

Kosher Salt Goes Mainstream: From Chef's Kitchens to America's Spice Racks

Want to learn a simple secret of some of America's greatest chefs? It's Kosher salt – the ingredient used solely in restaurant kitchens for decades is now quickly gaining favor with a new generation of food enthusiasts for traditional home cooking. According to a recent poll, 86 percent of certified chefs prefer cooking with Kosher salt to any other kind. What do they know that you don't?

It's simple. Kosher salt, which you can recognize by its large, coarse flake, adds a pure, clean and crisp flavor to any dish. Chefs also prefer Kosher salt because of its ability to dress-up a meal for presentation.

Kosher salt's name and roots are based in its use in the process of making foods Kosher. But for chefs and food enthusiasts alike, it is Kosher salt's coarse flake – which adds tremendous flavor and allows them to better control portions with their fingers for seasoning and sprinkling – that provides the greatest benefit.

Based on the popularity and increased education provided by cooking shows and magazines, average everyday cooks are beginning to experiment with Kosher salt in droves. Morton Salt, America's authority on salt for more than 150 years, is seeing the category of Kosher salt explode. Within the last five years total Kosher salt category sales have grown by more than 150 percent.

“I won't use anything but Kosher salt. While traditional table salt does a wonderful job of adding flavor to food at the table, chefs agree that Kosher salt is preferable in the preparation, cooking, broiling and barbecuing processes,” says Larry Piaskowy, Executive Chef of Indigo Restaurant in San Francisco. “It can also be used in

so many dishes. What started as a process to make meat Kosher has turned into an all-around ingredient for cooks to enhance the flavor of meat, chicken and fish.”

Many consumers had their first introduction to Kosher salt along the rim of a margarita glass. But it can be used in so many other ways. Kosher salt can be used in appetizers, side dishes and main courses. Among its many uses:

Encrusting: Kosher salt can be mixed with water to form a thick paste to encrust both meat and fish. After baking, the salt crust is removed and discarded, leaving behind delicious and moist meat or fish. Coating a beef roast and letting it slowly cook for four to five hours will produce the juiciest piece of meat you’ve ever tasted.

Brining: Cooks can soak meat in a bath of water and Kosher salt to add flavor and juiciness to meats and seafood. It’s a wonderful way to produce an exceptionally moist, flavorful Thanksgiving turkey.

Flavor enhancer: Chefs like using Kosher salt because they feel it provides the cleanest, truest flavor. You can use Kosher as you would table salt in most cooking applications.

Rub: Looking for a way to spice up the flavor of chicken or steak? Try using Kosher salt as a rub. You can mix the salt along with other ingredients and marinate the meat in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Then, bake, broil or grill the meat to your desired tenderness.

Here’s an easy-to-prepare entrée that the whole family will love:

Southwestern Rub

Ingredients:

4 teaspoons Kosher salt

2 teaspoons ground cumin

2 teaspoons ground chili powder

2 teaspoons dried cilantro leaves

2 teaspoons dried onion flakes

Preparations:

Combine ingredients in small bowl. Store in airtight container in cool dry place until needed. Preparation time: 15 minutes.

Cooking:

Chicken or steak -- Sprinkle, then pat on about 1 teaspoon Southwestern Rub on each chicken piece or steak. Use additional Rub for whole bird or roast. Allow to marinate in refrigerator at least 30 minutes. Proceed to bake, broil or grill until chicken is cooked through and juices run clear.

Tips:

Variation: Southwestern Paste - Mix 1 tablespoon Spice/Rub with 3 tablespoons oil.

Brush warmed tortillas with oil, sprinkle with Southwestern Rub. Use to accompany chili or for southwestern-style salads. Toss 1 tablespoon Southwestern Rub with 4 ounces shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese. Use as topping with tacos.

For other great, easy-to-prepare recipes using Kosher salt, log onto to www.mortonsalt.com, or write to Kosher Salt Recipes, Morton Salt, 123 North Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60606-1743.