

Preserve It: Canning Basics



Salt is Salt is Salt

EXCEPT WHEN IT'S MORE THAN SALT. (READ ON.)

Salt is an essential mineral for health and one of the five basic human tastes. It's indispensable in the kitchen for many reasons beyond taste. Whether gathered from coastal or inland salt pans, evaporated from sea water, or mined from salt deposits, all salt is marine in origin. Salt is composed of sodium chloride (NaCl). And that's it. Salt is salt, and there is no salt that is "saltier" than any other salt. What does make a difference in taste perception is the size, shape, and density of the salt grain. A large-grained crystal or flake salt will have more of an impact on the tongue than a small granular bit of fine salt. The size and shape of the salt crystals will also affect measuring; for example, 1 tsp of fine table salt weighs more than 1 tsp of coarse kosher salt, so exchanging types of salt in cooking recipes may impact how salty the dish ends up tasting.

But what about the "more than salt" referenced in the above sub-title? Some brands add anticaking agents or other additives, such as iodine. Unrefined salts may contain trace minerals, which can contribute color (such as in Pink Himalayan and Hawaiian Red salts) and maybe flavor. These extras may be fine when it comes to cooking, but for canning and preserving there could be negative impacts – which is why **we recommend using canning/pickling salt for preserving**. This salt is pure salt, with no additives or minerals. It is fine grained, which makes it easily dissolvable. Canning and fermenting recipes have been designed for this salt, so if you do make any substitutions, you should plan on performing weight conversions.

So, what are these negative impacts? Anticaking agents can cause cloudy brine, and iodine may turn vegetables dark. These are not safety issues, but it could impact the look of your jar of pickles. Additives, minerals and impurities could interfere with fermenting. Thus, to ensure good results – beautiful jars of canned goods and successful fermentations – choose canning/pickling salt.

For further information on preserving, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at <https://nchfp.uga.edu> or contact your local Cooperative Extension office.

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