



Times have changed – the modern microwave is an essential part of any commercial kitchen

How important are microwaves in commercial kitchens?

“Microwaves are an essential part of today’s commercial kitchen. They are essential for speed of service and allow the operator to offer a wide choice of menu.” Ray Hall adds, “Microwaves are also very energy efficient, in fact, when cooking vegetables, they use three times less energy than that of a gas hob. When you add the fact

that some vegetables retain up to 85% of their vitamin C content,

compared to around 15% when boiled in a saucepan, they are a very attractive option in today’s energy and nutritional conscious world!”



What types of microwaves are available and what kind of establishment are they best suited too?

Microwave or combination microwave?

The modern microwave oven in today's dynamic commercial kitchen has become a vital piece of equipment for defrosting and rapid reheating of pre-cooked foods. In fact, today's catering kitchen often has several in use to meet today's busy and fast demand for efficient menu serve and table turnaround.

If you require the microwave to be used mainly for the simple reheat and defrosting of foods then a straight Commercial microwave will suffice. However, if you wish to reheat and cook food products then a microwave convection oven is well advised. Items such as pastry will become soggy if reheated in an ordinary microwave whereas using a combination microwave convection oven the crisp golden brown and



conventional finished

result will be achieved however in microwave time!

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 visa 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).

The Latest and most flexible combination oven from Maestrowave

The latest equipment offering from Maestrowave is the new Combi Chef 7, with Menu Creator 2.0™.

This is the most flexible Combi Chef ever produced by Maestrowave.

As the name suggests, this oven is able to operate in a verity 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.

Packed full of new features and the latest version of Menu Creator, being Menu Creator 2.0™, this oven will produce the best results ever in super quick time!

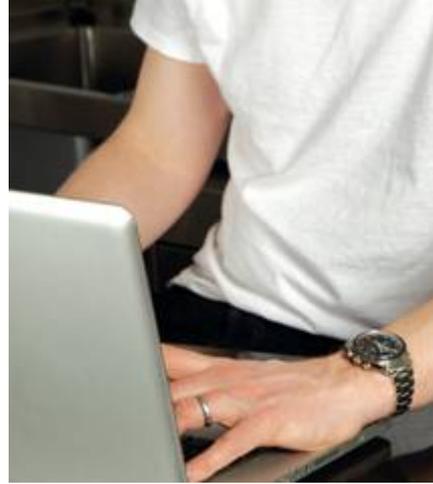


As an example, a beef topside joint of up to 6lb (2.7kg) can be cooked in combination mode in just 11 minutes. By using the combination mode of grill and convection, you can also be sure of a quality result!

Now that's accelerated cooking, with quality!

The new 'create your own menu' feature now allows for up to **99** menus to be pre programmed using any method of oven, microwave, grill or combination or microwave plus oven or microwave plus grill using the turbo fan function on or off!

A Maestrowave SD memory card is supplied with each oven enables simply to use programming via a PC. With this new software and the advanced **Combi Chef 7** far greater control can be achieved across multi-site operations where uniformity of menu delivery is vital. New menus can be developed and adapted centrally using the **Menu Creator 2.0™** software and then deployed into remote sites via an updated SD card at the touch of a button! Errors are eliminated, with perfect cooking stages and timings all pre-programmed on the software, so quality results can be delivered time after time, improving customer experience and reducing costly waste.



The beauty of **Menu Creator 2.0™** is that it is extremely simple to understand and operate.

Loading menu information takes seconds and accessing saved menus for updating is very easy too. However, if a user requires it, full technical support is available. The system operates off standard PC software and is Windows 7 compatible.



and fan grill functions.

The oven comes complete with the **Menu Creator 2.0™** SD card, air filters, a ceramic insulating tray, for use when using metal dishes in combination mode and a wire rack shelf for use in convection, combination, grill, grill convection

What size of microwave and what features?

It is also very important to choose the correct microwave oven wattage. You need to choose an oven with sufficient power, but just as importantly, do not over specify. If too low, you can be frustrated by delays, and if too high, it will be difficult to judge the timing of small portions.

The wattage determines the speed of reheat/cook times. **Genuine commercial microwave ovens start at 1000 watts and go up to 3200 watts. The most popular outputs are 1000, 1200, 1500 and 1900, as these output sizes can all be run from a standard 13amp socket and are generally fairly compact in size yet big enough inside to accept a good-sized dinner plate. The Sharp and Maestrowave ranges are good examples of this popularity.**

Whilst it is common for chefs to choose speed (the higher the output the faster reheat times), it is very important to understand that for some food products too much speed will destroy smaller portions of food or the delicate and sugary types of products. The higher output models (above 1900 watt) are designed for the reheating of larger portions of food and as the oven cavity sizes are much larger than the regular commercial microwave the requirement of more microwave output is vital to aid more even cook/reheat result. A great example is the **Sharp R1900m**. Designed with incredible flexibility in mind the new **Sharp R1900M "Dual Control"** is a must for heavy-duty use. With its 1900 watt power this is a very fast microwave that has an "extra heavy duty build quality", but still runs off a standard 13 amp plug, has two control panels and is capable of programming up to 100 of your favourite menus.



It should be remembered that microwave oven technology cooks from the outside in! Only up to a depth of about 2.5 inches, the rest of the cooking/reheat process is through natural conduction, as conventional cooking, however the microwave has the advantage of reaching a depth of 2.5 inches immediately, therefore providing a much faster result than that of conventional cooking.

Choosing a microwave with variable power is also very important, as this will allow more dense food products to be reheated/cooked slower allowing for the conduction of heat to work through to the middle to avoid an overcooked outside and raw centre! The use of variable power works in the same way as your hob and gives you the exact control you need to create speed yet a quality cooked/reheat result.

A further feature to look for is stage cooking. This allows the chef to program in a series of different defrost /cook / reheat tasks to allow a complete process to be carried out at the press of a button. For example, it is possible to defrost then cook and keep warm ready for serve up all in one go. Most leading brand models now have this function as standard.

How important is it for chefs to properly maintain their equipment and how should they do this?

Training

Training comes in two forms - How to use it and how to look after it. At R H



Hall, we train our distributors through extensive set down programmes so that they are able to offer the best advice and training to the end user.

We also have recently invested in an extensive facility at our head quarters – “Halls Kitchen.” Divided into zones, it is fitted out with the very latest equipment. This is a superb facility where both menu



development chefs and our own trainers work closely together to create the ideal environment for menu planning and equipment training.

Such advice as to when and how to clean the oven, service interval recommendations and the best use of the oven are just part of the training given to customers.

Here are some examples.

Simple regular low cost maintenance is all that is required to keep your microwave in peak health and condition. However, you can also help prolong the life of your microwave by taking three simple steps:

1. Keep the ovens cavity & inner door clean of food spillage / deposits at all times.

This will avoid cavity burn ups and prolong the life of its little heart "The Magnetron". This measure will also help the consistency and speed of reheat/cook times.

2. Weekly clean the oven's filter

This is located normally on the underside of the machine and is designed for simple removal/cleaning. This will ensure that the correct flow of clean filtered air is able to pass over the microwave's critical components and therefore will prolong the life of machine.

3. Regular six monthly or annual servicing.

This is a very simple and low cost service, which will ensure safety and life expectancy but very importantly will help avoid breakdowns at times when you least expect or need them.

The cost for a basic service and safety check should be around £50 - £65. Replacement parts normally encountered and required to be changed are wave-guide covers (in oven cavity) and door switches - the cost for these parts vary but are generally low cost to replace.

What should operators look out for when looking for in buying a microwave?

“Buy from a reputable and knowledgeable supplier and check out the quality of build– avoid purchasing from price driven mailers/web sites, unless you are familiar with what you are buying! RH Hall have an extensive network of approved distributors throughout the UK, so an expert is always close to hand and can offer onsite advice also!”

RH Hall and their dealers, will provide expert advice on the correct microwave for the intended job. Ray Hall, managing director of RH Hall states, “We believe in being transparent to our customers. You know where you stand with our dedicated and trained dealer network.”



Our terms are published, easy to understand and staff are trained to ensure that they always listen to the customers needs, establish the intended use of the equipment and if required help them create a profitable menu.”



He adds, “With such an extensive array of microwave technology available today, the company ethos is a real benefit to the customer. It is no longer good enough to supply a “box”. The customer has an enormous choice and this can be confusing. Just as they are experts in their business, we

are experts in ours and by listening to the customer we can help them make the right choice, not just based on price but a choice of “value for money” and fit for purpose, both for today and the future.”

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