



BALANCING FLAVORS

Choose an acid with an appropriate flavor profile

Most sources of acid for use in cooking have a unique type of flavor. Think of the difference between limes and lemons, or between a delicate sherry vinegar and a super-concentrated balsamic and pick the best one to work with your dish.

Choose a sugar with an appropriate flavor profile

While brown sugar can add a lovely, caramelized flavor along with some sweetness, it can clash with the delicate freshness of something like a passionfruit dessert. Then of course there is always balsamic vinegar which covers the sweet and the sour in one hit.

Get creative with your sources

While it can be easy to just reach for a squeeze of lemon or a spoonful of sugar, sometimes it can be more fun to add an element to a dish that will provide the sweetness or sourness you're looking for. This can add variety so that not every mouthful is the same. Think about using fruit or dried fruit in savory dishes. Or using acidic ingredients like fresh tomato, rhubarb, slices of lime or lemon or marinated anchovies for a little sour buzz.

Gently does it

If you overdo the sweetness or the sourness, they can be used to balance each other to a degree. So, if there is too much acid, a little sugar can help and vice versa. But this is far from ideal. Better to season carefully and avoid the need for corrective measures.

Taste before and after

Don't just assume that you're going to need the sweetness or sourness. Taste first and ask yourself whether it is good as is or whether it would benefit from some more sharpness or more sweetness.

Beware of taste saturation

When your taste buds have been exposed to something a few times, they can become less sensitive to those flavors. So, if you've been tasting and tweaking for a while, it's good to take a break and have a glass of water.

Mitigate heat

If the spiciness of a dish is just too hot for you to handle, try diluting the dish with a little water or cooking liquid or by adding a few more vegetables, protein, or starches to the dish. You can also try adding a pinch of sugar or something sweet to tame spice. Also, dairy can be placed directly into a dish or served on the side like a nice cooling dollop of sour cream or yogurt.

Don't forget about the salt & pepper

Be holistic in your seasoning approach and remember the importance of salt and pepper. Season your food throughout the cooking process so each individual ingredient is properly salted.