

superacid

A medium having a high *acidity*, generally greater than that of 100 wt.% sulfuric acid. The common superacids are made by dissolving a powerful *Lewis acid* (e.g. SbF_5) in a suitable *Brønsted acid*, such as HF or HSO_3F . (An equimolar mixture of HSO_3F and SbF_5 is known by the trade name ‘magic acid’.) In a biochemical context ‘superacid catalysis’ is sometimes used to denote catalysis by metal ions analogous to catalysis by hydrogen ions. By analogy, a compound having a very high *basicity*, such as lithium diisopropylamide, is called a ‘superbase’.

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