

# Make This Summer WORTH Its Salt!



**S**ummer has arrived, and so have thirst-quenching cocktails (mini umbrellas optional) and the backyard grill. Of course, no summertime feast is complete without generous amounts of that magical, but oft overlooked ingredient – unrefined salt. Heck, plain old potato salad is only perfected by a pinch of celery salt, and the tang of the margarita is simply transformed with a rim of crunchy citrus salt. So if you are ready to take the plunge into the world of sublime salinity, read on for a crash course on unrefined salts and some flavor-full ideas for their use.

## REDISCOVER TRUE SALT

Salt's impact on human history cannot be overstated. It was used as currency in the Roman-era (origins of the word 'salary'), it is recorded as being harvested by humans as early as 6000 BC (China), and Gandhi staged a famous protest march over its taxation (1930 India).

Moving forward to today's culinary world, the first step is to forget what you believe to be true about that powdery white substance in the glass shaker. "Salt" is not just one thing, but instead is a vibrant varietal akin to wine or tea. The salt that we are most accustomed to is the end result of an industrial process that strips this natural mineral of almost all of its unique qualities.

Fortunately, there is an alternative! Get back to basics with pure unrefined salts, harvested by hand from exotic locales around the world. These unrefined salts come in a painter's palette of colors, and a fantastic range of crystal structures and salinity-levels (yes, different salts actually vary in saltiness!).

Just like grapes that make up a prized wine, unrefined salts are valued for their unique attributes, which result from the environment in which they are harvested. For instance, Himalayan Pink is a salt with a naturally high mineral content (mostly copper) that imbues it with an incredible rosy hue. This salt is mined by hand in

India from ancient salt deposits left after the evaporation of a pre-historic ocean under the Himalayan Mountains. Granular mined salts, like Himalayan Pink, are wonderful in high-heat applications like baking or grilling.

Alternatively, you may want to try Sel Gris (sel is French for salt), which is harvested from low-lying marshes off the Atlantic coast of France. This unrefined salt has a gray tint attributed to surrounding clay deposits, and a light flaky texture. Sea salts, like Sel Gris, excel as a finishing touch on almost any food, and are prized for their crunchy burst of salinity. And these two examples are only an appetizer portion of the hundreds of varieties of unrefined salts available from around the world.

## HOW TO USE THESE SALTS

Now that you have shifted your perspective on salt, it is time to explore how to use this magical elixir of flavor. It is critical to remember that salt does not just make food taste saltier, but instead can actually enhance all flavors. For simple proof, consult any homemade cookie or bread recipe. Salt is the twist that brings remarkable depth to the party, regardless of whether your application is sweet or savory.

Practical use of unrefined salts does not need to be complex or rehearsed. If you remember that mined salts are great in high heat applications and unrefined salts harvested from the ocean are ideal for finishing a dish, you have already graduated to the head of the class. For the skeptical, we would recommend step one to be the replacement of your factory-produced salt with naturally unrefined alternatives (for every day use try Murray River Salt, Fleur de Sel or Sel Gris – you won't be sorry!).

Step two in your salinity rebirth is to begin the exploration of all that is available in the world of unrefined salts. Purchase some of these bountiful salts, and explore their use. Keep in mind the basic rule about heat and when it is optimal to use mined versus sea

salts. Research recipes focused on brines, drinks with salt rimmers, confit, salt crusts, coffee can ice cream, or simply match color and salt origins with your application. For instance, grill any whitefish with a colorful mined salt like Bolivian Rose for a satisfyingly intense flavor, or sprinkle Fleur de Sel (the caviar of unrefined salts) on your Napa Cabbage salad.

Armed with unrefined salt, a whole universe of culinary possibilities unfolds, and so be bold and discover a world of flavor this summer – the season of salt. ☐

## WINDY-CITY CELERY POTATO SALAD

*Recipe Courtesy Beyond the Shaker*

Hold onto your hat because this easy recipe will blow your taste buds away! This dish is perfect for a summer picnic or just about anywhere else. The use of Windy-City Celery salt helps to amplify the flavors of the potato. Our other secret ingredient is avocado that is enhanced by the Windy-City Celery blend to provide a rich and creamy finish to this dish. *This serves about 8-10 people as a side course.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 generous tablespoons of Beyond the Shaker's Windy-City Celery salt
- 3 pounds of red potatoes, cut into small cubes (leave the skins on)
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 5 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup frozen whole kernel corn
- 3 tablespoons of cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of Tabasco sauce or other hot sauce (this is not mandatory, but it really helps bring out the great flavors of the other ingredients)
- 3 hard boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 avocado, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, sliced into half moons
- 1 stalk of parsley, chopped
- 1 cup of olive oil

### DIRECTIONS

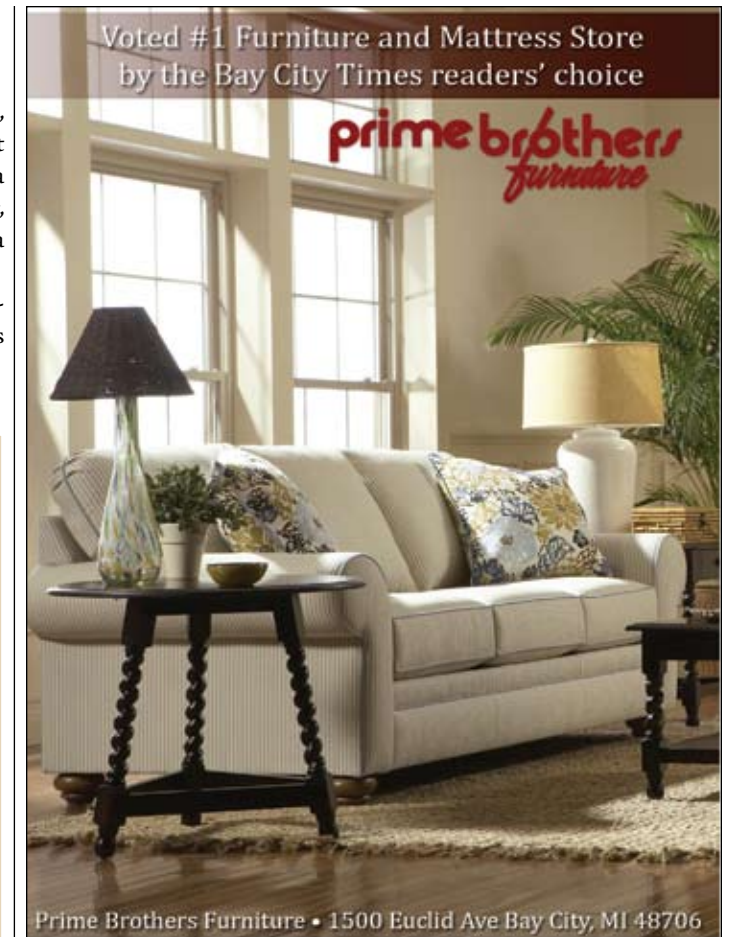
Have your oven pre-heated to 425 degrees. Put the prepared potatoes, onion, and garlic on the baking sheet. Slather on some olive oil and one tablespoon of Windy-City Celery, toss the potato mix around to coat, and roast in the oven for 20 minutes (no need to cover, as you want the potato mix to brown a bit).

Pull the baking sheet out of the oven and mix. Add the corn, and then roast in the oven for another 15 minutes (you can get a crispier texture by adding more time, but watch that you do not burn your corn).

In the bowl, mix the vinegar, Tabasco, the rest of the Windy-City Celery, and 1/2 cup of olive oil. Add the vegetables to this dressing and stir in the eggs, avocado, celery and parsley. Mix until everything is coated.

### SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Feel free to serve this potato salad either warm or chilled. We like to add a little Windy-City Celery salt to the top of the salad right before serving as a finishing touch. To make this recipe creamier, you can add mayonnaise. We have also tried adding a packet of dry salad dressing to the mix of vinegar, and we have found this to be a great way to boost the flavor. You can also try adding another salt such as Citrus Basil or Hot Habanero for a kick of flavor.



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