

SALT - ITS VARIETIES AND MANY USES

by Selene

She Who Watches and Waits

<mailto:windancr@peoplepc.com>

Storage life for salt is indefinite. So long as you keep it dry and do not let it get contaminated with dirt or whatever, it will never go bad. Over time, iodized salt may turn yellow, but this is harmless and may still be used. Salt is rather hygroscopic and will adsorb moisture from the air if not sealed in an airtight container. If it does adsorb moisture and cakes up, it can be dried in the oven and then broken up with no harm done. All salt, however, is not the same. Salt comes in a number of different varieties, each with its own purpose.

Table Salt

This is by far the most widely known type of salt. It comes in two varieties: iodized and non-iodized. There is an ingredient added to it to adsorb moisture so it will stay free flowing in damp weather. This non-caking agent does not dissolve in water and can cause cloudiness in whatever solution it is used if sufficiently large quantities are used. In canning it won't cause a problem since there is very little per jar. For pickling, though, it would be noticeable. If you are storing salt for this purpose, you should be sure to choose plain pickling salt, or other food grade pure salt. In the iodized varieties, the iodine can cause discoloration or darkening of pickled foods so be certain not to use it for that purpose.

Canning Salt

This is pure salt and nothing but salt. It can usually be found in the canning supplies section of most stores. This is the salt to be preferred for most food preservation or storage uses.

USES AND TIPS FOR SALT

KITCHEN

- Salt added to water makes the water boil at a higher temperature, thus reducing cooking time. (It does not make the water boil faster.)
- Peeling eggs - Boiling eggs in salted water will make eggs peel easily.
- Poaching eggs - Poaching eggs over salted water helps set the egg whites.
- Testing egg freshness - Place the egg in a cup of water to which two teaspoonfuls of salt has been added. A fresh egg sinks; a doubter will float.
- Preventing browning - Apples, pears and potatoes dropped in cold, lightly salted water as they are peeled will retain their color.
- Shelling pecans - Soaking pecans in salt water for several hours before shelling will make nut meats easier to remove.
- Washing spinach - If spinach is washed in salted water, repeated cleanings will not be necessary.
- Preventing sugaring - A little salt added to cake icings prevents them from sugaring.
- Crisping salads - Salting salads immediately before serving will keep them crisp.
- Improving boiled potatoes - Boiled potatoes will be given a fine, mealy texture by sprinkling with salt after draining, then returning them to the pan and shaking them back and forth quickly to get rid of the excess moisture.
- Cleaning greasy pans - The greasiest iron pan will wash easily if you put a little salt in it and wipe with paper.

- Cleaning stained cups - Rubbing with salt will remove stubborn tea or coffee stains from cups.
- Cleaning ovens - Salt and cinnamon take the "burned food" odor away from ovens and stove burners. Sprinkle spills while oven and burners are still hot; when dry, remove the salted spots with a stiff brush or cloth.
- Cleaning refrigerators - Salt and soda water will clean and sweeten the inside of your refrigerator. It won't scratch enamel either.
- Extinguishing grease fires - Salt tossed on a grease fire on the stove or in the oven will smother flames. Never use water; it will only spatter the burning grease.
- Improving coffee - A pinch of salt in coffee will enhance the flavor and remove the bitterness of over-cooked coffee.
- Improving poultry - To improve the flavor of poultry, rub the fowl inside and out with salt before roasting.
- Removing pinfeathers - To remove pinfeathers easily from a chicken, rub the chicken skin with salt first.
- Cleaning tarnished silverware - Rub tarnish with salt before washing.
- Cleaning copper pans - Remove stains on copper pans by salting area and scouring with a cloth soaked in vinegar.
- Removing onion odors from hands - Rub fingers with salt moistened with vinegar.
- "Sweetening" containers - Salt can "sweeten" and deodorize thermos bottles and jugs, decanters and other closed containers.
- Cleaning sink drains - Pour a strong salt brine down the kitchen sink drain regularly to eliminate odors and keep grease from building up.
- Brightening cutting boards - After washing them with soap and water, rub bread and cutting boards with a damp cloth dipped in salt; the boards will be lighter and brighter.
- Fixing oversalted soups - If soup has been oversalted, cut up a raw potato or two and drop into the soup. The potato will absorb the salt.
- Cleaning dried-on egg - Salt not only makes eggs taste better, but it makes "eggy" dishes clean easier. Sprinkle salt on dishes right after breakfast; it makes them a whiz to clean when you have time.
- Preventing food from sticking - Rub a pancake griddle with a small bag of salt to prevent sticking and smoking. Sprinkle a little salt in the skillet before frying fish to prevent the fish from sticking. Sprinkle salt on washed skillets, waffle iron plates or griddles, heat in a warm oven, dust off salt; when they are next used, foods will not stick.
- Preventing mold - To prevent mold on cheese, wrap it in a cloth dampened with saltwater before refrigerating.
- Whipping cream and beating egg whites - By adding a pinch of salt, cream will whip better and egg whites will beat faster and higher.
- Keeping milk fresh - Adding a pinch of salt to milk will keep it fresh longer.
- Setting gelatin - To set gelatin salads and desserts quickly, place over ice that has been sprinkled with salt.

CLEANING

- Cleaning brass - Mix equal parts of salt, flour and vinegar to make a paste, rub the paste on the brass item, leave on for an hour or so, then clean with a soft cloth or brush and buff with a dry cloth.
- Cleaning wicker - To prevent yellowing, scrub wicker furniture with a stiff brush moistened with warm saltwater and allow to dry in the sun.

- Cleaning grease spots on rugs - Some grease spots can be removed with a solution of one part salt and four parts alcohol and rubbing hard but carefully to avoid damage to the nap.
- Extending broom life - New brooms will wear longer if soaked in hot saltwater before they are first used.
- Removing wine stains - If wine is spilled on a tablecloth or rug, blot up as much as possible and immediately cover the wine with salt, which will absorb the remaining wine. Later rinse the tablecloth with cold water; scrape up the salt from the rug and then vacuum the spot.
- Removing rings from tables - White rings left on tables from wet or hot dishes or glasses can be removed by rubbing a thin paste of salad oil and salt on the spot with your fingers, letting it stand an hour or two, then wiping it off.
- Restoring sponges - Give sponges new life by soaking them in cold saltwater after they are washed.
- Settling suds - If a washing machine bubbles over from too many suds, sprinkle salt on the suds to reduce them.
- Brightening colors - Removing perspiration stains - Add four tablespoons of salt to one quart of Hot water and sponge the fabric with the solution until stains disappear. Wash colored curtains or washable fiber rugs in a saltwater solution to brighten the colors. Brighten faded rugs and carpets by rubbing them briskly with a cloth that has been dipped in a strong saltwater solution and wrung out.
- Brightening yellowed cottons or linens - Boil the yellowed items for one hour in a salt and baking soda solution
- Removing blood stains - Soak the stained clothing or other cloth item in cold saltwater, then launder in warm, soapy water and boil after the wash. (Use only on cotton, linen or other natural fibers that can take high heat.)
- Removing mildew or rust stains - Moisten stained spots with a mixture of lemon juice and salt, then spread the item in the sun for bleaching; and finally, rinse and dry.
- Color-matching nylons - Good nylons that don't have a match can be made the same color by boiling them a few minutes in a pan of lightly salted water.
- Fixing sticking iron - Sprinkle a little salt on a piece of paper and run the hot iron over it to remove rough, sticky spots.

HEALTH AND BEAUTY

- Gargling - Stir 1/2-teaspoon salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water for use as a gargle for sore throats.
- Cleaning teeth - Mix one part salt to two parts baking soda after pulverizing the salt in a blender or rolling it on a kitchen board with a tumbler before mixing. It whitens teeth, helps remove plaque and it is healthy for the gums.
- Washing mouth - Mix equal parts of salt and baking soda as a mouthwash that sweetens the breath.
- Bathing eyes - Mix 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a pint of water and use the solution to bathe tired eyes.
- Reducing eye puffiness - Mix one teaspoon of salt in a pint of hot water and apply pads soaked in the solution on the puffy areas.
- Relieving tired feet - Soak aching feet in warm water to which a handful of salt has been added. Rinse in cool water.
- Relieving bee stings - If stung, immediately wet the spot and cover with salt to relieve the pain.
- Treating mosquito and chigger bites - Soak in saltwater, and then apply a mixture of lard and salt.
- Treating poison ivy - Soaking the exposed part in hot saltwater helps hasten the end to poison ivy irritation.

- Relieving fatigue - Soak relaxed for at least ten minutes in a tub of water into which several handfuls of salt has been placed.
- Removing dry skin - After bathing and while still wet give yourself a massage with dry salt. It removes dead skin particles and aids the circulation.
- Applying facial - For a stimulating facial, mix equal parts of salt and olive oil and gently massage the face and throat with long upward and inward strokes. Remove mixture after five minutes and wash face.

OTHER USES

- Extinguishing grease fires - Keep a box of salt handy at your stove and oven and if a grease fire flares up, cover the flames with salt. Do not use water on grease fires; it will splatter the burning grease. Also a handful of salt thrown on flames from meat dripping in barbecue grills will reduce the flames and deaden the smoke without cooling the coals as water does.
- Drip-proofing candles - Soak new candles in a strong salt solution for a few hours, and then dry them well. When burned they will not drip.
- Removing soot - Occasionally throw a handful of salt on the flames in your fireplace; it will help loosen soot from the chimney and salt makes a bright yellow flame.
- Cleaning fish tanks - Rub the inside of fish tanks with salt to remove hard water deposits, then rinse well before returning the fish to the tank. Use only plain, not iodized, salt.
- Invigorating goldfish - Occasionally add one teaspoon of salt to a quart of fresh water at room temperature and put your goldfish in for about 15 minutes. Then return them to their tank. The salt swim makes them healthier.
- Cleaning flower vases - To remove deposits caused by flowers and water, rub with salt; if you cannot reach the deposits to rub them, put a strong salt solution in the vase and shake, and then wash the vase with soap and water.
- Keeping cut flowers fresh - A dash of salt added to the water in a flower vase will keep cut flowers fresh longer.
- Holding artificial flowers - Artificial flowers can be held in an artistic arrangement by pouring salt into the container, adding a little cold water and then arranging the flowers. The salt will solidify as it dries and hold the flowers in place.
- Keeping patios weed-free - If weeds or unwanted grass come up between patio bricks or blocks, carefully spread salt between the bricks and blocks, then sprinkle with water or wait for rain to wet it down.
- Killing poison ivy - Mix three pounds of salt with a gallon of soapy water and apply to leaves and stems with a sprayer.
- Keeping windows frost-free - Rub the inside of windows with a sponge dipped in a saltwater solution and rub dry; the windows will not frost up in sub-freezing weather. Rubbing a small cloth bag containing salt that has been moistened on your car's windshield will keep snow and ice from collecting.
- Deicing sidewalks and driveways - Lightly sprinkling rock salt on walks and driveways will keep snow and ice from bonding to the pavement and allow for easy removal. Don't overdo it; use the salt sensibly to avoid damage to grass and ornamentals.
- Deodorizing shoes - Sprinkling a little salt in canvas shoes occasionally will take up the moisture and help remove odors.