

How to Adjust Baking for High Altitude

When it comes to baking, high altitude is generally considered to be above 3,000 to 3,500 feet.

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What to change	How to change it	Why
Oven temperature	Increase 15°F to 25°F; use the lower increase when making chocolate or delicate cakes.	Since leavening and evaporation proceed more quickly, the idea is to use a higher temperature to set the structure of baked goods before they over-expand and dry out.
Baking time	Decrease by 5 to 8 minutes per 30 minutes of baking time.	Baking at higher temperatures means products are done sooner.
Sugar	Decrease by 1 tablespoon per cup.	Increased evaporation also increases concentration of sugar, which can weaken the structure of what you're baking. Lowering the sugar helps support better structure in baked goods.
Liquid	Increase by 1 to 2 tablespoons at 3,000 feet. Increase by 1 1/2 teaspoons for each additional 1,000 feet. You can also use extra eggs as part of this liquid, depending on the recipe.	Extra liquid keeps products from drying out at higher temperatures and evaporation rates.
Flour	At 3,500 feet, add 1 more tablespoon per recipe. For each additional 1,500 feet, add one more tablespoon.	In some recipes, a flour with a higher protein content may yield better results. Additional flour helps to strengthen the structure of baked goods.
Leaveners	Decrease baking soda and/or baking powder according to our leaveners chart.	Baked goods rise more quickly at higher altitudes, so less leavener is needed

HOW TO ADJUST LEAVENING WHEN BAKING AT HIGH ALTITUDE

One of the biggest challenges to adapting sea-level recipes for high altitude comes down to the leaveners. In general, you want to decrease the amount of leavening in a baked good. When using baking powder and baking soda, the following chart can help you decide how to adjust amounts. When baking a recipe that calls both baking powder and baking soda plus an acidic ingredient, like buttermilk or sour cream, try switching to all baking powder and milk.

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Baking powder or baking soda	3,000-5,000 ft.	5,000-6,500 ft.	6,500-8,000 ft.
1 teaspoon	7/8	1/2	1/4
1 1/2 teaspoons	1 1/4	3/4	1/2
2 teaspoons	1 1/2	1	3/4
2 1/2 teaspoons	1 3/4	1 1/4	1
3 teaspoons	2	1 1/4	1
3 1/2 teaspoons	2 1/2	1 1/2	1
4 teaspoons	2 1/2	1 1/2	1

HOW TO BAKE HIGH ALTITUDE COOKIES

Because cookies bake for a shorter amount of time than bread or cakes and are relatively low in water and high in fat content, they're much less susceptible to the vagaries of high-altitude baking. Many bakers report that they can make sea-level cookie recipes at altitude with minimal to no changes and still achieve good results, so these are a great starting point if you're looking for reliable high-altitude bakes.

HOW TO BAKE HIGH ALTITUDE COOKIES

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What to change	How to change it	Why
Oven temperature	Increase 15°F to 25°F	Since leavening and evaporation proceed more quickly, the idea is to use a higher temperature to set the structure of cookies before they spread too much.
Baking time	Decrease by 1 to 2 minutes per 10 minutes of baking time.	Baking at higher temperatures means cookies are done sooner.
Sugar	Decrease by 1 tablespoon per cup.	Increased evaporation also increases concentration of sugar, which can weaken the structure.
Liquid	Increase by 1 to 2 tablespoons at 3,000 feet. Increase by 1 1/2 teaspoons for each additional 1,000 feet. You can also use extra eggs as part of this liquid, depending on the recipe.	Extra liquid keeps cookies from drying out at higher temperatures and evaporation rates.
Flour	At 3,500 feet, add 1 more tablespoon per recipe. For each additional 1,500 feet, add one more tablespoon.	In some recipes, a flour with a higher protein content may yield better results. Additional flour helps to strengthen the structure of the cookies.
Leaveners	Decrease baking soda and/or baking powder according to our leaveners chart.	Cookies rise more quickly at higher altitudes, so less leavener is needed
Chilling Time	Chill cookie dough for 30 minutes to 2 hours before baking	Chilling the dough solidifies the fat and helps prevent too much spreading while baking.