

CUISINE

# S'mores or less

Missing s'mores when you're not at the cottage? Make them at home with your kitchen microwave. We tested two s'mores machines: the Progressive International S'Mores Maker and the Micro S'mores (both available online), each designed to quickly and tidily (no ever-expanding marshmallows) create the "perfect" s'more, sans campfire. But how do they stack up next to the traditional method?



**Progressive**  
\$18



**Micro S'mores**  
\$15



**Old School**  
Free

**DEVICE**

Reservoir filled with water, and two arms to hold assembled s'mores in place.

Patented "core fusion technology" heats s'more and squishes it down. Bonus: Comes with recipe book.

Stick with marshmallows held over fire.

**SPEED**

For fully melted chocolate, our microwave needed 60 seconds for two.

For a good melt, 15 seconds for one.



Varies. Plunge the marshmallows into fire for a one-second char, 17 seconds for all-round browning.

**BURN RISK**

None.

Still none.



**RESULTS**



Marshmallow rubbery and stringy, hardened quickly. Chocolate nearly liquified, but cracker crisp.

Marshmallow plasticky and had cornstarch flavour. Chocolate well melted, but graham cracker cold.

Marshmallow toasted on the outside and gooey on the inside. Tastes of caramelized sugar, semi-solid chocolate, crunchy cracker. Mmmm...

**FUN FACTOR**

Can't compare to the real deal, but a decent substitute. Plus, it has arms!

Meh. We were bored while making and consuming.

A true cottage event.



**CLEANUP**

Tidy, easy to wash, dishwasher safe.

Got a little sticky by s'more #3, but easy to clean and dishwasher safe.

Assembly can be messy, but cleanup is a breeze. Toss that stick away.

**HOW THEY STACK UP**

Not bad...



Only okay.



Still our fave.

TRADITIONS

## Old foolin'

It started in 1965 as a friendly challenge between Roy Carroll and his son-in-law George Joiner. After a few pints, Joiner said, "Wouldn't it be great if we could go to our cottages in the winter?"

"Why wait for insulation?" asked Carroll. "We've got a stove and lots of wood." "You're on," said Joiner.

After surviving that first bitterly cold outing, the guys were labelled "a bunch of old fools" by Joiner's mother, Beatrix. And so began a wacky annual tradition known as the Old Fools Weekend.

Since then, participation in the all-male OFW at Otter Lake, Que., north of Ottawa, has grown to several dozen, ages six to 78, and up to 50 Fools on every fifth anniversary. Participants must attend the event, held on the full-moon weekend in February, at least twice to earn the Old Fools' Certificate. At the Old Fools' Fire, former Fools who have died are remembered with special candle lanterns, while hardy Fools imbibe the traditional punch known as Old Fools' Death Wish (a secret recipe, of course).

For the 20th anniversary in 1985, the Fools created the Otter-lude Games, including zany events such as Fools Rush In (how many fools can cram in the outhouse—wearing snowshoes) and the Joe Two Rivers Challenge (the Fools take on a survival task such as making Kraft Dinner in a can by boiling snow for water). Attendee Larry Fleece says the Otter-lude Games are "not as famous as the Olympics, but they're a hell of a lot more fun." Spoken like a true Old Fool.—Jane Langille

PHOTOS: GARY DAVIDSON (EXCEPT WATCH, HANDS); ISTOCKPHOTO; GIBBY TOM STEWART/COBBLES; ILLUSTRATIONS: RIGHT, AARON LEIGHTON; MARSHMALLOW, JADEN KALE, SHIRI WOOL/COM