

# SPICE OF THE MONTH

AT THE CROTON FREE LIBRARY

## March's spice is finishing salt!

This month is going to be simple. Just salt. Sodium chloride. NaCl. Totally not complicated like these other spices, right?

Aha, but the shelves at Shop Rite would beg to differ. Table salt, sea salt, kosher salt, rock salt, pickling salt, Himalayan pink salt, grey salt, black salt...

Author Mark Kurlansky wrote an entire book on the subject. The book, appropriately named *Salt*, discusses the salt's importance to humanity, from prehistory to the present day.

We use salt to preserve food, to melt snow and ice, to extinguish kitchen fires. Salt is an important part of softening water, dyeing fabrics, and tanning leather. Cultures around the world believe that salt wards off evil spirits. We need salt for our bodies to function; both sodium and chloride are vitally important electrolytes. Plus, food without salt is not great! Humans have the capacity to experience five different tastes, and salty is one of them.

To sum it up, salt is kind of a big deal.

Unlike kosher salt or table salt, which is meant to dissolve into food and flavor an entire dish, finishing salts are meant to be sprinkled on top, giving surprise bursts of flavor. In this month's kit, we've included two different flavors of finishing salt for you to sample: applewood smoked and lemon rosemary. Try them on the recipes we've suggested or sprinkle them on any dish of your choosing — sweet or savory!



**All books listed here are available to check out or as ebooks  
from the Westchester Library System!**

**Our sources:**

- *Spiced* by America's Test Kitchen
- *Salt: A World History* by Mark Kurlansky
- "Salt" from the U.S. Geologic Survey, Dept. of Interior: <https://pubs.usgs.gov/myb/vol1/2018/myb1-2018-salt.pdf>

**The recipes in this kit are:**

- Flavored Salts from *Spiced* by America's Test Kitchen (p. 24)
- Potato and Eggplant Tortilla Espanola from *Milk Street Vegetables* by Christopher Kimball (p. 341)
- Orange-Roasted Pecans from *Salty Snacks* by Cynthia Nims (p. 115)

**See our cookbook collection for additional info & recipes, like:**

- Caramel Turtle Bars from *Absolutely Chocolate* by the Editors of *Fine Cooking* (p. 76-7)
- Roasted Baby Vegetable with a Dilled Cream Sauce (p. 53-4) or Tzimmis (p. 62) from *The Fresh Honey Cookbook* by Laurey Masterton
- Grilled Queso Fresco with Black Olive Mojo from *The Great Big Cheese Cookbook* from the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board (p. 93)

**What did you make with your  
finishing salt?**

Post it on social media with the hashtag  
**#CrotonSpiceClub** and tag us, or send a photo &  
description to [ref@crotonfreelibrary.org](mailto:ref@crotonfreelibrary.org)!

**Finishing salts purchased from the San Francisco Salt Co.**