

## Treats in a Hurry

**M**icrowaves are great for a number of things: defrosting, reheating, baking potatoes, popping popcorn ... but not so great for other things. I tried a couple of recipes from different books for this column that I was not impressed with, especially one for a coffee cake made in the microwave. Yuck. However, I did find two really good recipes to pass along to you. The first is from our new communications assistant, Irene Good. Her mother used to make caramel corn in the microwave as a special treat. We made it for Irene's birthday, and we agree that it's fantastic. It's fast and easy, and there's almost no cleanup. The perfect recipe! Plus, the kids can have fun passing the bag around and shaking the popcorn—just make sure they use pot holders because that bag gets pretty warm.

The second recipe is for a peanut butter and chocolate fudge made in the microwave. Again, it is almost too easy, but really tastes good. Either of these would be a fast way to make treats for an impromptu gathering of kids.

I'm glad to have the modern convenience of a microwave, but I also make sure mine knows its place. I'll never again try to bake a cake in it, but if I need to melt chocolate for the icing, I know just where to turn.

### Microwave Caramel Popcorn

4 quarts popped popcorn  
(plain or butter flavored)  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 stick margarine  
1/4 cup corn syrup  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Put popcorn in large paper grocery sack. Put brown sugar, margarine, corn syrup and salt into a large microwave-safe bowl and bring to a boil by cooking 2 minutes on high in microwave. Stir, then cook 2 more minutes. Stir in baking soda. Dump hot mixture over



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popcorn in sack. Shake bag well. Microwave bag on high for 1 1/2 minutes. Remove bag and shake again. Return to microwave and heat for 1 more minute on high. Take bag out and shake really well. Cut open bag and allow to cool. Loosen pieces (or make balls) and eat! Makes 8 servings.

Note: Experiment with light or dark brown sugar and light or dark corn syrup. Light will make a more traditional caramel corn, and dark will make something more like Cracker Jacks.

Serving size: 2 cups. Per serving: 260 calories, 2 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 38 grams carbohydrates, 365 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol

### Microwave Peanut Butter Fudge

1 1/2 cups smooth or crunchy peanut butter  
1 bag (12 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate chips  
1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

Line 8x8-inch pan with wax paper. Set aside. In microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate and peanut butter and melt by cooking in microwave on high for 3 minutes. Remove and stir. Add sweetened condensed milk, stirring until well blended. Pour into 8x8-inch pan and refrigerate for 1 hour. Cut into small squares. Makes 25 squares.

Serving size: 1 square. Per serving: 197 calories, 5 grams protein, 12 grams fat, 20 grams carbohydrates, 85 milligrams sodium, 5 milligrams cholesterol



The subject for November's recipe contest is **Cooking With Wine**. Some of the best sauces, marinades and even desserts need that specific flavor that only wine can impart. The inclusion of wine gives dishes an air of elegance, so they're often special occasion dishes. Send us your best recipes in which wine is an ingredient by August 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a gift pack from Adams. Others whose recipes are published will also receive a gift pack from Adams. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as your co-op affiliation. Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You can also fax recipes to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org).

The winning recipe for this month's contest is Microwave Peach

Butter, sent in by Rita Blanca EC member and employee **JENNIFER GERGEN**. Her recipe is an easy way to make those end-of-summer peaches last a little longer. It's delicious spooned it over ice cream or spread on toast. Jennifer will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook*, and a gift pack compliments of Adams, which the runners-up whose recipes appear below will also receive.

### Microwave Peach Butter

8-10 fresh peaches, peeled and sliced

3 tablespoons fruit pectin

3/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon allspice

2 1/4 cups sugar

Purée peaches in blender or food processor. In a 2-quart microwave-safe bowl, combine peach purée, pectin, cinnamon and allspice, mixing well. Microwave on high for 6 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes.

Add sugar and mix well. Microwave on high for 6 more minutes, stirring after 3 minutes. Stir again and microwave 1 more minute, then ladle into 4 clean 8-ounce jars. Cool slightly and refrigerate.

Note: You may substitute 2 16-ounce cans of peaches for fresh peaches. Drain the peaches and cut the sugar down to 1 3/4 cups.

Serving size: 2 ounces. Per serving: 145 calories, trace protein, trace fat, 38 grams carbohydrates, 6 milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol

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Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper and include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative. All entries must be postmarked by September 10, 2005. Send entries to Holiday Baking Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail ([recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org)), you must include "Holiday Baking Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail, not an attachment.

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