



Microwave Buying Guide



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*Thank you for downloading the Microwave Buying Guide. At **Innovative Foodservice Group**, we're committed to educating our customers so that they will feel confident about their purchases.*

In the hands of a proactive businessman, a microwave oven becomes an indispensable tool that does something that no other item in your kitchen can do: it makes cold food warm fast. In this guide, you'll find information that details the differences between the types of commercial microwaves available today and what you should look for when determining which product is best suited for your business.

The Good of a Microwave



Microwave ovens radiate electromagnetic rays, which cause the polarized molecules inside food, water molecules mostly, to spin, build up thermal energy, and spread that energy to their non-polarized neighbors.

Unlike conventional ovens or other devices that work by gradually enveloping their food in rich, warm air, a microwave heats its target directly. It's the difference between the speed of fog and the speed of light.

Microwaves can't brown, braise, or bake. They're useless with bread and they turn sirloin steak into rubber. Unlike traditional cooking methods, they don't unearth hidden flavors or introduce interesting textures. You shouldn't think of the microwave as a cooking device, because it isn't — not really. The microwave is a heating device, and as such, other appliances just can't compete.

An Applied Unit

Microwave ovens are inexpensive, and they use less energy than almost every other appliance in your shop. So, as a business owner, how can you use a microwave to its fullest potential?

That depends. Where's it going?

Inside a Restaurant – In a restaurant, there are several scenarios where a microwave alone can rescue you or your employees from disaster. New managers quickly learn that their soups and entrees are never quite warm enough. You can hedge disputes with fussy customers by placing a microwave oven on or in your wait station. A microwave might also feel at home on your line. Your cooks could use it to defrost meat or steam vegetables — steaming vegetables is, by the way, one of the few cooking applications where a microwave does not subtract from an ingredient's flavor.

Typical level of use: Low to Moderate

Inside a Convenience Store – Providing warm meals brings convenience stores a wellspring of extra revenue. Whereas space and safety constraints restrict the practicality of full-size ovens, the microwave is perfectly compact: place one behind the counter or one beside the coffee pot. These machines can quickly heat sandwiches, snacks, prepackaged foods, cups of Ramen, coffee, and other popular convenience store foods. Keep in mind that these units are used most often during the morning hours; if your store is open only during afternoons and evenings, there is no need for a larger sized model.

Typical level of use: Moderate to High

Inside a Break Room – Buy a microwave for your break room and your workers might suspect that you care. One of these machines can heat up the TV dinners, leftovers, and bags of popcorn that fuel your employees throughout the day. The population and eating habits of your company will determine which size unit is most appropriate for your business, but by and large, break room microwaves aren't used as frequently as those in convenience stores and restaurants.

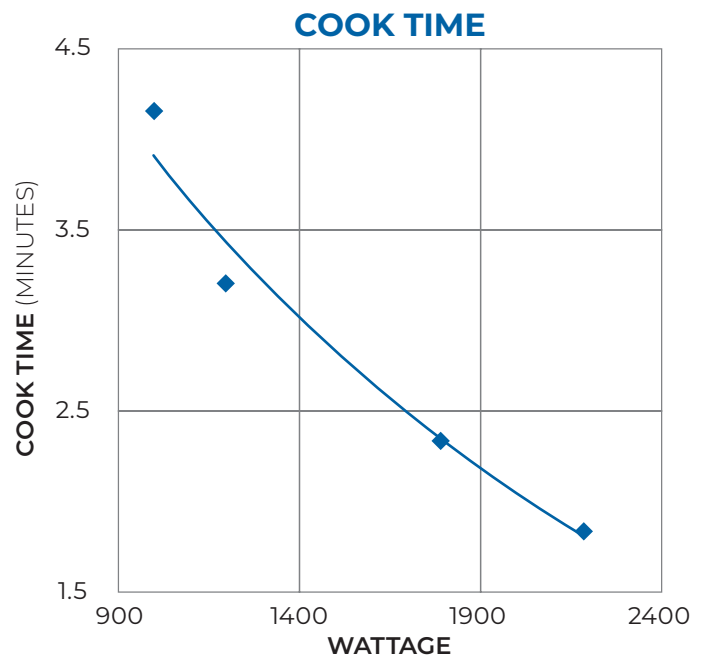
Typical level of use: Low to Moderate

Inside Quick-Serve Kiosks and Cafeterias – Microwaves also provide an easy-to-operate, low-cost method of melting the nacho cheese that tops your tortilla chips and baked potatoes (also microwavable). Several successful summer businesses base their entire operations around the commercial microwave. If you run such a business, consider a higher-wattage unit to keep up with the strong demand.

Typical level of use: High

Types of Microwaves

The major factor that distinguishes one microwave from the next is wattage: a high wattage unit creates denser waves, causing quicker cooks. You should choose a product based on your expected usage—you don't want to overspend but be aware that queues form in front of inadequate units.



A 2200-watt unit takes half the time to cook a baked potato as a 1000 watt unit

The least powerful commercial microwaves operate at 1000 watts and can service almost fifty people per business day. If you don't expect extensive use of your microwave, consider one of these smaller units.

For higher volume convenience stores and wait stations that regularly heat meals, a unit between 1200 watts and 2000 watts should suffice. These microwaves can be used up to 150 times a day.

For heavy-duty needs, microwaves exist that surpass even these high wattage levels. Microwaves that operate at 2000 or more watts are recommended for cafeterias and quick serve restaurants only.

Remember: *Your business is like no other, and only you truly understand it. The above guidelines apply to aggregates of stores within a particular industry. You might use your microwave more often or less often than a similar store within the same industry. Before buying a microwave (or any major restaurant appliance, for that matter), sit down with a pen and paper and figure out how often you'll be using the machine and use that information to determine your ideal machine.*

The Problem with Residential Microwaves

In certain business situations, residential models are preferable to their commercial counterparts—an out-of-the-way gas station, for example, or a small office of less than twenty workers doesn't need a 2000-watt machine. However, all business owners (and especially restaurant owners) should review their insurance agreements and health codes before purchasing a residential model over a commercial one. If you ever must file a fire damage claim, insurance agreements are usually voided if a residential microwave is found anywhere within your store. Residential models aren't safety-certified in the same way that commercial models are. They're called 'residential' for a reason — they can handle the microwaving stress that a family of six throws at it, but they aren't fast enough or powerful enough to cook more than a few meals per day. That graph up there — a 700-watt plot point wouldn't even fit on the page.

Other Features to Consider

Once you get past photons and electromagnetism and energy conversion, microwaves are fairly straightforward. Obviously, your microwave must fit on its countertop, so when buying a unit, pay attention to a unit's dimensions. Also, while browsing through products, look out for a microwave's input method. Like the microwave in your grandparents' home, many of these units feature dial controls. For a higher price, you can buy a unit with a programmable keypad where each button corresponds to a particular meal that you serve. These keypad-operated units save time and provide consistency among your meals.



Still need help? - **Innovative Foodservice Group** has expert staff, fully trained in commercial microwaves that can find the right product to fit your needs.

Anything from commercial restaurants to home use - give us a call any time Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.



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