

Baking Powder and Baking Soda

Baking powder and baking soda are leaveners that cause baked goods to rise and have a light texture.

Baking powder is available in single-acting and double acting varieties. Double-acting baking powder is the most readily available type and is the type used in most baking recipes. Double-acting baking powder produces carbon dioxide gas in two stages: when it is mixed with liquid and when it is heated. Single acting baking powder creates carbon dioxide gas only when it is mixed with liquid. Baking powder can lose its ability to leaven. Discard any baking powder that is past the expiration date on the package.

Baking soda is an alkaline substance used in batters that have acidic ingredients such as buttermilk, molasses, and sour cream. When the baking soda is mixed with the acidic ingredient, there is an immediate release of carbon dioxide gas. Batter and dough that use only baking soda as a leavening agent should be baked immediately. Otherwise, the baked product might not rise as high and the texture won't be as light.

NOTE:

Be sure your baking powder and baking soda are fresh. To test baking powder for freshness, mix 1 teaspoon of baking powder and 1/3 cup hot water. For baking soda, mix 1/4 teaspoon baking soda and 2 teaspoons vinegar. If bubbling occurs, the products are still fresh. If not, they should be replaced.