



Energy-efficient COOKING

For over 30 years, RH Hall has dominated the foodservice industry in microwave know-how, expertise and innovation. And the microwave oven is a vital piece of equipment in today's commercial kitchen, says **Ray Hall managing director, RH Hall**



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Managing Director, RH Hall

Today's microwave ovens have the ability to roast, bake, grill, steam or simply reheat and many kitchens have several machines set up designed for different foodservice tasks.

Microwaves are very energy-efficient; when cooking vegetables, they use three times less energy than a gas hob. When you add the fact that most vegetables retain up to 85 per cent of their vitamin C content, compared to around 15 per cent when boiled in a saucepan, they are a very attractive option in today's energy and nutrition-conscious world.

It is essential to choose a genuine commercial microwave oven and one with sufficient power, but just as importantly, not to over-specify.

If too low in output, you can be frustrated by delays, and if the output is too powerful, smaller portion food servings can be destroyed and become overcooked.

The wattage determines the power and speed of reheat/cook times. Outputs start at 1000 watts and go up to 3200 watts. The most popular outputs are 1000, 1200, 1500 and 1900, and work off a single 13 amp supply. The Sharp

and Maestrowave ranges are very good examples of this popularity.

A variable power programme is also important, as it allows dense food products to be reheated or cooked more slowly, allowing heat to work through to the middle to avoid an overcooked outside and raw centre! (Yes, microwave energy does cook from the outside in not the inside out!) The use of variable power gives you the same control as your hob.

A further feature to look for is programme and stage cooking which allows the chef to programme a series of different defrost/cook/reheat tasks to allow a complete process to be carried out at the press of a button.

Over the past few years combination microwave ovens have become



The Innovative Sharp dual control R1900 microwave

increasingly popular within foodservice. Combining microwave power with convection oven heat or grill produces traditional oven-cooked finish of food products at microwave speed. The Maestrowave Combi Chef ranges, for example, are well worth looking at.

My advice is to stick to proven major brands and don't buy on price alone. A genuine commercial oven will provide you with many years of good service and importantly, consistency and reliability.

Buy from a reputable supplier who can advise on the range and choices available. R H Hall has a vast network of dedicated distributors nationwide and for multi-sited, national account and public sector requirements our dedicated team of experienced advisors and development chefs can advise you first hand.

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