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## How to Make Amazing 7-Minute Caramels in Your Microwave

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There are hundreds of delicious ways to enjoy caramel, from [chocolate confections](#) to [sticky caramel apples](#) and carnival bags of [caramel corn](#). Caramel might be the special sauce that makes every dessert taste better, but it's also surprisingly simple to make.

In about 7 minutes and with just a few ingredients, you can actually whip up a killer batch of homemade caramels at home. And it turns out that the [microwave](#) is the perfect appliance to use to make quick, fuss-free caramels. We break down the hows and whys for you right here.



You create caramel syrup just by heating up sugar slowly to around [340° F \(170°C\)](#). If you put regular white sugar in a saucepan and heat it up, the sugar will turn to a liquid and begin to brown and smell amazing. That's the essence of what we call caramelization, or the controlled removal of water from any sugar through heat.

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Sugar (aka sucrose) molecules are actually a combination of two simpler sugars, [fructose and glucose](#). During heating, they break down as the water changes into steam and evaporates. This [process](#) creates new, smaller molecules with the deep, rich flavor that we call caramel. Any sugar can caramelize, which is why fruits, sweet sauces, and vegetables like carrots and [onions](#) develop deeper flavors as they are cooked.

### Why the Microwave Is Really Good at Making Caramels:

If you make [caramel on the stove](#), you need to stir continuously and use a [candy thermometer](#) to make sure that it does not burn. If the sugar gets too hot (and it's a pretty small temperature window), the mixture becomes bitter and your caramel batch is ruined.

Enter the microwave. Food cooks in microwaves because it absorbs energy and heat from the microwave radiation. [Microwaves](#) cook by heating up the water in the food, so there is a limit to how hot the food can get. Since water removal is key to the caramelization process, making caramels in the microwave is both easy and foolproof.

### How to Make 7-Minute Caramels in Your Microwave

I only recommend making these in a microwave that has a turntable to avoid hot spots that will make the sugar burn.

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup unsalted good-quality butter
- ½ cup light corn syrup (if you can't find it, then regular or dark will work just fine)
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup [sweetened condensed milk](#)
- sea salt (optional)

#### Instructions

1. Lightly grease a square or rectangular baking pan.
2. Gently melt butter in medium-sized, microwave-safe glass bowl in the microwave.
3. When the butter is melted, remove it from microwave.
4. Add corn syrup, sugar, and sweetened condensed milk to the bowl.
5. [Whisk](#) to combine everything together.
6. Put back in microwave and cook for six minutes at full power.



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7. While it's cooking, prepare an ice bath.
8. At six minutes, take a small spoonful of the caramel and drop it into the ice bath.
9. Pick it up and roll it around in your fingers. If it can form a soft ball that you can roll around, then it is done. If it is too soft to roll easily, then cook for another 30 seconds.
10. Continue with the ice bath test every 30 seconds until it has reached the right consistency. NOTE: It should NOT take more than 8 minutes at full power (it took me 7), but the time does vary depending on how much you make, the wattage of your microwave, and the size of your bowl.
11. Carefully remove the bowl from microwave.
12. Carefully pour the hot caramel into your greased baking dish.
13. If desired, sprinkle with sea salt.



14. Cool in refrigerator until set, at least 30 minutes.
15. Remove when ready and cut caramels into rectangles or squares.
16. Wrap individually with waxed paper or cut and separate so that the caramels do not touch.
17. Store in an airtight container at room temperature. Separate the layers with wax paper if you are not wrapping them individually.



These caramels are better than grocery store caramels and can even rival many gourmet brands. Use the best unsalted [butter](#) you can find. [Mass-](#)

produced caramels are often made with butter mixed with other fats, so their taste cannot compare to gourmet or homemade caramels like these, which rely on the flavor that comes from butter.

Photos by Naomi Imatome-Yun/Food Hacks

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