

How to Reduce Acid in Tomato Dishes

Explore this Article ■ [Using Baking Soda](#) ■ [Deseeding and Shortening Cook Times](#)
■ [Choosing Tomatoes to Use](#) ■ [Questions & Answers](#) ■ [References](#)

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Tomatoes can add wonderful flavor and nutrition to your favorite recipes. Tomatoes are very acidic, so they can cause serious problems for [those with ulcers](#) or other acid related digestive issues. You can reduce the acidity of tomatoes by adding some baking soda after you cook them. You can also remove the seeds, reduce the time you cook tomatoes, or add them to a dish raw.

Method 1

Method 1 of 3: Using Baking Soda



1 Cut the tomatoes into pieces. Most dishes will require you to cut up the tomatoes anyway. You can choose how large or small you want the chunks to be depending on what you are making.

- Note that smaller pieces will heat through more quickly.



2 Simmer the tomato chunks at medium heat for about 10 minutes. If you are going to add the tomatoes into another hot dish, you may not need to cook them for as long. If you cut bigger chunks, you may need to cook them a little longer.^[1]

- Be sure to watch the tomatoes carefully so that you can remove them from heat if they start to burn or become too crispy.



3 Remove the pan from the burner and stir in 1/4 tsp of baking soda. This amount works well for six medium tomatoes, so for more or less tomatoes you can adjust the amount of baking soda.^[2] Stir the baking soda so that all the pieces of tomato get a slight coating.^[3]

- The baking soda will fizz as it reacts with the acid of the tomatoes.



4 Add the rest of your ingredients and finish cooking the dish. Once the fizzing has stopped, which may take a minute or so, finish cooking the dish. The baking soda will reduce the overall acid content of the dish and does not usually alter the taste of the dish.^[4]

Method
2

Method 2 of 3: Deseeding and Shortening Cook Times



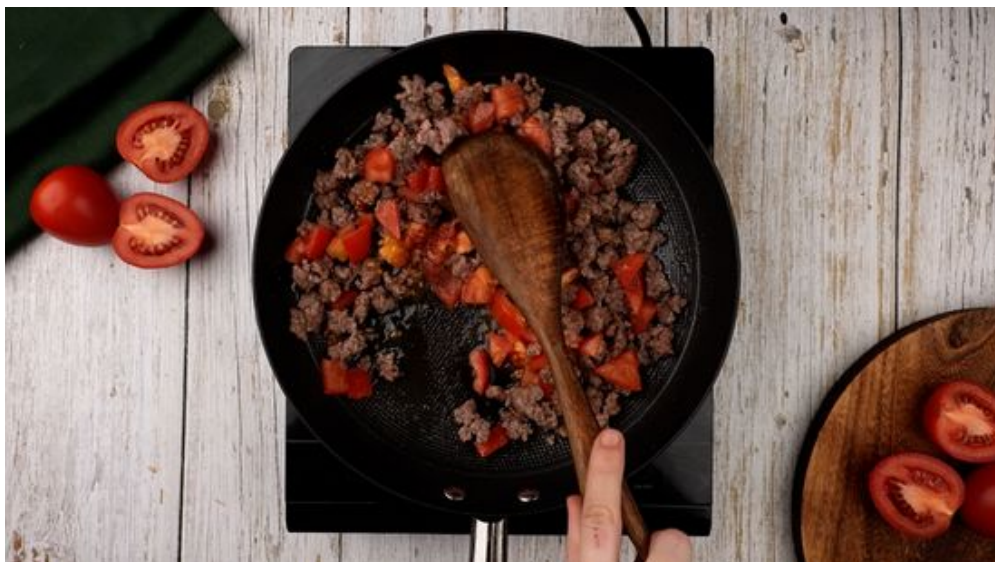
1 Remove the seeds from the tomato. Carefully slice the tomato in half around what would be the equator line so that one half has the stem and one half has the bottom. Then use a $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon, or another small spoon, and scoop the tomato seeds out and discard them. Don't scrape too deeply into the flesh of the tomato.^[5]

- The seeds carry much of the acid content of the tomato plant, so removing them altogether is a great way to reduce the acidity.
- Some dishes are enhanced by cooking the seeds along with the flesh of the tomato, so take this into account before you remove the seeds.



2 Reduce the cooking time of tomatoes. Tomatoes become more acidic as they cook longer, so reducing the cook time to the least amount possible can help keep the acid level lower. Sauces and other dishes that require long simmering may make this difficult, but it is recommended that you don't cook tomatoes for longer than 1 ½ hours.

- You may have to get used to using tomatoes that are less cooked, but if you deal with problems stemming from acidic foods it may be worth the effort.



3 Add tomatoes last. If your dish includes tomatoes, but tomatoes are not the main ingredient, add them after everything else has cooked for the majority of the necessary time. Doing this is another way of reducing the cook time, while still cooking them briefly.

- If a dish calls for you to simmer the ingredients for one hour, put the tomatoes in for the last 10 minutes. They'll have time to warm up and soak into the dish a little bit, but not become overly acidic.



- 4 Use raw tomatoes in the dish.** In the same way that reducing the cooking time can reduce the acid content, foregoing cooking the tomatoes altogether will reduce the acidity. Raw tomatoes are far less acidic than cooked tomatoes. If you can include the tomatoes in the dish raw without significantly affecting the dish, this will make them less acidic.^[6]
- If you are putting the tomatoes into a hot dish, the other ingredients will most likely heat the tomatoes up enough to even out the temperature of the dish.

Method
3

Method 3 of 3: Choosing Tomatoes to Use



- 1 Look for the ripest tomatoes.** Tomatoes lose some of their acidity as they ripen, so avoid tomatoes that appear to be less than fully ripe. Two good ways to check the ripeness of a tomato is to feel the weight and gently squeeze the tomato. Choose heavier tomatoes and softer tomatoes.^{[7] [8]}
- Heavier means more juice, which means more ripe. Tomatoes that are soft but not mushy are more ripe than hard tomatoes.
 - You can also learn the smell of a ripe tomato versus the smell of an unripe tomato.



2 Cook with fresh tomatoes. The process of canning tomatoes ends up increasing the acidity, so you can reduce acid in your dishes by only cooking with fresh tomatoes. You'll have to buy fresh tomatoes more frequently than canned ones as they will not last as long.^[9]



3 Choose non-red tomatoes. Tomatoes come in red, green, yellow, orange, and combinations of these, and in most cases non-red varieties of tomatoes are said to be lower in acidity. The next time you make your favorite tomato dish, try out some non-red tomatoes and see if you notice a difference in the acidity.^[10]

- This is not a hard and fast rule as there are red varieties that are low-acid and non-red varieties that are high-acid.
- Some varieties to keep an eye out for are Yellow pear, a tomato similar to cherry varieties, Georgia Streak, a yellow heirloom variety, and Big Rainbow, a golden-red tomato.



Expert Q&A

Question

What kills the acid in tomato sauce?



Tara Coleman
Clinical Nutritionist
Expert Answer

You have two really good options for this. The first is to add some baking powder to your sauce. The other solution would be to use riper tomatoes for your sauce. The more ripe a tomato is, the less acidic it will be.

Helpful 12 Not Helpful 1

Question

How can I remove acidic taste from already canned tomato paste while cooking?



Community Answer

Baking soda is a base so it can reduce acidity even in dishes that you aren't cooking.

Helpful 14 Not Helpful 3

Question

Does this still taste like tomato or does it alter the flavor? Will my favorite dishes like curries still be as tasty if I do this?



Community Answer

The sources listed in the baking soda section support that baking soda will not significantly alter the taste as long as you don't use too much.

Helpful 10 Not Helpful 3

Question

When I eat tomatoes I get bumps or sores on my scalp is this because of the acid in tomatoes?



Community Answer

Some people are allergic to tomatoes, so it may be worth talking to your doctor to find out if you have a tomato allergy.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 2

Question

How can I remove an acidic taste from already canned tomato paste while cooking without adding baking soda?



Community Answer

Add butter. Not that fake margarine stuff, real butter. It's pH isn't as high as baking soda, but it's still considerably higher than the tomato paste and it cuts the acid taste without killing it.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 1

Question

How do I reduce the tomato taste in a tomato-based sauce?



Tanner McCarty
Community Answer

Adding other ingredients, especially spices, can significantly alter the flavor of your sauce.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 1

Question

How do I remove an acidic taste from a stew that has already been prepared?



Community Answer

When it has that acidic, strong taste, add coconut cream, dairy cream or butter, to soften the flavor. It really makes the dish taste so much nicer.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 0

Question

I did everything I always do, I have been cooking for 4 hours and my tomato sauce is still very acidic. What can I do?



Community Answer

The longer you cook it, the more acidic it becomes. Add some baking soda, (start with 1/8tsp)—it will nullify the acidity.

Helpful 1 Not Helpful 0

References

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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Tara Coleman**. Tara Coleman is a Clinical Nutritionist who has a private practice in San Diego, California. With over 15 years of experience, Tara specializes in sports nutrition, body confidence, and immune system health and offers personalized nutrition, corporate wellness, and online learning courses. She received a BS in Biology from James Madison University and spent six years in the pharmaceutical industry as an analytical chemist before founding her practice. Tara has been featured on NBC, CBS, Fox, ESPN, and Dr. Oz The Good Life as well as in Forbes, Cosmopolitan, Self, and Runner's World. This article has been viewed 351,812 times.

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3 votes - 100%

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