

Microwaves Aren't Meant to be Cleaned

By Joe Dinnetz

Microwaves aren't meant to be cleaned, though they often should be. Unlike a toilet, which signals its need for a cleaning by inviting guests over, you can tell when the microwave needs cleaning because someone, more often than not a parent, roommate, or lover will ask you to do it. They will make the request by pointing out a bit of food splattered and stuck to the side of the microwave that resembles something you yourself ate a few days or weeks earlier. Besides, it's probably your turn, or at least it will be declared as such. There is no use in disputing the splatters or whose turn it is. The important thing to remember is that microwaves aren't meant to be cleaned.

Your first instinct might be to avoid picking at the bits of food with your fingernails, so you will choose to spray the inside with a cleaner, hoping the moisture in combination with a rag, sponge, or paper towel will remove the bits. That is folly. By design, the bits of food will cling to the walls and work their way into the corners or lodge themselves in the circular vents with each scrubbing motion, requiring your fingernail to extract them anyway. Picking at the food with your fingernail will cause bits to fall underneath the rotating dish. After removing the dish and wheels, you will discover that without a corner or vent to hide in, the bits of food just move around in a circular motion with your rag, sponge, or paper towel. Thus, to avoid using your fingers again, you will need to flick the rag, sponge, or paper towel to successfully remove the bits of food from the microwave. They will likely get on your shirt.

The door will not offer any relief. You will inevitably lodge bits food in the seals or in the cosmetically designed corners of the glass and yet again resign your fingernails to most of the task. On more than one occasion you will consider if the effort you are putting into the process exceeds the value of simply buying a new microwave. You will also remind yourself that the food you eat does not touch any of the surfaces of the microwave and therefore justify quitting - at which point you will sigh in the realization of time and effort wasted because microwaves aren't meant to be cleaned.