

5 Easy, Cheap, and Unique Microwave Meal Prep Plans from a Gen Z College Student

I've been there. I finally get my key in the door, plop down my bag, and my stomach is growling—but the last thing I want to do is walk to the cafeteria for subpar food. Then I remember the cafeteria is closed. A.K.A. cup noodles for all the kids who can't afford anything else.

So I turn to my dusty cabinet for another package of noodles that, frankly, I can't taste anymore. I know the struggle. I've spent hours scrolling through articles trying to find good recipes I can make in the microwave, but it's all too much work, too expensive, or one of those articles telling you how to make your ramen "fancier."

Like every parent says after checking how well their kid did the dishes: if I wanted it done right, I would have to do it myself. So that's exactly what I did. I came up with my own microwave recipes, and I haven't had a cup of noodles since!

Taco Soup

This will last you all week and is so easy, I want to make it every week.

Ingredients:

- 1 can of corn
- 2 cans of beans of your choice
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 2 cans of canned chicken (If you don't use canned chicken in your meals, you should—it's seriously slept on)
- 1 can of Rotel
- 1 can of chicken broth

- 1 can of tomato sauce

Instructions:

1. Dump everything in a big bowl. That's it!
 2. Heat up individual servings when you get hungry.
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Microwave Golden Curry

This one has a couple more steps, but it's so delicious I can't leave it out.

Ingredients:

- Golden curry mix to taste (If you've never heard of Golden Curry, it's a Japanese curry with a delicious, savory taste. You can find it at Walmart, your local Asian market, or order it on Amazon)
- Baby carrots
- Potato
- Instant rice

Instructions:

1. Heat some water for your curry mix in the microwave and add a couple of curry squares. Let the curry sit in the hot water while you prepare your other ingredients.
2. To cook the potato, poke it full of holes and wrap it in a wet paper towel. (I recommend using a smaller potato for faster cooking.) Microwave for 3–4 minutes, flip it, and cook for another 3 minutes. Let it sit before taking it out—it will be hot.
3. For the baby carrots, put them in a cup of water and microwave for about 7 minutes. Timing depends on your microwave, so check tenderness with a fork.
4. Check if the curry mix is dissolved and microwave for a couple more minutes. When fully mixed, it should have a gravy-like consistency.

5. Mix everything together and enjoy!

Tip: For a quicker meal, use canned curry sauce, instant rice, and canned chicken.

BLT

I love microwaving bacon. It always comes out crispy and less greasy than pan-fried bacon. Even if I had a stovetop, I'd still choose the microwave.

Ingredients:

- Bacon
- Lettuce
- Tomato
- Avocado spread (optional)
- Choice of sauce (I really like garlic mayonnaise)

Instructions:

1. Cut your lettuce and tomato.
 2. Cook bacon according to package instructions. Tip: If it's soft and you're unsure if it's done, let it sit for a minute. If it's not crispy after a minute or two, pop it back in at 20-second intervals until desired crispness.
 3. Toast your bread.
 4. Assemble your sandwich.
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Fried Rice

Fried rice in the microwave? Yep—no kidding. Super easy!

Ingredients:

- Instant rice
- Little Smokies
- ½ tablespoon sesame oil (essential for flavor—Dragon Imperial brand is great if you can find it)
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce (or more if you're like me and love salt)
- Frozen peas and carrots
- MSG (optional, but really enhances flavor)
- 1 egg

Instructions:

1. Cook instant rice according to box instructions, then add a raw egg on top. Tip: If the rice is dry, add a bit of water or cover with a wet paper towel and pop it back in the microwave for 30 seconds.
 2. Microwave for 1 minute, then continue in 30-second intervals, stirring until the egg is fully cooked.
 3. Mix in the remaining ingredients and heat to taste.
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Queso and Brisket Baked Potato

This is the easy, classic one—you've probably seen it a million times, but it's a staple.

Ingredients:

- Potato
- Queso
- Brisket

- Choice of toppings

Instructions:

1. Heat pre-made brisket from the grocery store.
2. Cook baked potato in the microwave (see Golden Curry potato instructions).
3. Add high-quality pre-bought queso. Don't skimp!
4. Assemble with brisket, queso, and toppings of your choice.