



Family Fun Activities

Ingredients and Their Uses

It is important to realize that baking recipes are actually chemical formulations designed to give your baked goods special qualities. Changing one or more ingredients can cause your recipe to fail, even if you are an experienced cook. Following is a list of some main ingredients and their uses in baking recipes.

Clabber Girl Baking Powder is a chemical leavener. All consumer baking powders are double-acting, which means it reacts when moisture is introduced and again in the oven when heat is added. Ingredients are cornstarch (to keep ingredients separate in the can), baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), acid salts (Sodium Aluminum Sulfate and Monocalcium Phosphate).

Flour is the base for most baking recipes. It forms a large part of the framework of baked doughs and batters. Two important gluten forming proteins, gluten and gliadin react together when moisture is added to form the web-like structures of gluten. Gluten allows the cell walls of the dough to expand and trap the air bubbles produced by the leavening, which makes the dough rise and stretch. All purpose flour is generally used in baking recipes, but remember that some flours have more gluten than others. If your recipe calls for a specific flour, like cake flour or bread flour, it is not wise to substitute.

Shortenings, oils and other "fats" make the dough tender. This also includes butter, margarine, and lard. When butter is specified in a recipe, it imparts special qualities to the dough as well as added flavor. Butter can help make finished baked goods crispier than other fats.

Eggs help bind the dough together, and along with gluten make cell structure strong to hold leavening bubbles. They also add tenderness, moisture, color and flavor. Depending on the recipe, eggs can also have leavening or "lifting" quality.

Salt adds flavor.

Sugar imparts sweetness, contributes to leavening, browning, flavor, and also tenderizes the finished baked good. Usually the recipe calls for granulated sugar. When brown sugar is used in a recipe, it imparts a special flavor since it contains molasses. Dark brown sugar has more than light brown sugar.

Milk and other liquids dissolve the sugar and other ingredients and provides the base for the first reaction of the baking powder. Depending on the type of liquid, like milk, it can also add vitamins and minerals to a finished baked good.



Measuring Equipment

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB

DRY MEASURING CUPS:

use to measure flour, sugar, and all dry ingredients. Use the size cup needed for measurement, 1 cup, 1/2 cup, 1/3 cup or 1/4 cup; spoon into cup and level off at the top.



MEASURING LIQUIDS:

Use a clear measuring cup with a pour spout. Pour liquid in and get at eye level to make sure measurement is accurate.

MEASURING SPOONS:

Measurements are always level; level off with a flat edge. If you are measuring wet ingredients, and dry ingredients with the same set of spoons, make sure the spoons are clean and dry before measuring the dry ingredients. Be especially careful when measuring baking powder. A wet spoon inserted into the can will start a leavening action; the baking powder may not work well the next time you want to bake.

