

# How to Navigate the Food Landscape: Salt



ANDREA SIEBERT

JUNE 16, 2022

# What will you learn?

Portugal's Salt Tradition

Commercial Categories

Artisanal Sea Salt

Seasons of Sea Salt

Gentle Processing

Sustainability Aspects

Culinary Uses

What to Look for

---



# Sea Salt: 2000 Years of Tradition

- Portugal's salt farming goes back to Phoenician times, perfected by the Romans.
- Still today, many *Atlantic salinas* in the Algarve are operated by manual techniques.
- Artisanal salt production relies only on gravity, manpower and natural evaporation.
- Careful gathering by skilled *marnotos* guarantees Atlantic salt in premium quality.





# Commercial Categories

Portuguese Legislation since 2008

## Machine-harvested sea salt:

- Produced in large ponds, harvested by machines once at the end of season
- Use of pumps to move seawater and replace brine
- Washing and artificial drying after harvest
- May contain additives (anti-caking agents, iodine)
- Characteristics: dry, free flowing, > 99% NaCl

## Hand-harvested sea salt:

- Produced in small ponds, harvested by hand several times during season
  - Use of gravity to move seawater and brine
  - Washing in brine during harvest, sun-drying
  - Must not contain any additives
  - Characteristics: moist, rich in minerals, 94 – 97% NaCl
-

## SAL TRADICIONAL

Grainy crystals, accumulating at the bottom of the ponds, gathered by hand every two to four weeks.



## FLOR DE SAL

Delicate crystals, floating on the brine, daily skimmed by hand.

# Artisanal Sea Salt

- Cleaning
- Repairing
- Filling with seawater



- Water turns into brine
- Crystals form
  - Salt is harvested



- Pans remain flooded
- Salty soils are preserved



- Rain ends the season
- Pans left with residual brine



# The Seasons of Sea Salt

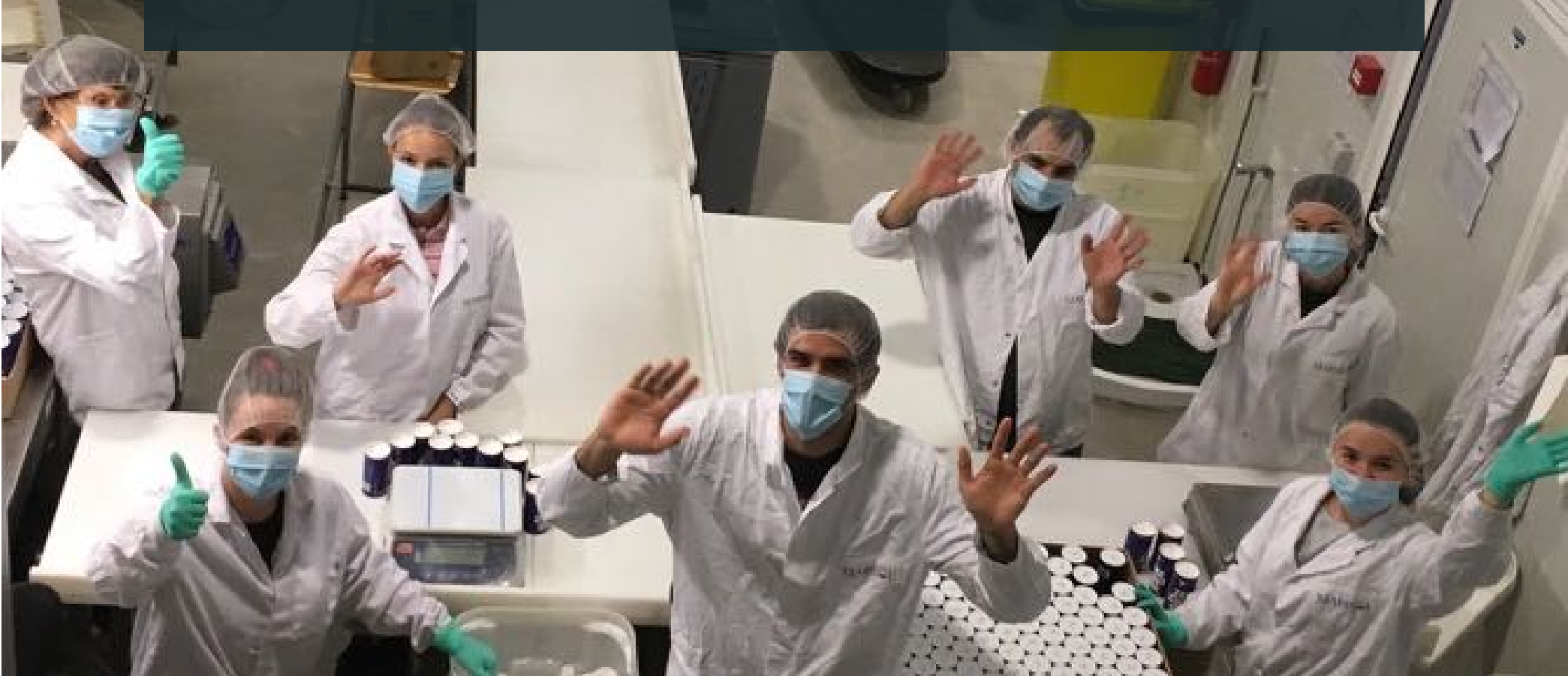


# Gentle Processing

Combined use of artisanal and mechanical techniques



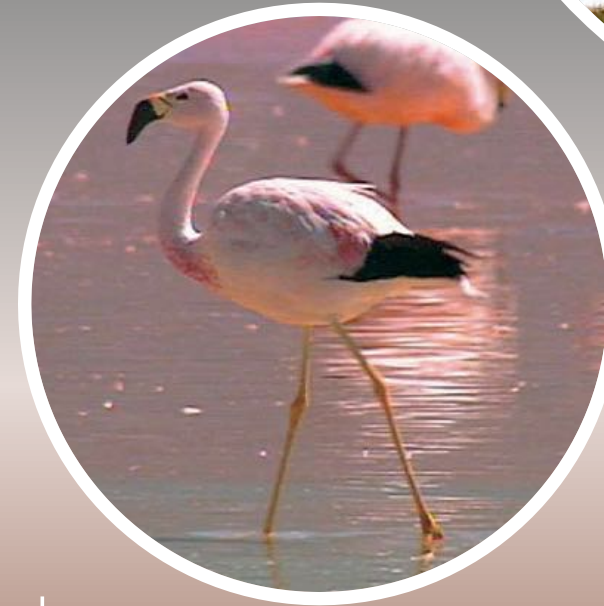
# Meet our team

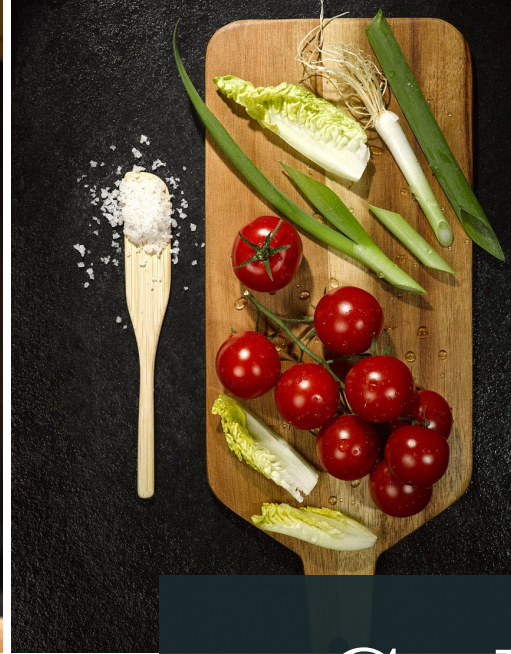




# Sustainability Aspects

- Salt pans in natural salt marshes, in protected nature and bird protection areas (*Natura 2000, Ramsar II*).
- Evaporation of seawater and salt crystallisation rely on natural solar energy, i.e., sun and wind.
- Seawater and brine move driven by gravity only.
- Harvesting and maintenance operations are carried out strictly by hand.
- Artisanal salt is only washed in brine, during harvest, and dries on the sun.
- Extensive salt farming protects the natural estuaries of the Algarve's coastline.
- During wintertime, the flooded ponds provide food and habitat for waterbirds (e.g., egrets, flamingos, ibises, spoonbills).
- The revival of traditional salt farming has created qualified jobs in the Algarve.





# Culinary Uses

## SAL TRADICIONAL

Full and well-balanced taste  
Underlines the food's natural taste  
Grainy crystals, crushed or ground  
Use as your every day cooking salt

## FLOR DE SAL


Mild and subtle taste  
Accentuates the ingredient's flavours  
Delicate crystals, melt on the tongue  
Use for seasoning and finishing touches

# Certified Quality

## What to look for?

- Guaranteed origin
  - Traditional salt farming
  - Certified quality
  - Accredited standards
  - Food safety (HACCP)
  - Free from additives
  - Sustainable production and packaging
- 



A scenic landscape at sunset or sunrise, with a body of water in the foreground and a distant shoreline. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange. Silhouettes of trees and bushes are visible in the foreground and on the left side.

Thank you  
for your attention

Questions & Answers