

Raising Agents

Kitchen

How each one lifts a bake, and why they are not interchangeable.

What each needs to work, and how fast it acts.

Agent	Needs	Speed
Bicarbonate of soda	An acid + liquid	Immediate
Baking powder	Liquid; heat for the second lift	Double-acting
Yeast	Time, warmth, sugar	Hours
Steam	High heat	During baking
Whipped egg white	Folding, gentle handling	Mechanical

Too much bicarbonate without enough acid tastes soapy and metallic. It is the commonest cause of an off-tasting cake.