

# THEN *and* NOW!

## Kitchen Innovation Proves Indispensable to 75 Percent Of Americans

(NAPSA)—How long has the microwave oven been on the radar screen in America's kitchens? You'll be getting warm with your guess if you read this brief history of this indispensable appliance.

**THEN:** It has been 35 years since the first household microwave oven—the Amana® Radarange® Microwave Oven—was introduced to families across America. Hailed as a technological breakthrough and criticized as a gimmick that would ruin the fine art of cooking, the Amana Radarange debuted in Chicago in August 1967 as a product that would forever change how Americans eat and cook.

**NOW:** Today more than 95 percent of American households include a microwave oven—an increase of five percent since 1997. And a recent Yankelovich Monitor study revealed that 75 percent of the people surveyed ranked the microwave oven as “almost impossible/pretty difficult” to do without. Only the automobile ranks higher.

“In just 35 years, the microwave has become a critical component of American society. We now have an entire generation that's grown up with the microwave oven and they use it daily for everything from cooking a quick lunch to reheating leftovers to popping popcorn,” says Jill Means, an Amana brand home scientist.

Recent research conducted by the Amana team found that Americans use their microwaves an average of 13 times a week—or almost twice a day. Twenty-six percent of the time is spent reheating leftovers while 23 percent is used to cook individual meals or food



**HAPPY 35TH BIRTHDAY—**The first microwave oven featured a 115-volt current and just two buttons, “start” and “light.” It also included two control knobs, one for cooking times up to five minutes and the other for longer cooking times up to 25 minutes.

items. The remainder of our microwave time is dedicated to defrosting (13 percent), heating snacks (12 percent), heating water or beverages (12 percent), cooking meals for the whole family (eight percent) and softening or melting ingredients (six percent).

“The microwave has revolutionized the way people cook,” Means explained. “It has contributed greatly to our fast-paced, dual career lifestyles. Originally, Amana engineers envisioned the microwave replacing the conventional oven. Instead, the microwave has spawned an entirely new category of food items.”

Prompted by the popularity of the microwave, food companies have developed microwave versions of everything from brownies to macaroni and cheese—not to mention the ever-popular microwave popcorn.

Among the most popular items cooked in America's microwaves, snacks such as popcorn and nachos account for 71 percent of the food items cooked in microwaves (not including

reheated foods). Frozen convenience foods (frozen meals) come in second at 59 percent, closely followed by vegetables/side dishes (56 percent), soups (36 percent), non-frozen convenience foods such as boxed mixes (22 percent), casseroles (16 percent), meat/poultry/fish (14 percent) and baked goods/desserts (two percent).

A few other interesting findings:

- Sixty-two percent of Americans keep their microwave on the kitchen counter

- one-third of us clean our microwaves once a week

- nearly one-third of all microwaves in use today are 1-3 years old

“The Radarange has impacted American cooking in a different way than was expected,” says Janel Dufek, brand manager for Amana. “No one in 1967 could have predicted the enormous popularity of convenience foods for the microwave. It was just too big a departure from the way Americans ate at the time.”

For quick and easy microwave recipes or more information visit [www.amana.com](http://www.amana.com).