



## Buyers Guide

### CHOOSING A COMMERCIAL MICROWAVE OVEN



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Most cooks will tell you that one of the most important appliances in their kitchen is the Commercial Microwave Oven. For good reason too. Commercial microwaves fulfil a number of vital functions which help to save time, save money and reduce the workload on your staff and other appliances. This guide should help you decide which microwave oven would be most beneficial for you and your business.

### Primary Functions and Features.



The main functions of a commercial microwave are cooking, defrosting and reheating. Cooking by microwave is fast and efficient. Although cooking with a microwave is rapid, they don't brown food, so some dishes may require "finishing off" under a grill to make them more appetising. Still, no need for overhead extraction or plumbing here.

Defrosting by microwave is much faster than traditional methods. All sorts of food can be defrosted, such as bread, fish, vegetables and more - all within a matter of minutes.

Reheating by microwave is a great way to add value or lifespan to food. Gently warming a chocolate fudge cake or even "pinging" bread for a few seconds can make a massive difference to how the food tastes, whilst also reducing the amount of time your customers have to wait for their next course.

### What's the difference between Domestic and Commercial Microwaves?



Visually, a commercial microwave seems very much the same as a domestic version, albeit larger and with steel or stainless-steel construction. However, under the cover, commercial microwaves are much more powerful and durable - designed to cope with the day-to-day bashing that most appliances receive in busy kitchens.

Commercial microwaves are built from components designed for constant, long periods of heavy use, whereas domestic units generally lose power as they get older, taking longer to cook and providing inconsistent results - a massive risk in terms of food hygiene.

There are other, smaller differences in commercial microwave ovens that may be easily missed. For example, most domestic microwaves feature a rotating glass turntable to ensure food is cooked consistently. In commercial versions, the base is constructed from a ceramic plate and fans are used to disperse microwaves intelligently throughout the cabinet. The flat base makes the machine much easier to access and clean, whilst allowing you to use the full cavity and square ceramic or polypropylene GN pans - not always possible in-home microwaves.

### What to look for in your Commercial Microwave.



**Light Duty/Heavy Duty:** The major consideration when buying a microwave is largely down to how many covers you expect to serve when you're at your busiest. For example, a small light duty microwave is perfect for occasional use such as warming desserts or to give the "just baked" warmth to scones and bread products. However, as a main kitchen cooking machine in a mass catering establishment, a light duty microwave could struggle to keep up with the pace. Conversely, a large heavy duty microwave would excel in the busiest kitchens, whilst being far too big for a small church hall, cafe or snack van.

**Power:** It's simple. More power means faster cooking. Faster cooking means more covers and happier customers. This is one of the areas where a powerful commercial microwave can really make a difference. A jacket potato can take around seven minutes to cook from scratch in a standard domestic microwave, whereas a powerful Samsung 1850W Commercial Microwave would have the same result in less than three - a massive difference when customers are queuing.

**Manual or Programmable:** The most common method of controlling a microwave is via either a top or side mounted control panel with a digital touch panel or manual dials. Dial controls are generally very easy to use, and the microwave can quickly cook with the minimum of user input. Push button microwaves normally have a digital display - and timings are accurate to the second, ensuring consistent results every time. Additionally, push button microwaves are usually programmable - helping to prevent user error and reduce waste. Programmable microwaves are especially valuable in chain restaurants or similar businesses with multiple sites, as food is cooked consistently at each location with minimum training required.

**Warranty:** It's really easy to overlook the warranty. Given that microwaves are a vital part of the kitchen, you *need* to know that the machine is going to be reliable and that if anything does go wrong, the machine is covered by a guarantee. Domestic microwaves are not designed for

commercial use, so if they fail it's unlikely that any warranty claim would be honoured - potentially leading to costly repairs or even having to wait for a new machine.

### **Other type of Microwave's.**



Although traditional microwaves are used to speed up cooking times, there are other types of microwave ovens that can benefit you and your business.

**Accelerated/Rapid Cooking Ovens:** A real innovation and a massive time saver, accelerated cooking ovens use a combination of microwave and convection or impingement technology to cook food incredibly quickly and thoroughly - sometimes up to 15 times faster in the top models.

These microwaves are popular in quick service restaurants and takeaways - especially sandwich shops and cafés which sell hot snacks. Sometimes called High Speed Microwaves or Rapid Cook Ovens, these advanced machines are great for making pizza, toasted sandwiches, burritos and more. Accelerated cooking ovens are produced by prestigious brands such as MenuMaster, Merrychef and Turbochef.

**Hybrid Microwave Ovens:** Similar to Accelerated Cooking Ovens, hybrid microwaves are designed to perform more than just the microwave function and usually have other built-in functions such as a grill or oven to save kitchen space and increase your cooking options. Typically, this is more common in domestic models, however there are some incredibly versatile commercial versions which can be programmed to use the various functions in one routine to obtain the desired results. For example, reheating a lasagne using the microwave function and then browning off the cheese topping with the grill - all at the touch of one button. Perfect for reducing the workload of constantly moving dishes between appliances.