



Food Safety & Nutrition

General Cooking Q & A



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I often buy nuts in bulk or in the shell, but my recipes call for cups or portions of cups of nuts. How can I know how much to buy in bulk?

Many cookbooks will give you the equivalents, but here is a guide for you.

Peanuts	1 ½ lbs in shell equals 1 lb shelled or 3 1/3 – 4 cups
Hazelnuts	1 lb equals 3 ½ cups
Walnuts	1 lb equals 3 ¾ cup halves or 3 ½ cups chopped
Pecan	1 lb equals 4 cups halved or 3 ¾ cups chopped
Sunflower seeds –	1 lb equals 3 ¼ cups
Pistachios –	1 ½ lbs – 1 lb shelled or 3 ½ - 4 cups

Can I substitute baking soda for baking powder?

You cannot substitute one for another. However you can make your own baking powder. It you use homemade be sure to use it in a dough or batter that will be bake immediately. Combine 1 tablespoon baking soda, 2 tablespoons cram of tartar and 1 ½ tablespoons cornstarch.

Why do some recipes call for baking soda and baking powder?

The amount of baking soda used to neutralize the recipe's acid is not enough to leaven the baked goods well enough. So, baking powder is added as a backup leavener.

How do I know if my baking soda and baking powder are fresh?

To test baking soda for freshness: pour a few tablespoons of vinegar into a small dish and stir in 1 teaspoon baking soda. A burst of froth indicates that the baking soda is good. If it doesn't fizz, use the baking soda for collecting odors in your refrigerator.

To test baking powder for freshness: stir 1 teaspoon baking powder into 1/3 cup hot water. If it bubbles vigorously, the baking powder has plenty of leavening power. To keep it active never dip a wet spoon into the can. Moisture will deactivate the powder. It will be effective for about 3 months after opening.