

EXAMINER

Zap! The kitchen microwave turns 50

The now ubiquitous appliance got its start here in Massachusetts.





AMANA

By Rebecca Szkutak | AUGUST 04, 2017

Massachusetts-based Raytheon pioneered the countertop microwave, which debuted 50 years ago this month.

> **October 8, 1945** — Patent filed for “method of treating foodstuffs” using electromagnetic energy by Raytheon Manufacturing Co. engineer Percy Spencer, a native of Howland, Maine

> **12** — Spencer's age in 1906, when he dropped out of school to work; despite his lack of formal education, he was named on at least 108 patents

> **750** — Weight in pounds of Raytheon's first commercial microwave oven, marketed to restaurants when released in 1947

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> **5 foot 6** — Height of the first commercial microwave, which sold for \$5,000

> **4** — Number of knobs and buttons on the Radarange (none were for popcorn)

> **\$495** — Cost of the Amana Radarange in 1967 (around \$3,500 today)

> **\$35** — Least expensive countertop microwave

now available at Walmart (some models can cost \$1,500 or more at various stores)

- > **150** — Watts of energy produced by the first countertop microwave
- > **1975** — Year the sale of microwave ovens surpassed the sale of gas ranges
- > **\$24.5 billion** — Projected sales of microwave ovens globally in 2020
- > **1982** — Pillsbury offers the first microwave popcorn, which comes frozen

QUOTABLE SPORTS MOMENT



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“What comes out of the microwave hot doesn’t always stay hot. I know, because I eat bagels in the morning.” — Shaquille O’Neal, after his Miami Heat overcame a 25-point deficit to beat the Boston Celtics, March 16, 2006

Sources: Amana; Raytheon; invention.si.edu; The Chicago Tribune; The New York Times; US Patent and Trademark Office; Walmart; Allied Market Research; USA Today

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