

SPECIFICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1151/2012 on protected geographical indications and Protections designations of Origin

“ACHILL ISLAND SEA SALT”

PDO (X) PGI ()

1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

Name: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Address: Food Industry Development Division, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2

Tel.: (353-1) 6073464

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2 GROUP

Name: Achill Island Sea Salt

Address: Bunacurry, Achill, Co. Mayo, F28 HT29, Ireland

Tel.: (098) 47856

e-mail: Info@achillislandseasalt.ie

Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class 2.6 Salt

4 SPECIFICATION

4.1 Name:

“Achill Island Sea Salt”

4.2 Description:

“Achill Island Sea Salt” is the name given to the sea salt produced from the waters around Achill Island, Co. Mayo, Ireland. “Achill Island Sea Salt” has a soft flaky texture, is crystalline white in appearance, with a concentrated salty taste and contains no additives

nor preservatives. Its soft flaky texture allows the salt to break down easily and melt into food, thus rapidly enhancing its flavour.

Certificate of Analysis for ‘Achill Island Sea Salt’ is within +/- 20% of the table below

Achill Island Sea Salt Analysis		
Element		Mg/kg
As	Arsenic	<0.01
B	Boron	6.9
Cd	Cadmium	<0.040
Ca	Calcium	682
Cr	Chromium	<0.20
Co	Cobalt	<0.050
Cu	Copper	<0.10
Fe	Iron	1.3
Pb	Lead	<0.050
Mg	Magnesium	5690
Mn	Manganese	<0.10
Ni	Nickel	<0.20
K	Potassium	3000
Se	Selenium	<5.0
Na	Sodium	364000
Zn	Zinc	0.86

The analysis table above, tested by an accredited and certified laboratory, and demonstrates that Achill Island Sea Salt contains a wide array of trace minerals and elements.

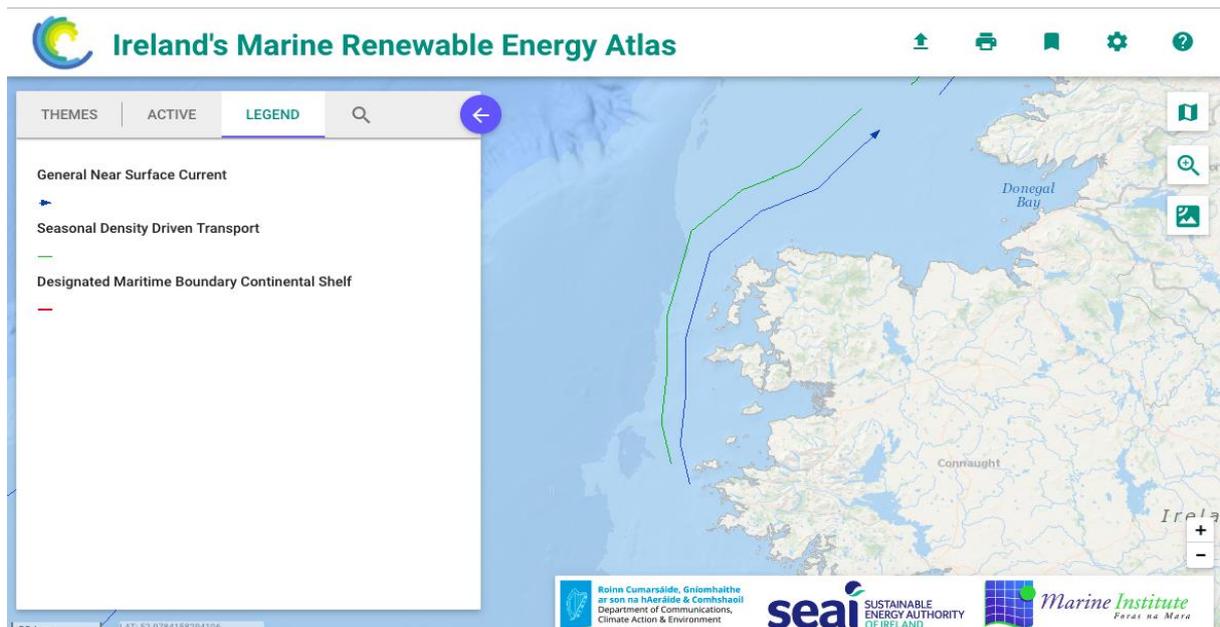
4.3 Geographical area:

Achill Island is Ireland's largest island, located off the west coast of County Mayo. The Island is 140 square kilometres with a coastline of 128km with coordinates of 53° 57' 50.0724" N and 10° 0' 10.9116" W.

The island measures 20kms east to west, 18kms North to South and is connected by a bridge to the mainland at the southeast of the Island known as Achill Sound on the R319. The Sound varies from about 270m at the south to about 6km at the north.



Achill Island



SEAI- Ireland's Marine Renewable Energy Atlas: Tidal Currents along the west coast of Achill Island.

4.4 Proof of origin:

- Achill Island Sea Salt is harvested from the northern face of Achill Island at the Valley pier and sea water is the only raw material used in the production of Achill Island Sea Salt.
- The specific taste, texture and undefined size of the salt crystals is attributable to the mineral content of the Atlantic Ocean at the Valley Pier on Achill Island and to the process in which the sea salt is produced at a high quality.
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) ensures that critical control points and records are kept and maintained throughout the production process to demonstrate product safety, quality and traceability.
- All sea salt batches are recorded, and every jar and container of sea salt can be traced back to the day of water harvesting and production.
- All factory, harvesting and packing equipment are cleaned, monitored and maintained on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to ensure consistency and product quality.

4.5 Method of production:

All processes of harvesting, evaporation, and crystallization are performed indoors, in the designated area, under controlled and monitored conditions to ensure consistency in the quality of the product.

- In a batch process, seawater is pumped during high tide using a pump into a stainless-steel tank which is then transported from the Valley Pier, Achill Island to the Achill Sea Salt production site. This water is unadulterated sea water, with no additives or additional liquids being added.
- The harvested seawater is pumped into the production facility where it is passed through a specially designed filtration system and then into storage-tanks, for a maximum of one week.
- From the storage tanks the seawater is passed into evaporation unit(s). There is currently one evaporation unit with a maximum capacity of 1000Ltr. Here the water is evaporated under vacuum pressure. This process outputs distilled water and concentrated sea-water brine. The evaporation process takes up to 50 hours per batch.
- The concentrated brine is pumped into an open crystallization pan in a controlled clean room. The brine is further concentrated by gas heat under the pan at between 70°C and 86°C for up to 37 hours.
- When the crystallization point of salinity is reached (within a range of 25%-35% density), sea salt crystals begin to form on the surface of the brine. As the crystals grow heavier, they sink to the bottom of the pan.
- Heating and ventilation are controlled by extractor fans to ensure consistency in quality of the product.
- The sea salt flakes are harvested by hand from the pan using a sieve style shovel to allow for drainage.

- The sea salt flakes are transferred to trays and placed in a low temperature oven at 40°C to dry to a specific moisture content of less than 3%. This process takes up to 24 hours and is dependent on humidity and moisture content. The salt is turned at specific times throughout the drying process to avoid formation a dry salt crust.
- Once dried, the sea salt is stored in appropriate food safe containers and appropriately labelled according to batch, before it is packed according to customer requirements.
- Achill Island Sea Salt is made from pure sea water. At no point in the production process is additional rock salt or sea salt added. The process is Organic Certified which allows Achill Island Sea Salt to be used in organic products and recipes.
- Certifications of quality include:
 - Organic Trust – Certified Organic Process
 - Euro Toques Ireland – European community of Chefs
 - Health and Safety Authority – Certified Food Grade Facility
 - Great Taste – Gold Star 2015, 2017
 - Blas Na hEireann – Irish Food Awards, Silver award 2015, 2017.

4.6 Link:

Achill Island is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, which has the highest salinity level (3.5%) of all five ocean basins. The waters that surround Achill Island have consistently been rated Grade A Shellfish Quality by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority. Due to its rural location, these waters are not affected by nearby large cities nor heavy industries. The area where the water is collected on the moderately sheltered northern shore is ideal due to the superior quality and consistency of the sea water.

The sea water is collected on the Northern face of the island at the Valley Pier coordinates **54°01' 21.3" (North), 9°57'50.9" (West)**. The predominant seabed habitat type is shallow sublittoral mixed sediment. While tidal currents that pass along the along the west coast of the island consist of general near surface currents and seasonal density driven transport currents.

Tidal driven currents are relatively low, close to the shore but increase dramatically offshore as the flows in Achill Sound reach speeds of up to ca. 7m/sec. The major force driving water circulation and water exchange of the coastal waters is the tide. Tidal flows along the coast, ride from a southerly direction and flush through Achill sound to the north on the falling side. The extent and velocity of tidal flows is influenced by the tidal cycle, varying between tidal spring and neap tides (Aqua-Fact, 2003). This tidal flow acts to provide a balance of trace minerals which contribute to the mineral content and subsequently the salty flavour of “Achill Island Sea Salt”.

“Achill Island Sea Salt” contains no additives or preservatives, and the method of production allows for the retention of over 20 trace elements that are naturally present in the sea water. ‘*Achill Island Sea Salt*’ is characteristic of its origin in taste and

appearance, it is affected by the purity of the sea water which has been rated Grade A for shellfish quality by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, the mineral content as well as the method of production applied. The mineral content of the sea water contributes to “Achill Island Sea Salt’s” demonstrably distinctive texture and concentrated salty taste. “Achill Island Sea Salt” has a naturally clean crystalline white appearance. The irregular shape and various sizes of the salt flakes and soft texture is due to the sea salt harvesting process in which the sea water is slowly evaporated over heat, allowing for the crystallisation of the sea salt flakes. This process is carried out by trained salt makers who ensure that the salt is produced to the highest quality using their knowledge of the correct time and temperatures to give the salt its unique shape and texture. The panning off of the sea salt flakes requires care and skill to ensure the texture of the flakes are maintained. Each member of staff undergoes training to ensure the correct texture, size and shape salt flakes are achieved. This is learnt as part of a training programme, which includes practical demonstrations of how the sea salt should be panned off, and correct temperature and time control, which are central to achieving the desired sea salt flakes. Examples of correct and incorrect flake texture and size are also demonstrated to staff throughout the training process. All staff follow the standard operating procedures, to ensure consistent quality in all measures is achieved.

Historically, Sea Salt harvesting and production on Achill Island was carried out until the late 1800s, **evidence of this is on MacKenzie, Maritime Survey of Ireland 1776 and on ‘Bald’s Map of Achill Island 1809’** in which “Salt Point” and ‘Salt Pans’ are clearly marked in Polranny at Achill Sound. It is believed that salt production ceased in the early 19th century for a variety of reasons but mainly a combination of food shortages and also the wide availability of cheaper industrially produced salt.

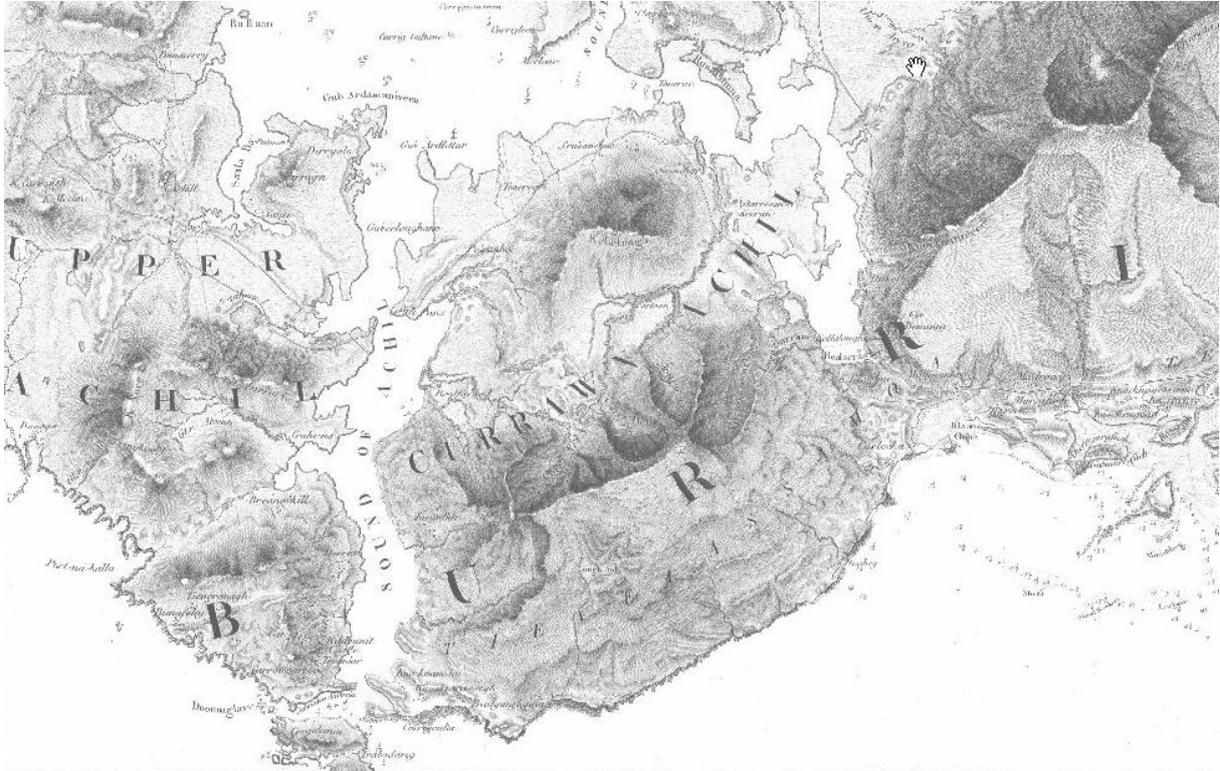
For generations the sea was the lifeblood of the Achill Island community and the abundant fishing waters sustained the local community providing them with a livelihood and a way of life. Salt, as a natural preservative, was a vital ingredient to the fishing industry as it provided a means of preservation, storage and consumption.

Achill Island Sea Salt is highly recognised by the food industry in Ireland. As a quality sea salt, it is used by many chefs and regularly appears as a named ingredient on menus. Here are some comments recognising the taste and region of Achill Island Sea Salt:

"Achill Island Sea Salt is undoubtedly the best sea salt in Ireland. It has a perfect texture, taste and a deliciously crunchy texture. The delicate flavour has a lingering taste of the wild Atlantic Ocean. It is a pleasure to use Achill Sea Salt in Aniar and showcases the very best of Irish artisan produce." **JP McMahon, Chef Proprietor, Galway.**

"Achill Island Sea Salt is unique in its flavour and texture and lends itself perfectly to our Taste The Place menu in the Limerick Strand Hotel where all

of our ingredients are sourced from the Wild Atlantic Way." **Tom Flavin, Executive Chef, Limerick.**



Bald's Map of Achill Island 1809: Achill Island East and Corraun Peninsula.



'Salt Pans' in Polranny Achill, depicted on 'Bald's Map of Achill Island 1809'



MacKenzie, Maritime Survey of Ireland 1776



'Salt Point' at the southeast of Achill Island depicted on the MacKenzie, Maritime Survey of Ireland 1776.

4.7 Inspection body:

Name: Health Service Executive

Address: St Mary's Headquarters, Westport Road, Castlebar Co. Mayo

Tel.:

Fax:

e-mail:

References:

Aqua-Fact (2003) *Environmental Impact Statement For Proposed 600 Tonne-Ashore Re-Circulation Turbot Farm at Bunacurry, Achill Island, Co. Mayo*. Galway. Available at: http://137.191.225.173/mcc_dwviewer_external/frameset.aspx?la=1&id=031675.