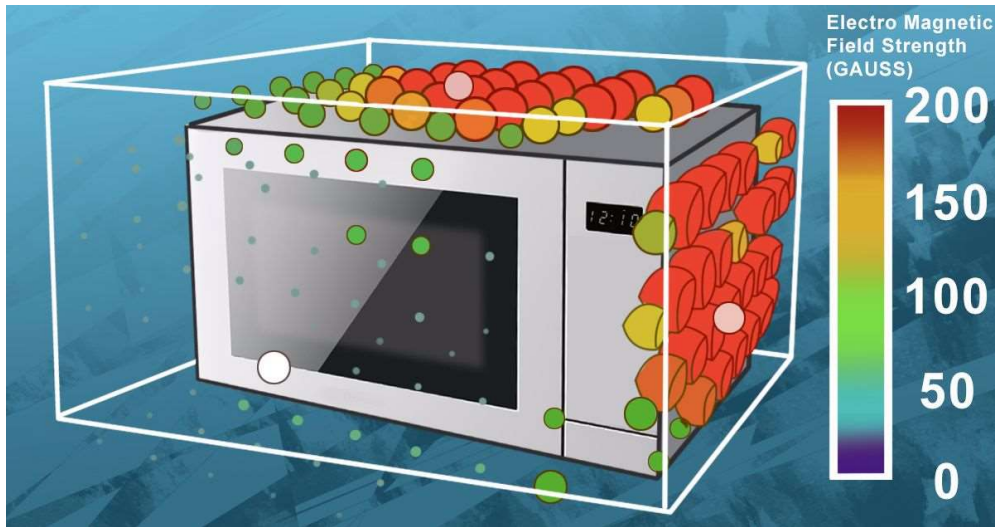


# 11 facts they didn't tell you about the microwave

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Even among today's back-to-basics foodie fads, microwave ovens retain their presence in almost every American home. From reheating leftovers to quickly heating water, the convenience they offer is a major time-saver.

But if you're only using your microwave to heat food, read on. There are other things to do with your microwave that you may not have known about.

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**1. Remove a stamp.** Philatelists can easily remove stamps stuck onto paper. Simply put a few drops of water on the stamp and microwave it for 10 to 15 seconds, advises [Popular Mechanics](#). This method is also handy for removing kids' stickers.

**2. Turn soft taco shells into crunchy ones.** Want to feel the crunch?

Curl flour taco-sized tortillas into coffee cups, one tortilla per cup.

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Can you take sized tortillas into cone cups, one tortilla per cup.

**3. Refresh pastries.** Don't let stale doughnuts go to waste, says [HouseholdHacker](#). Put each doughnut in the microwave for 10 to 12 seconds, and they will emerge bakery soft.

**4. Increase juice output from citrus.** Next time you're getting ready to juice an orange or lemon, microwave it for 20 to 30 seconds before squeezing or machine juicing. The fruit will be softer and produce more juice, [LOLWOT](#) states.

**5. Sanitize glass.** Putting water into a glass container and heating it in a microwave for two minutes will kill germs without overheating the glass, says [MSN](#). This method is often used to sterilize mason jars and baby bottles.

**6. Clean the microwave.** Did you know microwaves are self-cleaning ovens? Simply squeeze some lemon juice into a microwave-safe bowl of water, and drop the lemon halves into the bowl. Run the microwave for four to five minutes and let the hot water and citric acid do their thing. Remove the bowl and wipe everything clean. Watch this [HouseholdHacker](#) video to see how easy it is.

**7. Sterilize gardening soil.** Gardeners occasionally want to sterilize soil to eliminate diseases, weed seeds and pests. [Gardening Know How](#) recommends microwaving two pounds of moist soil in a ventilated microwave-safe container for 90 seconds to two and-a-half minutes, depending on wattage.

**8. Make a hot compress or heating pad.** A wet towel or cloth in the microwave for one minute makes a quick compress, notes [LOLWOT](#). A tied-off tube sock filled with uncooked rice is a reusable heating pad, according to [Popular Mechanics](#); after warming in the microwave (perhaps with some lavender oil) it's the perfect shape to soothe any sore muscle.

**9. Remove gum.** Microwaving some vinegar for one minute and then applying it to stuck-on gum will remove it quickly, advises [MSN](#).

**10. Take the sting out of onions.** Don't cry! Cut just the ends off the onion, and microwave it for 30 seconds, says [HouseholdHacker](#), and you'll be able to chop the rest of the vegetable without shedding a tear.

**11. Sanitize sponges.** Sponges are germ-free after 60 seconds in a microwave; just saturate them with water first. (Adding a little dishwashing liquid or lemon juice is optional.) Scientists at [Good Housekeeping](#) found that this method killed 99.9 percent of household germs.

Finally, a note about the safety of microwave ovens versus conventional ovens. It is important to know that microwaves cannot pass through the metal caging of the appliance nor the specially treated glass in the door, so there should be no radiation leakage from a clean, unaltered oven. As a further precaution the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) advises people

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Further precaution, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration advises people to step away from their appliance when it is on.

Microwaves are more than just convenient reheating tools. Why not harness their energy-efficient power to help with other household tasks?

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