



MICROWAVES & LIGHT EQUIPMENT – PUB & BAR 20TH JULY 2015

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What should operators look for when selecting microwaves and light kitchen equipment?

To choose the right kind of microwave, operators should look at their menu and decide what tasks the microwave oven should undertake. 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 combination microwave oven is well advised. Items such as pastry will become soggy if reheated in an ordinary microwave whereas using a combination microwave the crisp, golden brown and conventional finished result will be achieved in microwave time!

It is 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. Whilst it is common for caterers to choose speed (the higher the output the faster reheat times), it is also 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.

Always choose from a commercial range of microwaves, operators shouldn't be tempted to go down the domestic route – these units simply aren't built for the rigours of a professional kitchen. Likewise we would also recommend that cheap imports are also avoided – the testing, safety and product back-up that are offered by the leading brand names are often not available with a cheap import.

Depending on the use of the microwave and the dishes/menu offered, a combination microwave oven may be a good addition – 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.

What are the most important pieces of light kitchen equipment no commercial kitchen should be without?

Microwaves are definitely an essential part of today's commercial kitchen – essential for speed of service and still allowing an operator to offer a wide choice of menu. Microwaves are also very energy efficient. If simple reheat and defrosting of foods is required then a microwave will suffice, but if an operator wants to reheat and cook food products then a combination microwave convection oven is well advised.

How can operators make best use of light kitchen equipment and how can they ensure that they have a long life?

We recommend that the correct training of staff on how to use and look after the equipment in the first instance will definitely help the life span of any equipment. In addition, simple regular low cost maintenance and cleaning will keep it in peak health and condition.

At RH Hall we train our distributors to be able to offer the best advice and training to the end user. 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. We also have an extensive facility at our HQ fitted out with all the very latest equipment so clients and distributors can see and operate a number of microwaves in addition to a very wide range of kitchen equipment.

When using your microwave on a regular basis, one tip 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 plastic cavity liner which is safer to use, easier to clean and provides long term financial benefits. This invaluable accessory is exclusive to Sharp commercial microwave ovens. Every Sharp sold with the **Microsave CPS** comes with a lifetime warranty on the cavity.

With annual servicing in place and by buying a recognised quality brand, there is absolutely no reason why your commercial microwave oven shouldn't last between 3-5 years and even more, dependent on site and on how the oven is cared for! Regular cleaning and servicing are key to ensure users get the maximum lifespan from their microwave.

With kitchen space often in short supply, how important is layout and storage for light kitchen equipment?

Combination microwaves in particular offer a great solution where space is at a premium. The Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 can be used to create a 'Kitchen in a box' offering reheating, cooking and defrosting in one unit, all from a 13 amp plug.

Where space is limited, ensuring you get the most out of your equipment is essential and the items that are chosen should really earn their place. We can offer independent advice on the best products to suit the needs of each individual site and also arrange a site survey via one of our Nationwide Approved Dealers.

What staff training is required to get the best out of light kitchen equipment?

Understanding is still the key to success with microwave cooking. To maximise usage of a microwave effectively, I think it is paramount that all caterers are educated as to the full potential of their unit and also be receptive to implementing the alternative cooking techniques required and then they'll be able to fully appreciate the great results that are possible and implement its use more and more in the meals produced by their kitchen.

By fully understanding their microwave and getting the right techniques for each type of food, succulent meat, poultry and fish together with perfectly cooked vegetables that retain taste, texture and nutritive value are all possible. Many of the techniques used in microwave cooking are the same as used in conventional cooking, but with a few minor adjustments.

There is a great deal of 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!

Historically there has been a lot of 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.

For more information, please visit:

www.rhhall.com

www.microwaveassociation.org.uk

www.maestrowave.com

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