

Flavor Balancing

Striking a balance between flavors is key to a flavorful meal!

| Acidic | Sweet | Bitter | Salty/Umami |
|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Brings brightness to a dish. Adds a salty flavor profile. Balances sweetness.</i> | <i>Brings balance and roundness to a dish. Balances acidity and bitterness.</i> | <i>Balances sweetness and cuts richness. Better as a background flavor.</i> | <i>Makes a dish savory and enhances flavors in a dish. Reach for these before salt.</i> |
| Lemon juice Lime juice Vinegars Wine Tamarind Pickled Foods Cranberries Sour Cherries Tomato / products Pineapple Oranges | Fruit juices / Nectars / Concentrates / Reductions Caramelized onion Carrots Sweet potatoes Butternut / other squashes Honey Maple syrup Molasses Dried fruits Tomato paste / products Beets Reduced vinegars / wines Roasted peppers | Greens (i.e., kale, dandelion, chicory, watercress, arugula) Broccoli Rabe Broccoli Cabbage Brussels Sprouts Asparagus Some mustards Grapefruit Citrus rinds / zest Beer Wine Teas (especially black, green) | Tomato products (especially canned, like paste) Soy sauce Mushrooms (especially dried) Cured / brined foods (i.e., olives) Seaweed Fish sauce Seafood (especially dried) Worcestershire sauce Anchovy Green tea Beef Pork (especially cured) Chicken Fermented foods (miso, fermented black beans, etc.) Aged cheeses (i.e., parmesan, romano, blue, gouda) Liquid amino acids |

Simple Ways to Reduce Salt

1. Before reaching for the salt shaker, try adding ingredients with *umami* instead. Umami rounds out the flavor and appeal of a dish, and since most of these ingredients contain sodium already, there's no need to add extra salt.

Umami: A meaty, savory, or rounded taste, corresponding with glutamate content of food. Adding food with umami can help to reduce salt content, since it enhances the flavor of food in a way similar to salt but with less sodium.

2. Utilize herbs and spices to increase flavor. **Herbs** are the aromatic leaves of plants, whether fresh or dried (i.e., thyme, basil, rosemary, cilantro, dill, sage, etc.) **Spices** are dried bark, roots, buds, seeds, fruit, or berries of plants (i.e., mustard, ginger, pepper, coriander, cumin, paprika, allspice, garlic powder, etc.). Make your own spice blends or buy sodium-free blends.

3. Use vinegars and citrus. Acidic foods brighten food and bring out flavors without added sodium. It's generally best to add them at the end of cooking and before adding salt.

4. Use fresh or frozen vegetables and beans instead of canned, or use "no sodium added" versions. Rinse canned beans before using.

5. Make your own stock or use reduced sodium stocks and broths.

6. Try adding 1/4 less salt than your recipes call for. As you use less salt, your body will crave it less. Be patient: your body adapts over time.

Don't forget: read labels and watch for these foods that are commonly high in sodium:

Meats: deli meats, processed meats, bacon, salami, & cured meats. Fast food & snack foods. Cheese, breads, soup, bouillon, & broth. Salad dressings (make your own salad dressings or buy reduced sodium versions). Soy sauce. Pickled or brined foods.