

Sea Salt Popularity Continues



The food industry continues to see interest in sea salt grow - for a variety of reasons.

It is easy to find online content with the heading “sea salt vs. table salt.” Articles often try to compare these two types of salt from a health, flavor, chemical and functionality perspective. The one main difference between them, however, is that sea salt usage is trending up in all areas of the food industry.

Sea salt is harvested from evaporated seawater and tends to have a coarser texture -- with granules that contain more surface area than traditional table salt. Table salt tends to come from solution mining where wells are drilled into underground salt deposits and water is pumped in creating brine that is forced to the surface for later evaporation. Table salt granules tend to be cubular in shape.

The healthiness “halo” of sea salt is engaging for many consumers. Sea salt and table salt are both sodium chloride with sea salt having a bit more mineral content, in general. However, 54% of consumers believe sea salt is good for you. To these consumers, sea salt is perceived as healthier, better-tasting, and more premium.¹

Consumers are seeking sea salt in their consumer packaged products. 55% of consumers are more likely to purchase products if sea salt is a listed ingredient.¹ As a result, more consumer packaged goods with sea salt, have been introduced in the last 10 years.⁵ Food processors recognize the value of adding sea salt to their ingredient lists either through reformulation, line extensions or new product/flavor launches.

Americans’ spending on dining out just overtook grocery sales for the first time ever.⁴ As a result, foodservice operators are addressing consumer desire for sea salt by adding sea salt to more menu items. Restaurants are sprinkling sea salt on deserts, entrees, salads, and including it in spice blends and rubs and on beverage rims.

Foodservice operators have told us “we are being asked by customers to use more sea salt in recipes” and “customers associate sea salt with being ‘natural.’ They view it in a more positive light.”²

1 Cargill's 2016 IngredientTracker™ p 15, p 37

2 Cargill Salt Market Assessment, May 2016

3 IRM Tracker Report – January 2016

4 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-14/americans-spending-on-dining-out-just-overtook-grocery-sales-for-the-first-time-ever>

5 Innova Market Insights

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Cargill has a portfolio of sea salt offerings for food processors and food service operators. An example of a food processing sea salt; Sea Salt Topping, can work especially well for a visual pop in a variety of products.

Sea Salt Topping is a fine-screened sea salt, harvested from the Pacific Ocean. It is made by channeling ocean water into ponds and allowing the sun and wind to evaporate the water naturally. It is intended for a variety of applications including topping pretzels, crackers and wafers and processing tomato products. Sea Salt Topping contains no anticaking or free-flowing additives or conditioners – so it will appeal to those looking for a recognizable ingredient list.