

- Food—sodium content



Backed by decades of testing and expertise, the culinary, nutrition and kitchen appliance specialists at the GH Institute provide the best guidance on all things food and kitchen.



SALT SMARTS

What other single ingredient can turn a bland dish into a delicious one, help preserve foods, tenderize proteins and transform texture? Here, the experts in the GH Innovation Kitchen walk you through the power in every pinch.

by **TRISH CLASEN MARSANICO**



KATE MERKER
CHIEF FOOD
DIRECTOR

HOW-TO

Season Food to Perfection

This move will upgrade every meal you make.

I'll let you in on a little secret I learned in culinary school: **Don't wait until you're done cooking to salt a dish.** Instead, layer flavor throughout the cooking process by seasoning, tasting and adjusting as you go, from start to finish.

For example, when I make tomato sauce, I season the onions while they sauté, then again once the tomatoes are added. Right before serving, I'll give it one last taste to see if it needs a final pinch of salt.

Adding salt enhances flavors by suppressing bitterness and highlighting sweetness, sourness or umami. It can also help balance out a dish— if something tastes too sweet or acidic, a pinch can bring everything back into harmony. Just remember that a little goes a long way!



DIVINE DESSERT

Top a bowl of vanilla ice cream, olive oil and chocolate sauce with a sprinkle of flaky sea salt.

Your Secret Ingredient

More than just a flavor enhancer, salt brings out the best in both sweet and savory foods.

- 1. Tenderize proteins.** Salt breaks down tough muscle fibers in meat and helps it retain moisture as it cooks— meaning you have salt to thank for that melt-in-your-mouth sensation.
- 2. Draw moisture out.** Sprinkle salt on sliced eggplant or zucchini before cooking to pull out excess water. This helps prevent the veggie from releasing too much water while cooking and making dishes soggy.
- 3. Make desserts better.** Sweet treats benefit from a pinch of salt, which balances their sweetness and sharpens flavors such as chocolate and caramel. Salt also gives gluten a boost in breads and baked goods.
- 4. Boost brines and marinades.** Add salt to water or oil to help infuse flavor when soaking poultry and meats. Blanching veggies? Using salt in the process helps in retaining color and preserving texture.

TYPES *of* SALT

There are more varieties than you might expect—naturally sourced from ancient seabeds, mountain ranges and evaporated seawater—and each can be used in its own way.

HIMALAYAN PINK SALT

Collected from mountains near the Himalayas, this (often coarse) rock salt contains minerals including small amounts of iron, which gives it its rosy hue.

Best for: Gifting—grind it onto grilled meats or roasted vegetables

SEA SALT

Harvested from seawater and prized for its delicate flakes, it often retains traces of minerals like magnesium, calcium and potassium, which contribute to its crisp salinity.

Best for: Finishing dishes—sprinkle onto avocado toast, seafood, sliced watermelon or brownies

TABLE SALT

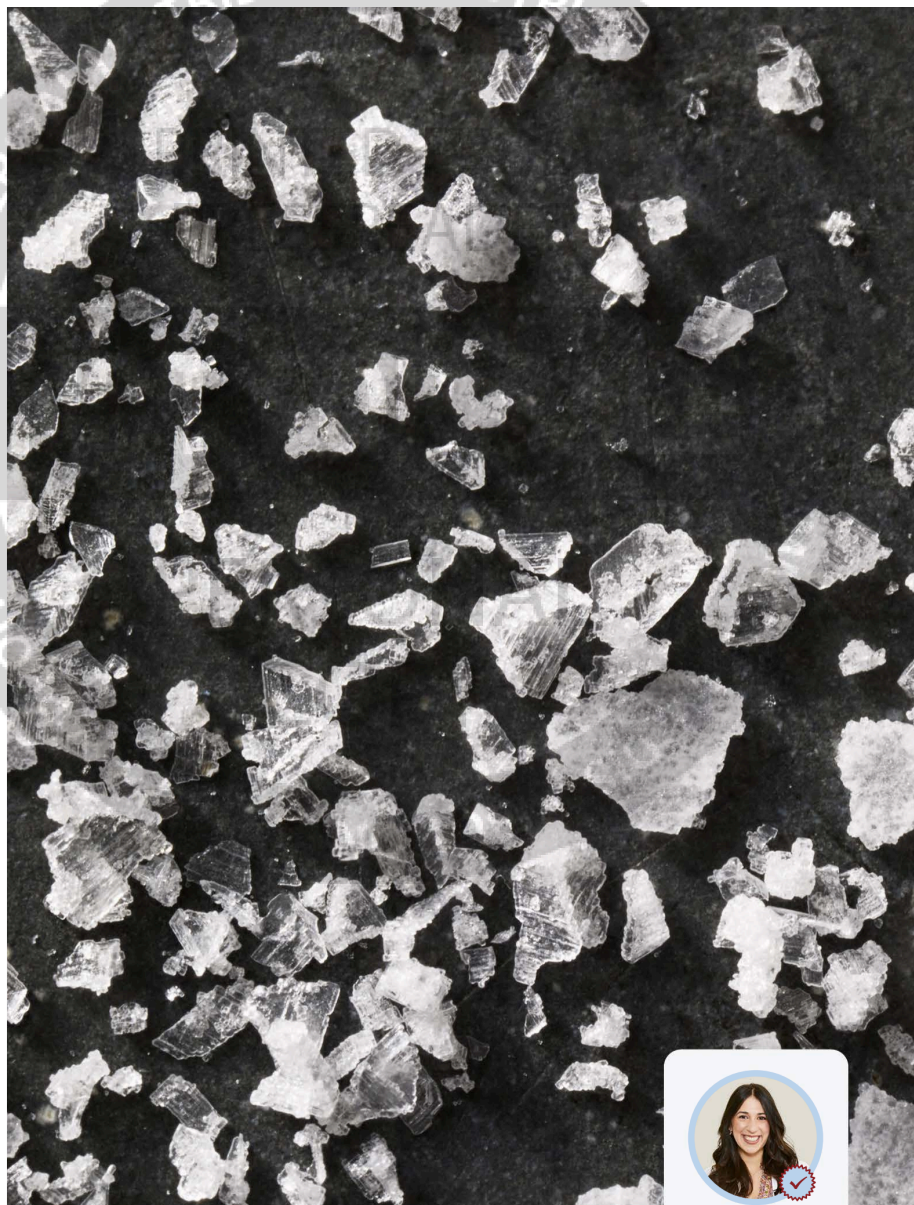

Made up of ultrafine grains; most varieties have been fortified with iodine. If you rely on this, use it sparingly. Always taste your dish before adding another shake of it.

Best for: Quick flavor hits—add a dash to vinaigrettes or toss with fries or deep-fried foods

KOSHER SALT

The Test Kitchen relies on this workhorse (specifically, Diamond Crystal). It's coarser than table salt but finer than chunkier sea salts.

Best for: All-around seasoning for meats and veggies as well as pasta water and pickle brines

STEFANI SASSOS
NUTRITION LAB
DIRECTOR

Q: Isn't salt bad for my health?

A: Actually, you can't live without it! Salt is a source of sodium and chloride, essential electrolytes that help your body function properly. It's the *amount* of salt in your diet that really matters: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults consume no more than 2,300 mg of sodium, or about a teaspoon of salt, each day. Packaged goods such as breads, deli meats and jarred sauces often are high in salt because it increases shelf life and boosts taste. And while cutting back on ultraprocessed foods may give you more wiggle room to use salt when cooking, try not to go overboard: Consuming too much can raise blood pressure, increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney issues.

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NICOLE PAPANTONIOU
KITCHEN APPLIANCES
LAB DIRECTOR

Strategic Storage

The best container for every type of salt, including some of our favorites:



SALT CELLAR

This countertop staple keeps kosher salt within reach for easy use when cooking.

WILLIAMS SONOMA HOLD
EVERYTHING ASHWOOD
SALT CELLAR, \$30



GRINDER

Best for coarse types like sea salt or Himalayan pink salt, this lets you grind it right onto meats or into veggies or vinaigrettes.

PEUGEOT PARIS U'SELECT
MANUAL SALT MILL, \$75.
US.PEUGEOT-SAVEURS.COM



SHAKER

Everyone can season to their taste with one of these filled with table salt. Bonus: Shakers come in all kinds of fun designs.

OLDE THOMPSON HARRISON
SALT AND PEPPER SHAKER SET,
\$12. CRATEANDBARREL.COM