

## Salt Works: Gourmet Salt Guide

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Until recently sea salt was considered a basic commodity - sea salt was just salt!

Now however, gourmet chefs, in homes and in restaurants, have learned to appreciate and distinguish between the distinctive qualities of the many varieties of gourmet salts and the ways these salts enhance the flavors and finish of foods. The purpose of this reference guide is to point out the distinguishing differences among these deliciously unique sea salts, and also to define each of our products so Salt Works customers can choose the perfect gourmet sea salt for all of their cooking needs.



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### Coarse Salt

Also known as: *Gos Sel, Sale Grosso*

Coarse salt is made up of large-grained salt crystals. Most coarse salts are best used in a grinder, providing an easy way of serving up freshly ground sea salt with all of your meals. Coarse salt tends to be less moisture sensitive than its finer-grained counterparts, so it resists caking and is easily stored. Use coarse salt to grind over any dish, create a salt crust on meat or fish, and to flavor soups, stews and pasta.



## Finishing Salt

Finishing salts are the premier varieties of specialty salts. Harvested generally by hand in specific regions of the world, finishing salts are most admired for their unique textures—either moist crystals or delicate flakes. Both varieties provide a strong crunch and dissolve quickly, resulting in a burst of clean, mild flavor with each bite. These salts enhance the depth of natural flavors of in any dish, and enrich a table setting with beautiful, shimmering presentation. The various colors and flakes of finishing salts make gorgeous garnishes for every meal.

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## Flake Salt

Also known as: *Flakey Salt*

Flake sea salt is a light crystal reminiscent of snowflakes. Seawater is evaporated using the natural processes of sun and wind, producing salt brine that is fed into an open evaporating pan. The brine is then slowly heated until delicate pyramid-shaped crystals of salt appear. The finished product is light, flakey sea salt. Flake salts can come in many different flake sizes, from large pyramid-shaped flakes to paper-thin, delicate flakes.

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## Flavored Salt

Our Fusion® flavored salts bind natural ingredients to sea salt crystals — every single one! The result is a flavor concoction more impactful than just a seasoning blend. What's more is that everything about the process is 100% natural, from the ingredients to their perfect union. Flavored salts provide an opportunity to get more creative with your cooking and even think beyond traditional pairings. Sure, Thai Ginger is divine on Asian noodles and fish, but

would you think to pair it with vanilla ice cream? Do try! Our Fusion® naturally flavored sea salts are a friendly reminder to always have fun in your kitchen.

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## Fleur de Sel

Also known as: *Flower of Salt, Flor de Sal (Portuguese)*

While finishing salts are the premier salt varieties, Fleur de Sel is the crème de la crème of finishing salts. Fleur de Sel literally translates to "Flower of Salt" and is often called the "caviar of salts" by chefs worldwide. True Fleur de Sel comes from the Guérande region of France, and is made up of only "young" crystals that form naturally on the surface of salt evaporation ponds. Paludiers (the salt harvesters of the Guérande region) carefully rake the salt crystals using only wooden tools, true to traditional Celtic methods. The weather conditions must be just right to produce a good Fleur de Sel harvest, and the process can only be completed once a year, in the summer.

Also, similar to fine wine regions, different areas within Guérande produce salts with their own unique flavors and aroma profiles.

Fleur de Sel is ideal for salads, cooked fresh vegetables and grilled meats.

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## French Sea Salt

French sea salts are hand-harvested from pristine Atlantic seawater. These delicious sea salts are unrefined so they retain more of the trace minerals that naturally occur in seawater. These minerals include natural iodine. French grey sea salt, or Sel Gris, is harvested using traditional Celtic methods. This prized process is done entirely by hand, using only wooden tools. This preserves the pure taste of the French salt, and produces a very special moist crystalline texture.

Sel Gris by Le Tresor is lower in sodium chloride content than average sea salts, generally containing anywhere from 83–87% sodium chloride. French sea salts are ideal for use on salads, cooked fresh vegetables and grilled meat. They are available in coarse grain (ideal for pinching or salt cellars), stone ground fine (an ideal replacement for processed table salts), and extra fine grain (the perfect popcorn salt).

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## Grey Salt

Also known as: *Sel Gris*

Grey salt is a "moist" unrefined sea salt, usually found in the Brittany region of France's Atlantic coast. Its natural light grey color comes from the minerals absorbed from the clay lining the salt ponds. The salt is collected by hand using traditional Celtic methods and wooden tools. Grey salt has gained great fame in the mainstream culinary world in the last few years. It is available in coarse grain (the perfect finishing or pinching size), stone ground fine (ideally used at the table instead of processed salts), and extra fine (Velvet) grain—perfect for sprinkling over nuts or popcorn.

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## Grinder Salt

The salts most suitable for a salt mill or grinder have large, dry crystals. The large salt crystals are easy to grind in the mills, and the lower moisture content allows the salt to flow through with little hassle. Used for flavoring foods at the table when the host determines that a finer, higher grade finishing salt is not required. Also appropriate for use during cooking for freshly ground salt flavor.

*Note:* Always use a salt mill with a **ceramic or plastic grinding mechanism**. Metal, including stainless steel, as found in pepper mills, will corrode and/or rust after prolonged contact with salt.

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## Hawaiian Sea Salt

Also known as: *Alaea, Alae, Hawaiian Red Salt, Hiwa Kai, Black Hawaiian Salt*



Alaea Sea Salt is a traditional Hawaiian table salt used to season and preserve. A natural mineral called "Alae" (volcanic baked red clay) is added to enrich the salt with iron oxide. This natural additive gives the salt its distinctive red color. The clay imparts a subtle flavor that is said to be more mellow and earthy than regular sea salt. It is the traditional and authentic seasoning for native Hawaiian dishes such as Kalua pig, poke and Hawaiian jerky. It is also delicious on prime rib and pork loin. Alaea Red Hawaiian Sea Salt is available in fine and coarse grain.



Black Hawaiian sea salt, or Hiwa Kai, contains activated charcoal giving it a unique black color, silky texture, and salient flavor-enhancing properties. Charcoal has also become popular for use in detox diets. Though not in large enough quantities to take as a detox supplement here, the activated charcoal in Hiwa Kai Black Hawaiian Sea Salt adds a pop of color and tasty flavor to your dishes. Available in coarse grain; great for tableside presentation and grinders.

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## Italian Sea Salt

Also known as: *Sicilian Sea Salt, Sale Marino, Sel de Mer*



Italian sea salt is produced from the low waters of the Mediterranean Sea along the coast of Sicily. It is a natural salt rich in minerals such as iodine, fluorine, magnesium, and potassium, with a slightly lower percentage of sodium chloride than regular table salt. Salt pans are filled with seawater in the spring and left to evaporate, relying on the heat of the Sicilian sun and strong African winds. Harvesting takes

place once the water has evaporated, and then the salt is crushed and ground without any further refining. These salts have plenty of flavor, without being too strong or salty. Italian sea salts work nicely in a shaker and are wonderful on salads or for finishing roasts and sauces. Great as a garnish on bruschetta. Our Sel de Mer is available in coarse and fine grain.

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## Kala Namak

Also known as: *Black Salt, Sanchal*

Kala Namak, or Indian black salt, is an unrefined mineral salt. It is actually a pearly, pinkish-gray color rather than black, and has a strong, sulfuric flavor and aroma. Vegan chefs have made this salt popular for adding an egg flavor to dishes like tofu scrambles. Kala Namak is used in authentic Indian cooking and popular in mango smoothies. Available in very fine or coarse grain.

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## Kosher Salt

Kosher salt can refer to two types of salt—one is a specific shaped flake salt that is so named for its use in the preparation of meat according to the requirements of Jewish dietary guidelines. It contains fewer additives, and has a cleaner and more even taste than ordinary table salt. The flakes dissolve easily, and have a less pungent flavor than processed table salt. Due to the shape of the granules, there is simply less salt in a pinch of kosher salt than in a pinch of table salt. This is the kind of salt most often used on top of pretzels and on the rims of margarita glasses. It is important to note that all kosher salt is not necessarily sea salt.

The second type of kosher salt is a salt that has been certified as kosher by a prestigious organization or certifying body such as the Orthodox Union, or OU. This means that the salt has met the guidelines of kosher outlined by Jewish law, and upheld by kosher

certification agencies and members of the Jewish faith. The certification ensures that the product is produced and handled in accordance to these high standards, and is suitable for consumption for those following a kosher diet. All of our SaltWorks, Artisan® and Fusion® brand salts have been certified Kosher by the OU.

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## Organic Salt

As of yet, in the United States, the USDA does not recognize salt as an item that can be certified as organic as it contains no carbon compounds. Although salt is not certified organic in the U.S. by the same standards as botanicals, agriculture, or livestock, there are at least three organizations that have set up rigorous guidelines for the production of salt in their respective countries. These standards ensure the purity of the water, the cleanliness of the salt beds, and that the proper techniques are used for harvesting and packaging the salt. These certifications that place their stamp of approval on organic salts consist of:

- Nature & Progres (France)
- Bio-Gro (New Zealand)
- Soil Association Certified (Wales)

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## Sea Salt

Also known as: *Sal del Mar, Sel de Mer, Sale Marino*



Sea salt is a broad term that generally refers to unrefined salt derived directly from a living ocean or sea. It is harvested through channeling ocean water into large clay trays and allowing the sun and wind to evaporate it naturally. Manufacturers of sea salt typically do not refine sea salt as much as other kinds of processed salt, so it still contains natural traces of other minerals, including iron, magnesium, calcium, potassium, manganese, zinc, and iodine.

Proponents of sea salt rave about its bright, pure, clean flavor, and about the subtleties left by trace minerals. Some of the most common sources for sea salt include the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean (particularly in France, on the coast of Brittany). Sea salt is thought to be healthier and more flavorful than traditional table salt. Available in coarse, fine & extra fine grain size, and many sizes in between!

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## Smoked Sea Salt



Smoked sea salts are a relatively new and exciting gourmet salt in the U.S.! They add a unique flavor to a wide range of dishes and are delicious for grilling or oven roasting—and an absolute must when cooking salmon! When you're considering a smoked sea salt, make sure that it is a naturally smoked salt and doesn't have liquid smoke flavoring added; this can create a bitter taste. Unlike artificially infused smoke-flavored salts, all of Salt Works smoked sea salts are created using natural smoking methods. They are slow-smoked in cold smokers over real wood fires to infuse the salt crystals with 100% natural smoke.

Smoked sea salts add an authentic smokehouse flavor to soups, salads, pasta, and sandwiches. Available in fine, coarse, and flake grain sizes.

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## Table Salt



Table salt is the most common kind of salt found in the average kitchen. It usually comes from salt mines. Once mined, it is refined and most minerals are removed until it is pure sodium chloride. A common sentiment is that this process results in a more bland and bitter salt than unprocessed varieties, not to mention lacks the potential benefits of its trace minerals. Most table salt is also available in either plain or iodized forms, where the salt is artificially spray coated with iodine. American salt manufacturers began



iodizing salt in the 1920's during The Great Depression, in cooperation with the government, after people in some parts of the country were found to be suffering from goiter, an enlargement of the thyroid gland caused by an easily-preventable iodine deficiency. Today we know that most people require less than 225 micrograms of iodine daily. Seafood and many dark greens, as well as sea salt, contain iodine naturally, and the supplement is unnecessary if there are sufficient quantities of either in one's diet. Natural sea salt is a healthy replacement for ordinary table salt.

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