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How to Make and Use Wine Salt

Adding a Touch of Class with This Decorative Condiment

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Wine salt is a decorative and flavorful condiment that adds an elegant touch to dishes. It combines the intensity of wine with the functionality of salt, creating a versatile ingredient that enhances flavors while serving as a striking visual element for plating. Making wine salt at home is straightforward and allows for customization while taking advantage of the unique properties of red wine.

The process starts by selecting a good-quality red wine, preferably a young variety with prominent fruity notes. This type of wine intensifies well when paired with salt. You'll also need natural coarse sea salt, which has the right texture to absorb the liquid without dissolving completely. The ideal ratio is one cup of red wine (125 ml) per 250 grams of coarse salt. This proportion ensures the salt absorbs the wine while remaining

manageable during the drying process.

Begin by pouring the wine into a saucepan and heating it over medium heat until reduced by half. This step evaporates the alcohol, concentrates the wine's flavors, and removes excess water, aiding in the drying process later. Allow the reduction to cool completely before use. If preferred, you can skip the reduction step and use the wine directly, though this will leave residual alcohol in the final product, which may not suit all diners.

Once the wine or wine reduction has cooled, gently mix it with the salt in a wide container. Ensure each grain is evenly coated with the liquid. Stir carefully to prevent the salt from dissolving or clumping. Spread the mixture onto a tray lined with parchment paper or a breathable cloth, forming an even layer for efficient drying. A wide, shallow tray is ideal to maximize surface area and promote airflow.

Let the salt dry in a well-ventilated, odor-free area for several hours or days, depending on the climate and season. For a faster method, use an oven with ventilation at a low temperature (60–80°C or about 140–175°F). Stir the salt occasionally during drying to ensure even evaporation. While the oven method is quicker, natural drying preserves the salt's flavor more effectively.

Once fully dried, transfer the wine salt to airtight glass jars to maintain its freshness and aroma. Store in a cool, dark place to prolong its shelf life.

Wine salt is versatile in culinary applications. It is excellent for seasoning grilled meats like steaks or chops, where it enhances the natural juices. It pairs well with fatty fish such as salmon, creating a balanced flavor contrast. Sprinkling it over fresh vegetables or salads, especially when paired with robust cheeses like blue cheese or Parmesan, adds a unique touch. It can also be used as a topping for artisan bread or focaccia, providing both flavor and visual appeal. For a surprising twist, try it in sweet recipes, such as chocolate cookies, for a delightful contrast.

If you prefer, you can use white wine instead of red, following the same procedure. While the visual effect is subtler, the resulting salt offers a delicate and surprising flavor. Experimenting with other types of wine, including rosé, dry sherry, or sweet varieties, can yield intriguing results.

Wine salt not only enhances the flavor of dishes but also elevates their presentation, making every recipe feel special.