

Know Your Salt

Most types of salt you buy are at least 97.5 percent sodium chloride and thus nearly identical. But they vary based on how and where they're made and what goes into that last 2.5 percent. Here's an overview of four common kinds.



TABLE SALT

Iodized or not, table salt is milled to create small, uniform cube-shaped crystals. It has an added anticlumping agent to keep it "free-flowing."

Use it: to season pasta water; it dissolves quickly. The tiny size of the crystals can easily lead to oversalting, so make sure to sprinkle—not pour—it.



KOSHER SALT

This is the workhorse of restaurant kitchens: Chefs know what they're getting with every pinch. The name comes from the fact that the crystals are good at drawing out moisture from meat, so it's used in the koshering process.

Use it: any time you're seasoning during the cooking process.



FLEUR DE SEL

Unlike salt harvested from deposits in the earth, sea salt comes from evaporating ocean water. *Fleur de sel* refers to the delicate, fine crystals that rise to the water's surface; the classic version is hand-collected in Guérande, France.

Use it: for sprinkling over crudo or raw veg before serving.



FLAKY SEA SALT

Snow-white, pyramid-shaped crystals harvested from coastal waters. The most prominent producer is Maldon, which sources its flakes from the waters off Essex, England.

Use it: to add a hit of salinity and crunch to finished dishes like salads, seared meats, and chocolate desserts.

SALT CAN ALSO... CONDUCT HEAT

Remember those pink salt blocks everyone was searing steaks on for a minute? A bed of kosher salt performs a similar function: transmitting heat.

SALT-ROASTED POTATOES

Preheat oven to 425°. Spread **2 cups kosher salt** in a 13x9" baking dish. Scrub **1½ lb. fingerling potatoes**, pat dry, and poke a few holes into each; arrange over salt. Roast until flesh is very tender and skins are crisp, 30–40 minutes.

Meanwhile, strip leaves from **2 rosemary sprigs** and cook with **3 thinly sliced garlic cloves** and **¼ cup olive oil** in a small saucepan over medium-low heat, swirling pan occasionally, until garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and add potatoes; toss to coat. Serve potatoes generously sprinkled with **flaky sea salt**.
4 servings



► Stick with a Salt Brand

You want to know what is hands down the best salt that you could possibly cook with? The one you cook with most often. Seasoning is about consistency above all else, and picking one box and sticking with it means that a pinch today will be the same as a pinch tomorrow will be the same as a pinch next week. Using an unfamiliar salt is like driving someone else's car—it'll get you there, sure, but it just isn't the same.



The BA Test Kitchen uses Diamond Crystal kosher salt. If you prefer Morton, decrease the amount of salt called for in a BA recipe by about a third.