwaves to ensure longevity of use?

When using your microwave on a regular basis, one thing that shouldn't be overlooked for getting the best from a microwave is regular cleaning - keep the oven's cavity and inner door clean of food spillage/deposits at all times. This will avoid cavity burn ups and prolong the life of its heart "The Magnetron". This measure will also help the consistency and speed of reheat/ cook times. You could

purchase the Microsave Cavity Protection System which is a unique and simple cavity liner manufactured from high quality TPX resin - which is safer to use, easier to clean and provides long term financial benefits. This invaluable add on is designed to work with the Sharp Commercial Microwave range and every Sharp sold with the Microsave CPS comes with a lifetime warranty on the cavity.

To what extent is there a stigma attached to the use of microwaves in a professional cooking environment?

Historically there has been some negativity towards cooking with microwaves, but there shouldn't be! microwaves can cook great food in a fraction of the time it would take with other methods. Not only do they save time, but money and nutrients too.

It is fair to say that microwaves are often misunderstood – possibly with this stigma dating back to the 1970's, yet they really are the unsung heroes of this innovative and fast moving marketplace!

Do you have any facts and statistics for microwaves in the casual dining sector?

Not specific numbers, but the use of microwaves in the sector are expanding and will continue to do so. We are seeing multiple units being used extensively on sites – up to 12+ units in some cases – in fact microwaves are appearing at the top of most specifiers' lists. We have seen double digit growth year on year and this has been sustained for the last 5 years.

For more information, please visit:

www.rhhall.com

www.microwaveassociation.org.uk

www.maestrowave.com

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